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Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for County Committee Members

The infographic features a green header with the USDA Farm Service Agency logo and the title "County Committee Elections 2021". Below the header is a row of seven photos of diverse individuals. Underneath the photos are five colored callouts with dates and descriptions:

- Jun. 15 2021**: Beginning of nomination period. Forms available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.
- Aug. 2 2021**: Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.
- Nov. 1 2021**: Ballots mailed to eligible voters.
- Dec. 6 2021**: Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.
- Jan. 1 2022**: Newly elected county committee members take office.

 At the bottom of the infographic, it states: "USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) began accepting nominations for county committee members on June 15. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 2, 2021.

New Jersey specific election information is available on our state website at www.fsa.usda.gov/nj

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in a USDA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote, and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serving on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. This may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

More Information

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election. They should check with their local USDA Service Center to see if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form or an [FSA-669-A-3](#) for urban county committees. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 1, 2021. To find your local USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

USDA Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

While USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in New Jersey are currently open to a limited number of in person appointments we continue to offer phone and virtual appointments and are still working with producers on timely filing crop acreage reports. FSA staff can provide assistance over the phone, by email and through virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams. Those interested in in-person appointment **must** contact their local office to make an appointment.



The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in New Jersey:

- **July 15** - corn, soybeans, spring feed grains, forage, CRP, hemp & most other crops
- **August 15** - processing beans
- **September 30** - 2022 Value Loss (i.e. Christmas trees, cut flowers, turf grass/sod, aquaculture).

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Acreage reporting deadlines for 2021 Nursery, value loss crops, small grains, honey, apples, blueberries, cranberries, peaches, grapes, and strawberries have already passed. Late acreage reports can be filed for up to one year after the prior year's reporting deadline provided the crop or crop residue is still in the field.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline. FSA staff are able to assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps.

FSA county offices in New Jersey will be happy to provide maps to producers through mail, email or local pick-up with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete,

producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet as directed by their local office.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and provide producers the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office by the reporting deadline above.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

For questions, please contact your local FSA office. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Filing a Notice of Loss for Prevented Planting, Failed Acres and Yield Losses

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to file Notices of Loss for prevented planting, failed acres, and yield losses in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.



Prevented Planting

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Failed Acres

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, to report failed acres.

Yield Losses

For losses on crops covered by the [Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#), producers must file a *Notice of Loss* within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a *Notice of Loss* for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

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), 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 or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. Additionally, this requirement is applicable to other crops as determined by the Deputy Administrator of Farm Programs. Please contact your local office if you have questions about specific crops.

This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, within the required 15 calendar days.

NAP Participants should be sure to review the NAP Basic Provisions found [here](#).

USDA Opens Signup for CLEAR30, Expands Pilot to Be Nationwide

30-Year Option Focuses on Improving Water Quality

Landowners and agricultural producers currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) now have a wider opportunity to enroll in a 30-year contract through the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers initiative, called CLEAR30. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expanding CLEAR30 – a water-quality focused option available through CRP – to be nationwide now.

Interested producers with CRP contracts expiring September 30, 2021, should sign up by August 6, 2021. CLEAR30 provides an opportunity for producers to receive incentives for a 30-year commitment to water quality practices on their CRP land, building on their original 10- to 15-year CRP contracts.

These long-term contracts ensure that practices remain in place for 30 years, which improves water quality through reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and helping prevent algal blooms.

About CLEAR30

CLEAR30 was created by the 2018 Farm Bill to better address water quality concerns. Originally, CLEAR30 was only available in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watersheds. Now, access is expanded to agricultural producers nationwide.

Eligible producers must have certain water quality benefitting practices currently enrolled under continuous CRP or through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), under contracts that are expiring on September 30, 2021.

These long-term contracts will help ensure that conservation impacts and benefits remain in place for 30 years, reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and, ultimately, algal blooms. Conservation in riparian areas also provides important carbon sequestration benefits. Traditional CRP contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

Annual rental payments for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus a 20% water quality incentive and annual rate adjustment of 27.5%.

