



Georgia Farm Service Agency Newsletter

June - July 2009

United States Department of Agriculture

Volume 6, Issue 3

Important Dates calendar for FSA Programs

Final Availability Dates for 2008 Crop Loans and LDP's:

31-May Cotton, Corn, Grain Sorghum, Soybeans, Sunflower Seeds

NAP Insurance Sales Closing Dates:

1-Dec Honey

31-Jan All annually planted crops, both spring and fall

15-Aug Perennial crops, forage crops for hay and grazing, and all value loss crops

Additional Program Deadlines:

Now Inquire and Sign-up CRP Continuous Practices such as Riparian Buffers

Now Emergency Conservation approved applicants -- report completed practices to FSA

1-Apr - 31-Aug CRP Nesting Season

31-May-09 Deadline to report tobacco planted acres

15-Jul Deadline to report spring/summer-seeded crops

15-Jul Deadline to certify and pay for final cotton acres for BWEF without a late fee assessed

1-Aug Deadline for requesting the reconstitution of a farm with crop bases

14-Aug Deadline to enroll into 2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE)

1-Nov Tobacco Buy Out Program Successor In Interest Contracts for 2010, as well as contract transfers involving moving "purchased" quota

NOTE: If the crop being reported has NAP coverage, the final date to timely report the acreage is 15 days PRIOR to the onset of harvest or grazing. It is important for producers to remember that crops with NAP coverage will usually have a NAP crop reporting date EARLIER than the regularly established reporting dates for crops without NAP coverage.

Present Emergency Loan Application Deadlines in Georgia:

8-Jun-09 Designation S2769 in 9 counties due to Tropical Storm Fay

16-Jun-09 Designation M1785, Amend. 12, in 2 counties due to Tropical Storm Fay

29-Jun-09 Designation S2788 in 47 counties due to Tropical Storm Fay

1-Jul-09 Designation S2793 in 4 counties due to drought and excessive heat

1-Jul-09 Designation S2796 in 6 counties due to drought

12-Aug-09 Designation S2821 in 158 counties due to drought

12-Aug-09 Designation S2822 in 8 counties due to severe storms with wind and hail

5-Oct-09 Designation S2846 in 7 counties due to early frost

13-Oct-09 Designation S2850 in 13 counties due to drought

21-Dec-09 Designation M1831 in 4 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

23-Dec-09 Designation M1833 in 50 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

28-Dec-09 Designation M1831, Amend. 1, in 3 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

28-Dec-09 Designation M1835 in 6 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

28-Dec-09 Designation S2864 in 2 counties due to very cold weather and freezing temperatures

4-Jan-10 Designation M1831, Amend. 2, in 3 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

4-Jan-10 Designation M1833, Amend. 1, in 61 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

7-Jan-10 Designation M1833, Amend. 3, in 18 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

8-Jan-10 Designation M1836 in 3 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes, and straight-line winds

11-Jan-10 Designation N981 (Physical Loss Only), in 20 counties due to severe snowstorm

NOTE: All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for information specific to the Emergency Loan Program and to determine whether their counties are declared under a certain designation.



Georgia State FSA Office ♦ 355 E. Hancock Ave. ♦ Stop 100 ♦ Athens, GA 30601-2775
Phone: (706) 546-2266 ♦ FAX: (706) 546-2327



Update on Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs

Details are slowly emerging about several of the Supplemental Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs created by the 2008 Farm Bill.

The program generating the most interest in Georgia is the **Livestock Forage Program (LFP)**. LFP was created to provide assistance to livestock producers that suffer grazing losses due to drought. Georgia has many livestock producers that may qualify for assistance under this program in 2008. The delay in implementing LFP is due to the necessity of FSA having to roll out six to eight new 2008 Farm Bill programs and having to develop new policy and procedure for them. It is hoped the final details of LFP will be released soon and a sign-up for 2008 losses can begin shortly thereafter.

