

Volume 7, Issue 1
May/June 2010

Farm Service Agency
100 Northfield Dr., 4th fl
Windsor, CT 06095-4730

860-688-7725 ext.2
Fax: 860-688-0083
Hours 8:00am to 4:30pm



FSA Farm News

2010 FSA County Committee Elections

County Committee:

Edward Kasheta Jr., Chairman
Lauren Kaplan, Vice Chairman
Diane Karabin, Member
Leslie Stearns, Member

County Office Staff:

Ross E. Eddy, CED
Doris G. Ostrowski, PT
Christine Rothe, PT
www.fsa.usda.gov

Office Closings:

May 31, Memorial Day
July 5, Independence Day

Farm Loan Programs

Tolland County Contact:

Ron Clark, Farm Loan Manager
1-860-887-9941 ext. 105

Hartford County Contact:

Ellen Losee, Farm Loan Manager
or Karen Tomlinson, Farm Loan Officer
1-860-626-8852

2010 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, with large or small operations. 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 15, 2010 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa0669a_commiteelectform
Aug. 2, 2010 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center)

Nov. 5, 2010 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Election Refresher

Elections happen once a year. Here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into *local administrative areas*, or LAAs. Each LAA has one producer serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee. Each year, an election is held in a LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. In com-

bined counties in some years, two seats may be up for election.

The LAA up for County Committee Elections include Hartford and Tolland Counties (**LAA4**) and include the towns of **Enfield, Somers, Stafford, Union, Willington, Tolland and Ellington.**

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the

person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected, and returned to the FSA county office by the close of business on August 2, 2010 or postmarked by midnight August 2, 2010.

The nomination period begins on June 15, 2010.



Nominations for County Committee

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: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa0669a_committeeselectform.pdf

Nomination forms for the 2010 election must be post-marked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 2, 2010.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated 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.

ACRE Program

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. Through ACRE, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers producers an alternative to Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) payments. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

ACRE payments are made when both state- and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments. Producers also elect to receive a 20% reduction in direct payments and a 30% reduction in loan rates.

A decision to elect ACRE binds the producer to the program through the 2012 crop year, the last crop year covered by the 2008 Farm Bill. For more details contact your local FSA office.

DCP Signup

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) will continue through **June 1, 2010**. USDA urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2010 DCP contract.

USDA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2010, eligible producers may request advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment.

Contact the nearest FSA office for more information .

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency 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.



Crop Reporting for 2010

All producers must report their 2010 crops by July 15, 2010. There will not be an extension this year. Timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, will prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program. Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments as well as crop acreage for Non-Insured Crop Disaster .

Please call in as soon as you have finished planting your crops to set your appointment to come in and report.

Renewable Energy for America Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development announced its Section 9007, Renewable Energy for America Program on April 26, 2010. This program provides loan guarantees and grants to agricultural producers in eligible, rural areas and rural small businesses for the purposes of installing new renewable energy systems or to update existing facilities to make them more energy efficient.

Energy efficiency grants and loan guarantees can be made for such diverse purposes as: new, more efficient lighting; increased insulation; the installation of more efficient irrigation; thermal curtains for greenhouse applications; and others.

Renewable energy grants and loan guarantees can be used to install biomass, geothermal, hydrogen, solar, wind, and small hydro energy-generating systems.

The Notice of Funding Availability has been published on April 26, 2010 and all applications must be in by 4:30 local time on June 30, 2010 to our State Office. The address is 451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002. We encourage you to contact the local office, Rural Development's Windsor Area Office to discuss your potential applications and to begin the application process. The Windsor Area Office can be reached by phone at (860) 688-7725, option 4.

Conservation News

The Windsor Service Center has some new faces. There are now three NRCS conservationists: Jim Hyde, Garrett, and Sally Timmons. Jim has lived and worked in CT for the past 14 years, having arrived from Nebraska. He's been working with dairy, beef, sheep, goats, and alpacas, with an emphasis on grazing and animal management. Garrett and Sally are recent arrivals from Rhode Island. Garrett hails from Oklahoma originally but has worked more recently in RI with animal systems, grazing, crops, and forestry. Sally, originally from RI, has experience with natural resources, wildlife, wetlands, and livestock/pasture systems.

The 2008 Farm Bill has programs to help with soil and water conservation related to such things as erosion problems, soil nutrition, manure storage, wildlife habitat, forestry planning, and farmland preservation. For more information, visit the website or call any of our conservationists to discuss ideas you might use to maintain or improve your land.

www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov/programs

or

860-688-7725 ext 3.

SURE Program Information

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of the coverage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following conditions trigger SURE payments:

At least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition

Crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm

Producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop production or crop quality losses. Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

A SURE calculator is available at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=sure>. The calculator is not official, but is intended for educational use. A fact sheet and backgrounder are also available online.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to USDA. The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 non-farm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs,; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs. Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and /or CCC-928 (legal entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15 to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at:

[Http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainserlet](http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainserlet).

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are “constituted” to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitutions at the local FSA office.

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 August 2, 2010 for farms enrolled in specific programs.

Dates to Remember

DCP Signup ends June 1

*Nomination period for LAA4 begins
June 15*

Renewable Energy for America Program ends June 30

*Crops must be reported
by July 15*

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800)-795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
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