How to Sign Up

To sign up for CLEAR30, contact your local USDA Service Center by August 6, 2021. While USDA offices may be closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Contact information can be found at farmers.gov/service-locator.

More Information

CLEAR30 is an option available through CRP, which is one of the world's largest voluntary conservation programs with a long track record of preserving topsoil, sequestering carbon and reducing nitrogen runoff, as well providing healthy habitat for wildlife.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our nation's lands, biodiversity, and natural resources including our soil, air and water. As such, CLEAR30 contracts receive a water quality incentive and a climate-smart practice incentive. Through conservation practices and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers, and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including state, local, and tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America.

To enroll in CLEAR30, please contact your local USDA Service Center. For more information on CRP, visit the Conservation Reserve Program.

Remember Double-Cropping & Final Planting Dates When Planting



Double Cropping

Each year, state committees will review and approve or disapprove county committee recommended changes or additions to specific combinations of crops.

Double-cropping is approved when the two specific crops have the capability to be planted and carried to maturity for the intended use, as reported by the producer, on the same acreage within a crop year under normal growing conditions. The specific combination of crops recommended by the county committee must be approved by the state committee.

Double-cropping is approved in New Jersey on a county-by-county basis. Contact your office for a list of approved double-cropping combinations for your county or [click here for a complete list](#).

A crop following a cover crop terminated according to termination guidelines is approved double cropping and these combinations do not have to be approved by the state committee.

Final Planting Dates

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on the final planting date for specific crops. The final planting dates vary by crop, planting period and county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific planting deadlines. The timely planting of a crop, by the final planting date, may prevent loss of program benefits.

NRCS Freehold is Hiring



The NRCS office in Freehold has an opening for a Soil Conservationist. The main responsibility of this position is to provide conservation planning assistance to local agricultural and forestry producers.

Practical knowledge of the methods and techniques of soil, water, and environmental conservation as they relate to agricultural operations and land use measures is needed. Details of the application process and educational requirements for the position can be found at [USAJOBS](#). (Announcement number: NRCS-21-11086947-DHA-BD-AW).

Applications must be received by 7/15/2021 to be considered. Interested applicants can contact Clare Flanagan, District Conservationist at the Freehold Office for more information at 732-462-0075 ext. 3.

On-farm Renewable Energy - Webinar

Want to learn more about on-farm renewable energy opportunities for local farms and other rural businesses?

North Jersey RC&D is hosting an educational webinar on **July 1st from 11:30 to 12:30.**

The webinar will focus on:

- Agrivoltaics: co-developing the same area of land for both solar photovoltaic power as well as for agriculture.
- Photovoltaic systems that are compatible with and synergistic to NRCS conservation practices
- Other on-farm energy solutions including mini-wind turbines, solar thermal systems, and heat pumps.
- No-cost energy assessments.
- Funding opportunities (including REAP) supporting the installation of renewable energy technologies and how farmers and rural small businesses can apply.

Learn about how renewable energy technology can be integrated on farms and how modern installations can complement both the agricultural operation and conservation practice implementation.

Learn more about the webinar and register: <https://www.northjerseyrcd.org/renewableenergy>



Emergency Loans Available in 14 New Jersey Counties

Farmers in the following counties are eligible for [Emergency Loans](#) through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA):

- **Presidential Disaster Designation #M4597** is due to severe winter storms and snowstorms that impacted New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.
 - Incident Period of January 31, 2021 to February 2, 2021.
 - 5 Primary Counties in New Jersey: Cape May, Morris, Ocean, Sussex, Warren.
 - 9 Contiguous Counties in New Jersey: Atlantic, Burlington, Cumberland, Essex, Hunterdon, Monmouth, Passaic, Somerset, and Union.
 - 2 Adjacent States and 5 Contiguous Counties: State of New York – Orange County; State of Pennsylvania – Pike, Monroe, Northampton and Bucks Counties.

Visit our state website at www.fsa.usda.gov/nj to see all current disaster declarations in New Jersey.

These natural disaster area designations allow FSA to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters. Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation or the refinance of certain debts. FSA will review the

loans based on the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Please contact your local FSA farm loan office for more information on FSA loans.



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