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Issue 2

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# Farm Service Agency

## County Committee Elections

## “FSA Counts on You”

Since COC elections happen only once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA selects one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee. Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election. In combined counties in some years, two seats may be up for election.

### Nominations

Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee election will be accepted June 15 through Aug. 2, 2010.

Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates. The nomination form, FSA-669A, is available at the county office or may be downloaded from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected. The completed nomination form must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Aug. 2, or postmarked by midnight Aug. 2, 2010.

### Voting

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 5, and must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Dec. 6, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 6, 2010.

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can 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 on an entire farm can also vote. No one can be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

### Candidate Eligibility

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 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 services.

For additional clarification about county committee elections, contact your local county office staff.

## Acreage Reporting

The acreage reporting deadline is fast approaching. 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 FSA programs. For programs requiring the form, including the NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program), acreage reports are due by the July 15th deadline.

## NAP Loss Filing

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. The timely filing of 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.

## Farm Safety

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand; it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped.

The mechanical aspects of grain handling equipment, also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab you or the clothing you might be wearing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Insure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

Your friends at FSA want all farmers to have a productive crop year, and that begins with putting safety first.

## SURE Signup

Signup for the 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) began on January 4, 2010. SURE 2008 is for those who suffered crop production losses during crop year 2008.

SURE provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or crop quality losses. The program takes into consideration crop losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to 60 percent of the difference between the SURE farm guarantee and total farm revenue. The farm guarantee is based on the amount of crop insurance and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on the farm. Total farm revenue takes into account the actual value of production on the farm as well as insurance indemnities and certain farm program payments.

Producers with a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. Producers must meet the risk management purchase requirement by either obtaining a policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, for all economically significant crops. For 2008 crops, producers had the opportunity to obtain a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement through a buy-in provision. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

If there is no Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may also be eligible for SURE if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. For SURE, a farm is defined as all crops in which a producer had an interest nationwide.

Contact the Mendocino/Lake County FSA for more information.

## Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) provides financial assistance to qualifying producers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines that were lost by natural disasters occurring on or after January 1, 2008 and before October 1, 2011.

To qualify for TAP, producers must;

- Suffer qualifying tree, bush and vine losses in excess of 15 percent mortality (after adjustment for normal mortality) from an eligible natural disaster for the individual stand;
- Have owned the eligible trees, bushes and vines when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible producers are not required to own the land on which eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted;
- Replace eligible trees, bushes and vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

To file an application for TAP producers must have met the Risk Management Purchase Requirements (RMPR). To meet the RMPR under TAP, producers must do the following;

- For insurable commodities, excluding grazing, obtain a policy or plan of insurance for each crop, type and intended use on the farm;
- For each non-insurable commodity by crop, type and intended use, excluding grazing, file the required paperwork and pay the administrative fee by the applicable State application closing date for NAP.

NOTE: The trees, bushes, and vines that are eligible for TAP, except for Christmas trees and nursery, are not required to have a policy or plan of insurance or NAP; however, the crop from the tree, bush or vine must be covered to meet RMPR.

Producers may apply to receive TAP benefits beginning May 10, 2010, for losses suffered during calendar years 2008 and 2009, and for losses suffered during January 1, 2010, to May 7, 2010. **The deadline for TAP for calendar years 2008 and 2009 is July 6, 2010.** Losses incurred January 1, 2010 through May 7, 2010 must be filed by the July 6th deadline as well. Losses occurring May 8, 2010 through September 30, 2011 must be filed within 90 days of the disaster event or date when the loss of trees, bushes or vines is apparent.

Call the FSA office for more information or to request an application.

## Direct and Guaranteed Loans

FSA is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,112,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

## LDP's Available Wool, Mohair and Unshorn Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers can apply for 2010 Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for wool, mohair and unshorn pelts produced during the 2010 crop year. Eligible producers must file CCC-633, page 1 **BEFORE** losing beneficial interest. When the producer obtains the receipt (s) showing pounds of wool and/or mohair and/or number of unshorn pelts sold they will complete CCC-633, page 4 and submit the form along with copies of receipts to the county office for payment.

Producers must also comply with wetland conservation and highly erodible land conservation provisions on all lands they operate or have interest in.

**Please contact the FSA office for more information.**



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