There are two other programs, the **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** and the **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)**, that also appear to be generating heavy interest and activity. During the past few months, adverse weather conditions such as heavy rains, excessive snow, tornados, lightning, and other natural disasters have caused deaths of livestock around the state. In many of these situations, producers are eligible for assistance and compensation for some of those losses. Interested producers should contact their local FSA office for specific details on eligible types of livestock losses and other specific program eligibility issues.

Interested producers are advised that verifiable death or loss documentation **IS REQUIRED** to participate in EITHER of these programs, LIP or ELAP, but will not be accepted by Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Offices until the FSA policy for these programs has been finalized and applications can be filed.

In the meantime, ANY livestock producer that has had livestock die as a result of abnormal, adverse weather conditions and would like to be considered for compensation for those losses, is encouraged to review the following procedure to insure that proper documentation can be provided for the losses claimed —

(1) Contact your local FSA office and make them aware of your loss – Producer photos of the livestock losses and a narrative statement of what happened are very good documentation also.

(2) Adequate documentation must prove **the death of eligible livestock occurred as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event** in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested.

(3) If adequate, verifiable proof of death records documentation is not available, a livestock producer may provide reliable records, along with verifiable beginning and ending inventory, as proof of death.

(4) Local FSA offices can provide interested producers with a list of acceptable proof of death, producer records and verifiable inventory documentation to insure the loss can be substantiated and properly documented.

Failure to provide sufficient documentation could result in denial of benefits.

Georgia State FSA Newsletter

State Executive Director
David F. Laster, Acting

Administrative Officer:
Kula C. Moore

Farm Loan Programs:
David F. Laster

**Production Adjustment/Conservation/
Common Provisions Section:** Brett M. Martin

Price Support/Compliance/GIS Section:
Clark E. Weaver

State Outreach Coordinator:
Vacant

Newsletter Editor:
Elaine P. McGarity

**For information, please first contact your
local FSA County Office.**

Georgia FSA State Office
355 E. Hancock Avenue
Mail Stop 100
Athens, Georgia 30601
(706) 546-2266

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the main source for information contained in this educational newsletter. Eligibility and participation for all FSA programs is determined in accordance with FSA rules and regulations. Contact your local FSA Service Center to determine program eligibility.

The Georgia Farm Service Agency State Newsletter is published by the Georgia FSA State Office. Contact your local USDA Service Center - Farm Service Agency listed in the phone book, weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. to obtain a free subscription, make address corrections, or be removed from the mailing list.

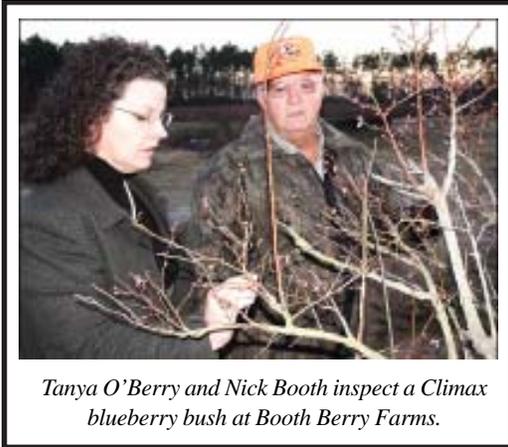
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (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 to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting/event/function should contact Kula C. Moore, 706-546-2269.

Family Tradition

Blueberry business incorporates four generations of farming

In Clinch County, blueberry is king. The sweet fruit is a booming, global business that begins on a bush in this south Georgia county. For Nick Booth, blueberries were a way to get out of tobacco and continue a family tradition of farming. Nick Booth started farming blueberries in the late 1980s.



Tanya O'Berry and Nick Booth inspect a Climax blueberry bush at Booth Berry Farms.

Today, the business includes blueberry fields, a packing shed and four generations of family. Booth's daughter, Tanya O'Berry, grew up working in her father's tobacco fields. Now she helps manage the packing shed.

Booth's wife, Mary

Jo, is often found managing the fresh line, making sure the machines and the workers run smoothly. O'Berry's teenage daughter, Ansley, can be found in the field on the blueberry picker or in the shed grading berries.

