



NEWSLETTER



Rutland Service Center

170 S Main St STE 4
Rutland, VT 05701-4559
802-775-8034
800-300-6927 (VT)
802-773-4177 (FAX)
802-253-0191 (TDD)

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee
David Seward, Chair
Karl Strohmaier, Vice Chair
Richard Sheldon
Richard P Browe
David Parker

Minority Advisor
Cristine Carabeau

Staff
Diane Heleba, PT X 10
Marge Christy, PT X 12
Michelle Smith, SCEP X 13

Co. Executive Director
Phyllis L Torrey X 11

Farm Loan Staff
1-888-408-3783

Gary Braman, Manager
David Girard, Loan Officer
Jill Cioffi-Thomas, Loan Officer

NRCS Staff
Jennifer Varin, DC X 14
Jeannie Skalka X 18
Sally Eugair X 16
Les Wright X 23
Corinne Matarese X 21
Carla Fenner X 26

Rutland NRCD
Nanci McGuire X 17

Poultney-Mettowee NRCD
Marli Rupe 802 287-8339

Bennington NRCD
Shelly Stiles 802 442-2275

VACD- CREP Planner
Elizabeth "Liz" Brock X 22

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting, or growing a prohibited plant.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office directly or by phone.

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to **David Parker**. David was elected to represent farmers from LAA #2, which includes the towns of Brandon, Chittenden, Killington, Mendon, Pittsfield, Pittsford, Proctor, Rutland, Sudbury, and West Rutland. David was elected to his first term on the County Committee. Kevin Kingsley and Laurie Bertrand were elected 1st and 2nd alternates, respectively.

Congratulations to **Richard Browe**. Rick was elected to represent farmers from LAA #4, which includes the towns of Danby, Dorset, Landgrove, Manchester, Mount Tabor, Pawlet, Peru, Rupert, Sandgate, and Winhall. Rick was elected to his second term on the County Committee. Scott Cleveland and Phyllis Mason were elected 1st and 2nd alternates, respectively.

The County Committee thanks voters for their participation in the election. The County Committee system works only because of your voter participation. In addition, please join the Committee in our thanks to **Cliff Cressy** for nine years of dedication as a Committee member. By statute, members can serve a maximum of nine consecutive years.

The committee members held their 2011 organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chair and vice-chair. The following are the results:

Chairperson – David Seward
Vice Chairperson – Karl Strohmaier

COC meets every month on the third Wednesday at 10:30 AM in the USDA Conference Room. The public has access to regular session minutes.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices – an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation, and finally, an appeal to the next level of authority.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

Producers who carried NAP insurance in 2010 for hay, maple or other non-insurable crops are required to provide production records. The deadline for this crop production reporting requirement is the final crop reporting date for the crop for the following year; **hay is July 15, 2011; maple sap is February 15, 2011.**

Timely reporting of production records during the winter months to FSA would be greatly appreciated as this would allow sufficient time to update individual yield records. FSA requires that any production reported in a loss year be verifiable according to Agency specifications. ***NAP losses must be reported to FSA within 15 days of loss.***

The noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) is a federally funded program that helps producers reduce their risk when growing food and fiber crops, specialty crops, and crops for livestock feed. These benefits are only available for crops for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is not available. Application for coverage must be filed by the applicable crop's application closing date.

In addition to providing insurance coverage on non-insurable crops, **an important value of NAP coverage is that it is required to be eligible to participate in disaster programs such as SURE and ELAP.**

Civil Rights Complaint Process

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally. To file a Complaint of Discrimination, write to USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office

Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

2011 DCP and ACRE Program

Enrollment for farms with bases continues through **June 1, 2011**. Eligible producers may request an advance DCP direct payment of 22 percent of the total payment for each commodity associated with the farm.

Dates to Remember

January 31	Wool LDP Deadline
February 15	Maple Sap Production Report Due
February 16	COC Meeting 10:30 AM
February 21	Presidents' Day, USDA Offices Closed
March 15	NAP Fees Due – Spring-seeded crops
March 15	Crop Insurance (Corn & sweet corn)
March 16	COC Meeting 10:30 AM
June 1	DCP/ACRE Signup
July 15	Crop Acreage Reports due 2010 Harvested Production Due
July 29	2009 SURE Deadline
Ongoing	Conservation Reserve Program/ CREP Farm Storage Facility Loan Milk Income Loss Contract

Visit our Web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/VT>

2010 NAP Production Reports Due

If you purchased a \$250 per crop NAP policy for the 2010 crop year, you are required to submit a harvested 2010 production report as soon as possible. **Deadlines are: Hay crop by 7/15/11 and maple sap by 2/15/11.**

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to start thinking about filing taxes. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement. The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application, and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information.

SURE Signup

Signup for the 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) began Jan. 10 and ends July 29. SURE provides benefits for 2008 - 2011 crop year farm revenue losses due to natural disasters.

A farm enrolled in SURE is eligible when either:

- a portion of the farm is located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration (USDA Secretarial Declarations only) or a contiguous county; or,
- the actual production is less than 50% of the normal production.
- Producer must have obtained crop insurance or NAP coverage on all crops of economic significance which they grew in all counties

Farming Operation Changes

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes **NOW** will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive CCC-1099-Gs detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on CCC-1099-Gs is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the producers' responsibilities to report income to IRS.

FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, Attorneys, and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.