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Dates to Remember

May 27, 2024	Offices Closed for Memorial Day
May 31, 2024	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Ornamental Nursery Crop
July 15, 2024	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Annual Crops, Asparagus, Blueberries, Caneberries, Currents, Gooseberries, Pears, Rhubarb, Strawberries, and Some Stone Fruit, and All Grasses, Mixed Forage, and Alfalfa

Note from the State Executive Director

Spring has most definitely sprung! Farmers are active in the field, turning cows out to grass, spreading manure, and planting corn and seeding down. All very busy.

We've come to the end of the sign-up period for Dairy Margin Coverage, DMC, ending on April 29th. We have about 355 producers who have signed up, that number might change slightly. That number amounts to approximately 73% of our producers which puts Vermont in the top tier of states for producer participation.



Dairy farming is clouded right now by the appearance of bird flu, H5N1. As of this writing 36 herds in nine states have been affected, but I don't think there has been a new one since April 25th. The testing requirement for lactating cows has caused some worry and concerns. Probably the best place to look for the most recent information is on the website of VAAFM, the link: -

[HPAI in Dairy Cows - An Emerging Animal Health Issue | Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets \(vermont.gov\)](http://www.vermont.gov/agriculture/food-and-markets/hpai-in-dairy-cows)

Hopefully this will clear up soon as the weather improves and migrating waterfowl will have completed their journeys.

Next on the agenda will be crop reporting. This will give you all a chance to meet new office staff, particularly in St. Albans, Newport and Rutland. Have a great May.

Communication Is Key in Lending



Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be successful. FSA staff will provide guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial credit. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan

staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

If a farm loan borrower can't make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Maps for Acreage Reporting Are Available

Maps are now available at County FSA Offices for acreage reporting purposes. If you wish to receive your maps by e-mail, please call your office or email.



In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, you must file timely acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may cause ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Producers are encouraged to file their acreage reports as soon as planting is completed.

Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments for Wool, Mohair and Unshorn Pelts

Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) provide financing and marketing assistance for producers of many commodities, including graded and non-graded wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts. MALs and LDPs are available during shearing and provide interim financing to help you meet cash flow needs without having to sell commodities when market prices are low, enabling you to delay selling until more favorable marketing conditions emerge. LDPs are payments made to producers who, although eligible to obtain an MAL, agree to forgo the loan in return for a payment on the eligible commodity.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2024 MALs and LDPs for all eligible wool, mohair and unshorn pelts. These requests should be made on or before the final availability date of Jan. 31, 2025. USDA recently announced [2024 wool and mohair marketing assistance loan rates](#).

Eligibility

To be eligible for a wool or mohair MAL or LDP, producers must produce and shear eligible mohair and wool in the U.S. during the applicable crop year and must:

- comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements;
- report all cropland acreage on applicable farms where the eligible commodity is produced;
- have and retain beneficial interest in the commodity until the MAL is repaid or the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) takes title to the commodity, and;
- meet Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations.

Unshorn pelts are eligible for LDPs only. In addition to the criteria above, producers of unshorn pelts must have sold the unshorn lamb for immediate slaughter or slaughter the lambs for personal use. LDPs and marketing loan gains are not subject to payment limitation, including actively engaged in farming and cash rent tenant provisions.

In addition to producer eligibility, the loan commodity must have been produced and shorn from live animals by an eligible producer, be in storable condition, and meet specific CCC minimum grade and quality standards. Producers are responsible for any loss in quantity or quality of the wool or mohair pledged as loan collateral.

To retain beneficial interest, the producer must have control and title of the wool, mohair, or unshorn pelt. If beneficial interest in the commodity is lost, the commodity loses eligibility for an MAL or LDP and remains ineligible even if the producer later regains beneficial interest. The producer must be able to make all decisions affecting the commodity including movement, sale, and the request for an MAL or LDP.

Producers may repay an MAL any time during the loan period at the lesser of the loan rate plus accrued interest and other charges or an alternative loan repayment rate, the national posted price, which is announced weekly. Visit the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website for [posted loan and LDP rates](#).

How to Apply

Producers can apply for an MAL by contacting their local FSA county office. To be considered for a LDP, **producers must first have the form CCC-633 EZ, Page 1, on file with FSA** prior to losing beneficial interest in the wool, mohair or unshorn pelt. **It is best to visit the county office and submit the CCC-633 Page 1 right before you shear.** This is completed one time per crop year and indicates your intention to receive LDP benefits.

To apply and learn more information, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Annual Review of Payment Eligibility for New Crop Year



FSA and NRCS program applicants for benefits are required to submit a completed CCC-902 Farming Operation Plan and CCC-941 Average Gross Income (AGI) Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information for FSA to determine the applicant's payment eligibility and establish the maximum payment limitation applicable to the program applicant.

Participants are not required to annually submit new CCC-902s for payment eligibility and payment limitation purposes unless a change in the farming operation occurs that may affect the previous determination of record. A valid CCC-902 filed by the participant is considered to be a continuous certification used for all payment eligibility and payment limitation determinations applicable for the program benefits requested.

Participants are responsible for ensuring that all CCC-902 and CCC-941 and related forms on file in the county office are updated, current, and correct. Participants are required to timely notify the county office of any changes in the farming operation that may

affect the previous determination of record by filing a new or updated CCC-902 as applicable.

Changes that may require a NEW determination include, but are not limited to, a change of:

- Shares of a contract, which may reflect:
 - A land lease from cash rent to share rent
 - A land lease from share rent to cash rent (subject to the cash rent tenant rule)
 - A modification of a variable/fixed bushel-rent arrangement
- The size of the producer's farming operation by the addition or reduction of cropland that may affect the application of a cropland factor
- The structure of the farming operation, including any change to a member's share
- The contribution of farm inputs of capital, land, equipment, active personal labor, and/or active personal management
- Farming interests not previously disclosed on CCC-902 including the farming interests of a spouse or minor child
- Certifications of average AGI are required to be filed annually for participation in an annual USDA program. For multi-year conservation contracts and NRCS easements, a certification of AGI must be filed prior to approval of the contract or easement and is applicable for the duration of the contract period.

Participants are encouraged to file or review these forms within the deadlines established for each applicable program for which program benefits are being requested.

Farm Service Agency Call Center

Farmers and ranchers can contact a call center to receive one-on-one assistance from USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) employees ready to help. By calling 877-508-8364, customers can ask questions about FSA programs.

The call center was created as a way to better serve customers, especially those who have not worked with FSA previously.

Customers who contact the call center can expect to receive the same great service they would receive as if they were in their FSA county office.

FSA Call Center staff can also provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers using the call center will still call 877-508-8364 and select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish-speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the call center staff.

The call center is just one of many ways USDA has adjusted and added flexibilities to meet the needs of our customers. One thing remains the same, USDA stands committed to offering exceptional customer service to our nation's farmers and ranchers.

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Chittenden/Washington County Office

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Lamoille/Orleans County Offices

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

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