The matriarch of the family, Irma Booth, never misses a day of work. At 87, she is constantly in motion, cleaning, grading berries and occasionally cooking the noon day meal. On any given day during the peak season, the entire family can be found on the farm.

"We are a small farm, family operated, we don't want to get too big," Booth said. Booth Berry Farms grows just under 40 acres of blueberries. The soil in Clinch County is perfect for blueberry growing, he said. This means corporations have moved in and are now farming thousand-acre properties. "I was told God created the dirt in Clinch County to grow blueberries. We got the perfect dirt for blueberries," Booth said. "We got the dirt for blueberries like Vidalia has the dirt for onions."

Blueberry season in south Georgia runs mid-April to mid-July. Depending on the weather, blueberries can be ripe as early as mid-March, O'Berry said. Southern Highbush blueberries ripen in April and May. Rabbiteyes ripen in late May, June and July. If blueberries come in early, farmers run the risk of selling their product in an overlapping market. "If you come in early, the Chilean berries are still in," Booth said. "There are so many berries on the market that you can't compete." Each country and state has a window for their fruit to come in, he said. "You've got your own little window of production where you can make your money," Booth said. The peak window for a farmer lasts between three to six weeks.

Booth Berry Farms grows and packages blueberries for a co-op. Fruit grown on the farm can be found in major grocery stores under the Naturipe brand. Early season Southern highbush berries can only be handpicked because they have to be shipped so far, he said. "Can't bruise them or beat them up at all, they have to go from here to Japan or France or somewhere else," Booth said. "They have to be real tough for that long ride," Booth said.

A hand-picked blueberry field of minimal acreage can require 15 to 20 workers a day in full season to keep the ripe fruit picked. Stars and emeralds are just a couple of the Southern highbush varieties the Booths grow. A truck comes to the farm to pick up the packaged berries in the evening, and by early morning they are headed overseas, he said.

Berries that are not hand-picked are picked by a machine that rides over the top of the bushes and gently shakes the ripe fruit into baskets. Machine-picked blueberries are Rabbiteyes. Climax and Brightwells are the variety of Rabbiteyes picked at Booth Berry Farms. Machine-picked blueberries are shipped within the United States. Blueberry bushes begin producing fruit in their third year. Pruning the limbs or canes back each year keeps the bush producing. A well-maintained blueberry bush can produce fruit for more than 20 years.

In addition to picking blueberries, Booth Berry Farms packages both fresh and processed berries. In the mid-1990s, Booth converted an old stick tobacco barn into a blueberry-packing shed. "It was more convenient to do it on the farm. We pick them. We pack them and the truck picks them up at the farm," Booth said. Booth Berry Farms began packing other growers' fruit in 1998. They now pack for six different growers, Booth said. The facility packs around 700,000 pounds of fruit each season.

To ensure cleanliness and freshness of the product, the packing facility and the fruit undergo a variety of inspections both at the farm and before the product is shipped. "After 9/11 everything changed with the processing end," O'Berry said. "They started all of these federal guidelines and so now whenever a blueberry leaves our facility for fresh there is an audit." Inspectors come in and make sure they are following safety guidelines, she said. Starting this year, every plastic container containing fruit will be date stamped to further aid in the inspection process, she said.

(Continued on page 8)

Table of Contents

Due Date Calendar	page 1
Clinch County Blueberries	page 3
Farm Programs	page 4
Farm Programs	page 5
Farm Loan Programs	page 6
County Committee Elections	page 7

Farm Programs

Price Support/Compliance/GIS ~ Clark Weaver, Chief

Importance of Accurate and Timely Acreage Reports

It is extremely important that program participants be aware their program benefits are directly tied to the timely filing of accurate reports of acres for their crops.

In many cases, some programs require that all crop acreages on a farm be reported. Some examples of the programs requiring a total report of crop acreage are Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Related Fish Program (ELAP), Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs). For other programs, only certain crop acreages need to be reported; examples of some of these programs are Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), and Livestock Forage Program (LFP).

