



U.S. Department of  
Agriculture

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**Hours**

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

**County Committee**

Burt Patenaude, Chair  
Robert Porter, Vice Chair  
William Nelson, Member  
Michael Tanguay, Member  
Patricia Willey, Member

**COC meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
of each month at 10:30 am**

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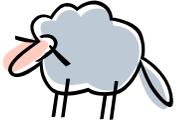
Farm Service Agency

# FSA UPDATES

April  
2007

**Wool/Mohair/Unshorn Pelt Producers**

There is a form that producers need to sign once per crop year, indicating their *intention* to apply for a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP). This form must be signed and submitted prior to losing beneficial interest in the crop. We then hold this form on file until you *actually* apply for an LDP.



Also keep in mind that you will be required to file a crop report for any cropland you are associated with, even if you are using the land as pasture. Please contact the office for more details.

**DCP Enrollment Deadline Extended to August 3, 2007**

FSA has extended the sign-up deadline for the 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) from June 1, 2007 to August 3, 2007. While the sign-up deadline is extended, the cut-off for participation remains September 30, 2007. Those producers failing to sign up by August 3, 2007, but before September 30, will pay a late-file fee of \$100 per contract.

DCP provides payments to eligible producers on farms enrolled for the 2002 through 2007 crop years. There are two types of DCP payments - direct payments and counter-cyclical payments. Both are computed using the base acres and payment yields established for the farm. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 authorizes DCP, which is administered by FSA.

**Remember Conservation When Making Planting Decisions**

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Vermont reminds you to check your conservation plan before making final planting decisions this spring to stay eligible for USDA programs.

With high corn prices, some farmers are planting more corn. Anyone who plans to participate in USDA programs now, or in the future, should check with NRCS before planting corn on land that has not been previously planted to corn; and before changing the crop rotation on highly erodible land.

USDA program participants are responsible for ensuring that their conservation plan or system is applied and maintained in order to remain eligible for USDA program benefits. The local NRCS office can review your current plan and discuss possible options.

**Sodbuster, Swampbuster**

Most Farm Service Agency programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation system.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in the fields.

**Conservation Compliance**

All participants in USDA programs are required to have a conservation system in place on all the highly erodible land (HEL) that they operate. (AD-1026 on file) Several areas where problems can arise with complying with a conservation system are; renting new cropland, purchasing new land, breaking out additional cropland, planting different crops such as soybeans, and changing or removing existing conservation practices.

It is very important that you contact the NRCS office before doing any of the above. Also, it is very important that you contact our office before modifying, tiling, draining, dredging, filling, or leveling any wetland or drainage ditch. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in loss of all Federal payments and eligibility.



- ▶ Do you intend to clear timber areas to create or to expand existing crop areas?
- ▶ Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
- ▶ Are there any areas on your farm(s) that you are considering cropping that have not been cropped in recent years?
- ▶ Is there a wet spot in a field that you want to drain to make cropping easier?
- ▶ Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?
- ▶ Are you doing anything different on your farm(s) this year?

These are Highly Erodible and Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any questions or concerns that something you plan to do on your farm could jeopardize your eligibility for benefits, please contact your NRCS representative.

**Dates to Remember**

- April 23  
Deadline to apply for  
Emergency Loans
- May 28  
Office Closed—Memorial  
Day
- June 30  
Deadline to file small grain  
acreage reports
- July 15  
Deadline to file all other  
acreage reports
- Ongoing Sign-up  
Farm Storage Facility Loans  
Conservation Reserve  
Enhancement Program

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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### **Emergency Loans – Update!**

Emergency loans **are now available for physical damages** caused by the *February 14th blizzard*. The Farm Service Agency is authorized to make loans, to qualified applicants, up to \$500,000. The interest rate for these funds is 3.75%, with variable terms depending on personal circumstances. To qualify, the damage must be to an established working family farm, and other program regulations apply. The application deadline is **October 29, 2007**.

Emergency loans are *still available to Caledonia and Essex County farmers* for **losses in production** (quality and quantity) for the 2006 crop year. The interest rate for these loans is 3.75% and terms are variable. **The application deadline is April 23, 2007**.

For more information contact the farm loan staff in Newport at 802-334-6090 or toll free at 1-866-241-2190.

### **Toll-Free Number for Borrowers**

Direct loan borrowers with USDA's Farm Service Agency can now check the status of their accounts around the clock using a new toll-free telephone number.

The toll-free number, 1-888-518-4983, is available in both English and Spanish. The system delivers information on active FSA loans 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



During the first call to the new system, borrowers will enter their tax identification number or the Social Security Number associated with the loan. They also will need to enter their ZIP code. Borrowers will create a personal identification number for security. Customers must enter their PIN every time they use the system and may change their PIN. The system menu helps user's access helpful information. The system may also direct borrowers to contact their local FSA servicing office if action is necessary on their accounts.

### **Consider CREP – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns, has recently announced there will be no general signups scheduled for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 2007 or 2008. However, environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) will still be eligible for enrollment. This targeted program will remain funded, and continue to provide a heightened environmental benefit on select areas.

### **Beginning, Small and Limited Resource**

**Farmers & Ranchers:** *Do You Require Financial Assistance to Fund Conservation Program Initiatives?*

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) have worked together to make conservation programs more available to beginning, small, and limited resource farmers. As producers move from initial contract development into the implementation stage under NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program, many face the inability to acquire the initial capital investment of their cost-share portion needed for contract implementation.

To help producers implement conservation measures, FSA has several loan programs available to assist with up-front costs. FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit otherwise. A primary objective of FSA's farm loan programs is to assist small, beginning, and socially disadvantaged (minority and female) producers. In fact, a portion of FSA's loan funds are reserved for beginning and socially disadvantaged producers. These loan programs are not new and have been used successfully in conjunction with conservation programs throughout the United States.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) and [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

### **MILCX Program**

There will be no MILCX payments for March or April milk production, since the Boston Class I Price has exceeded the target price. We do not know the Boston Class I price beyond April.

### **FSA Signature Requirements**

Proper signatures on Farm Service Agency contracts, applications and forms must be submitted before the document will be considered as filed. All entities, including revocable and irrevocable trusts, corporations, partnerships, estates, etc., must provide evidence of signature authority stipulating those individuals who are authorized to represent the entity. FSA cannot accept signatures without such documentation on file. Examples of acceptable evidence include trust agreements, corporate charters or resolutions, partnership agreements and court orders of appointment. Spouses can sign for one another on most program documents unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office staff. An FSA-211 may be filed to delegate signature authority for FSA program purposes to another individual.

