

June 2013



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Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County FSA Updates

Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County FSA Office

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2013 DCP Deadline Approaches

The sign-up period for DCP is still open. Producers are encouraged to sign up for DCP before the Aug. 2, 2013, deadline.

Producers that are interested in enrolling in DCP should contact the office. Contracts can be picked up, emailed or faxed. Due to budget constraints contracts will not be mailed this year.

Crop Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time is here. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For most 2013 crops, other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the July 15th deadline. Please contact the office for specific dates.

Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the **earlier** of July 15th or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

2013 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long established, large or small operation. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and to represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on:

- * Commodity price support loans and payments
- * Conservation programs
- * Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- * Emergency programs
- * Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Election Period

June 17, 2013 - The nomination period begins.

Aug. 1, 2013 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center

Nov. 4, 2013 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 2, 2013 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

Jan. 1, 2014 - Newly elected county committee members take office

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria

- * Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- * Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- * Reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) in which the person is a candidate

Not have been:

- * Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- * Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- * Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed service.

Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at:

English: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa0669a_english_form.pdf

Spanish: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa0669a_es_130405v01.pdf

Nomination forms for the 2013 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business **Aug. 1, 2013**.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate.

Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

The Local Administrative Area (LAA) that is having an election this year is LAA #5. This area includes the following:

Cape May County, Maurice River Twp., Estell Manor, Corbin City, Egg Harbor Twp, Galloway Twp, Egg Harbor City, Somers Point, Linwood, North Field, Pleasantville, Absecon, Longport, Margate, Ventnor, Atlantic City, Port Republic

NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable and verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit all production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date, which is July 15th.**

Timely Filing of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for **ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES**. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (notice of loss) in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has farm operating loans as well as loans to purchase or improve farms or ranches to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has priority funding for socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is a person who is a member of a group that has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice without regard to the members' individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African-Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders. FSA loans are available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Banking Changes?

If you changed banks and did not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers, there could be problems. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. It is important that any changes in a producer's account such as type account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible payment delay.

Farm Reconstitutions

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **Aug. 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

Estate Method — The division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate

Designation of Landowner Method — May be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding

DCP Cropland Method — The division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract

Default Method — The division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system

Important Dates to Remember

June 17- County committee Elecetion (COC) Nominations open

July 4- Office Closed- Independence Day

July 15- Crop reporting deadline for all crops except small grains

July 15- Last day to report prior years production for NAP

July 15- Last day to sign 2012 NAP Application for payment (CCC-576 pg 2) for crops that have had a Loss Adjuster final visit.

August 1- NAP coverage deadline for 2014 Strawberries.

August 2- DCP sign-up deadline

September 1- NAP coverage deadline for christmas trees, fin fish, flowers & grass (SOD)

September 2- Office Closed- Labor Day

September 30- NAP coverage deadline for barley, clover, grass, mixed forage, rye & wheat

October 14- Office closed- Columbus Day

November 4- COC election ballots mailed

November 11- Office closed- Veteran's Day

November 20- NAP coverage deadline for: apples, apricots, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, cranberries, grapes, honey, nectarines, onions, peaches, pears, plums, scallions & shallots

December 2- Last day to return COC election ballots

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