NOTE: The above referenced programs are only some examples, and are not to be taken as an all inclusive list of the programs requiring accurate and timely acreage reports.

In stressing timeliness of making an acreage report, it is important for producers to know that if a crop is not reported by the established state reporting date, or the required NAP reporting date (if applicable), a late-filing fee will be assessed. The crop can be considered timely reported as long as there is physical evidence of the crop still remaining in the field.

Generally speaking, the statewide acreage reporting deadlines are as follows:

March 1 – All winter grains and early-season fruits and vegetables already planted

May 31 – Tobacco

July 15 – All other spring and summer-seeded crops and land uses including CRP.

NOTE: Most crops insured under NAP have acreage reporting dates earlier than the State established date. Producers with crop insured under NAP should contact their local FSA office to see what the “Final NAP” reporting dates are for specific crops.

Again, please remember...accurate and timely acreage reporting helps insure you retain your program eligibility.

Changes to 2009 Commodity Loans (Except Cotton)

The 2009-2012 Marketing Assistance Loan and LDP policies have undergone several changes for the upcoming year.

Highlights of changes for 2009 commodity loans (except cotton) are listed below:

- State and local government, political subdivisions are no longer eligible to receive marketing assistance loans and LDP's.
- ACRE program participants will automatically see a reduction of 30 percent in loan rates. Wool, Mohair and Honey are exceptions.
- Producers whose average gross non-farm income (AGI) exceeds \$500,000 may receive a commodity loan but must repay the loan at principle and interest. NOTE: Commodity certificates may be used to repay the loan for the 2009 crop year only.
- Payment Limitations on market gain and/or LDP's are no longer applicable for crop year 2009-2012.
- Storing commodities (except peanuts) in a storage warehouse which has a Uniform Rice and Storage Agreement (UGRSA) is no longer necessary to receive a CCC Commodity Warehouse Stored Loan.
- Graze-Out payments may be available to producers of wheat, oats, barley and triticale who chose to graze the crop instead of harvesting?
- Continuing with the 2009 (peanuts only) crop, CCC will pay for handling and associated cost, other than storage cost, for peanuts pledged as loan collateral. CCC will require the payment of the cost at loan redemption. If the peanuts are forfeited, CCC will pay the cost.

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the Farm Service Agency (FSA) measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

Farm Programs

Production Adjustment/Conservation/Common Provisions ~ Brett Martin, Chief

2009 Deadline for DCP and ACRE Enrollment

For 2009 only, the deadline to enroll into the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) is August 14. For future years, this date will be June 1. Failure to obtain needed contract signatures for either program could result in the farm being ineligible to participate for crop year 2009.

Crop Loss Reporting Requirement

If you have Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or NAP, for any crop in 2009 and future years, you are reminded that according to the NAP Basic Provisions you are required to report to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) any crop losses the earlier of 15 days after the disaster occurrence, the date of loss or damage to the crop or commodity becomes apparent to you, or 15 days after the normal harvest date. Failure to meet this reporting requirement will result in the claimed loss on the crop being denied.

In addition, if you decide to harvest a crop by a means other than what the crop was insured, then you must allow the FSA the opportunity to appraise the crop. This is very important for persons who purchase NAP coverage on hay. If you should decide to turn your cows out on your hay acres, and you do not notify the FSA of such then you could end up not being eligible for assistance. If you decide to graze your hay acres, you must establish areas of the hay acres that cannot be grazed so that an appraisal can be performed at the end of the growing season. Failure to do this will result in your application being denied.

FSA Clarifies Double-Cropping Practices for SURE Program

Implementation of the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program in Georgia has raised issues for those who double-crop program crop acres. FSA determines double crop combinations by county or region and all producers in the county or region are eligible for double-cropping consideration if that combination is followed. Crop insurance may determine a double-crop combination by county or region; however, insurance may not be available to a producer if a producer does not have a history of double-cropping.

FSA considers a practice as double-cropping if either of the following applies:

- the producer has crop insurance coverage on the subsequent crop and crop insurance determines it a double-crop practice
- the producer does not have crop insurance coverage on the subsequent crop, but the practice meets the definition of double-cropping in the county.

If the practice is considered double-cropping and the producer:

- has crop insurance coverage or timely filed for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) coverage on the subsequent crop, the subsequent crop is eligible for SURE benefits
- does **not** have crop insurance or NAP on the subsequent crop, then the producer must request equitable relief to be eligible for SURE.

In cases where a producer attempted to obtain crop insurance on a subsequent crop in a double-cropped county or region and was unable to obtain crop insurance, those producers are **not** required to meet the risk management purchase requirement unless the subsequent crop was eligible for NAP.

If the subsequent crop is an approved specific double crop in an approved double-crop county the producer must request relief, even if the producer does **not** have a history of double-cropping.

If relief is granted and the producer pays the \$250 relief fee, the subsequent crop becomes eligible only for SURE. The subsequent crop is **not** considered a ghost crop and does **not** receive crop insurance coverage or NAP coverage.

Georgia producers should contact their local county FSA office with questions concerning Georgia's FSA State Committee-approved specific combinations of crops that can be double-cropped.

Additional information about SURE and its relationship to double-cropping may be found at county FSA office or on the web at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_Notice/dap_308.pdf.

CRP Extension of Certain Contracts

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will offer certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants the opportunity to modify and extend their CRP contracts that are scheduled to expire on September 30, 2009.

CRP contracts with the highest environmental benefit or with potential for soil erosion will be selected. CRP contracts can not exceed 15 years in the aggregate and selected CRP contract holders will be offered a three to five year extension.

No general CRP signup is scheduled to be held this fiscal year 2009. However, participants may continue to enroll small acreages, including land expiring September 30, 2009 that was not selected for extension, into the Continuous CRP. Continuous CRP includes such practices as CP21, Filter Strips, CP22, Riparian Buffers and CP38C, Establish Pine Savanna.

For more information about CRP, please contact your local County FSA Office or visit FSA on the web at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Farm Loan Programs

David Laster, Chief

Emergency Loans Available

Emergency loans continue to be available for eligible family farmers in Georgia due to disaster types ranging from severe storms and tornadoes to drought and excessive heat. If you experienced a loss due to the disasters, please contact your local FSA office for applications and additional information. Both Presidential and Secretarial declared counties are eligible for FSA Emergency Loans. At the time of this writing, applications are being accepted under 5 declarations or declaration amendments.

The deadline for applying for emergency loan assistance is dependent on the date a county was designated. Applications must be received within 8 months of the designation date. Please see the “Important Dates for FSA Programs Calendar” in this newsletter for application deadlines. All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA Service Center for specific information concerning the application deadlines applicable to their county or counties.

Emergency Loan Assistance (EM) Questions and Answers

What is an emergency loan? *USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to flooding, drought, other natural disasters, or quarantine.*

What can I use emergency loan funds for? *Emergency loan funds may be used to:*

- *Restore or replace essential property;*
- *Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year;*
- *Pay essential family living expenses;*
- *Reorganize the farming operation; and*
- *Refinance certain debts.*

Who is eligible for emergency loans? *Emergency loans may be made to farmers and ranchers who:*

- *Own or operate land located in a county declared by the President as a disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as a disaster area or quarantine area;*
- *Are established family farm operators and have sufficient farming or ranching experience;*
- *Are citizens or permanent residents of the United States;*
- *Have suffered at least a 30-percent loss in crop production or a physical loss to livestock, livestock products, real estate, or chattel property;*
- *Have an acceptable credit history;*
- *Are unable to receive credit from commercial sources;*

- *Can provide collateral to secure the loan; and*
- *Have repayment ability.*

What requirements must I meet? *FSA loan requirements are different from those of other lenders. Some of the more significant differences are the following:*

- *Borrowers must keep acceptable farm records;*
- *Borrowers must operate in accordance with a farm plan they develop and agree to with local FSA staff; and*
- *Borrowers may be required to participate in a financial management training program and obtain crop insurance.*

Do I need collateral? *All emergency loans must be fully collateralized. The specific type of collateral may vary depending on the loan purpose, repayment ability, and the individual circumstances of the applicant. If applicants cannot provide adequate collateral, their repayment ability may be considered as collateral to secure the loan. A first lien is required on property or products acquired, produced, or refinanced with loan funds.*

What is the loan limit? *Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.*

What are the terms of an emergency loan? *Loans for crop, livestock, and non-real estate losses are normally repaid in 1 – 7 years; depending on the loan purpose, repayment ability, and collateral available as loan security. In special circumstances, terms of up to 20 years may be authorized. Loans for physical losses to real estate are normally repaid within 30 years. In certain circumstances, repayment may be made over a maximum of 40 years.*

What is the interest rate? *The current interest rate for emergency loans is 3.75 percent.*

What about application deadlines? *Applications for emergency loans must be received within 8 months of the county’s designation date.*

What do you mean by temporary assistance? *Borrowers who receive temporary assistance are expected to return to conventional credit sources. Emergency loans are a temporary source of credit, and borrowers are reviewed periodically to determine whether they can return to commercial credit.*

How do I obtain more information? *Further information on the emergency loan program is available from your local USDA Service Center.*

County Committee Elections

Committee Nominations Open June 15

The election of responsible agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer take part in this election because County Committees (COC's) are a direct link between the farm community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on committees help decide the kind of programs their counties will offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency county committee election representing producers in various Local Administrative Areas (LAA's) will be accepted from June 15 through August 3, 2009. Producers who are eligible to vote in these LAA's and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on their 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. A blank nomination form (FSA-669A) is enclosed in this newsletter and is also available at all local FSA offices and online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>

LAA's are elective areas. Elections are held each year to replace a member whose three-year term will expire. All counties will be holding an election for a person to represent different LAA's. Please review the list of LAA's per county, found on this page, that are eligible for election.

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters by November 6 and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by December 7, 2009. All producers are encouraged to participate. The county committee provides a local input on commodity price support loans and payments; establishes allotments and yields; conservation programs; disaster assistance payments and programs.

More information on the elections is available at the county office or online at the Website shown above.

IMPORTANT COC ELECTION DATES

June 15, 2009: Nomination period begins. Nomination forms (FSA-669A) are available from your local FSA Office.

August 3, 2009: Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA Office.

November 6, 2009: Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 7, 2009: Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office.

January 1, 2010: Elected committee members and alternates take office.

FSA Counts on You: Nominate and Vote!

Georgia LAA's Conducting Elections in 2009

County	LAA	County	LAA
Appling	3	Lee	2
Atkinson	1	Lowndes	1
Atkinson	4	Lowndes	3
Bacon	1	McDuffie	1
Baker	1	McDuffie	4
Ben Hill	1	Macon	2
Berrien	3	Marion	1
Bleckley	1	Marion	4
Bleckley	3	Marion	5
Brooks	3	Miller	1
Bulloch	2	Mitchell	2
Burke	2	Montgomery	2
Calhoun	2	Montgomery	4
Calhoun	4	Morgan	2
Candler	2	Oconee	1
Carroll	2	Oconee	3
Coffee	1	Peach	2
Colquitt	1	Peach	3
Cook	1	Pierce	1
Crisp	1	Putnam	3
Decatur	1	Putnam	5
Dodge	1	Randolph	2
Dooly	3	Randolph	3
Early	2	Screven	3
Effingham	3	Seminole	2
Elbert	1	Sumter	1
Elbert	5	Sumter	5
Emanuel	2	Tattnall	1
Floyd	2	Tattnall	3
Floyd	3	Taylor	1
Gordon	4	Telfair	1
Gordon	5	Terrell	1
Grady	1	Thomas	3
Hall	5	Tift	1
Hart	1	Toombs	3
Hart	3	Turner	2
Henry	1	Union	1
Henry	4	Union	2
Houston	2	Walker	3
Irwin	2	Walton	3
Jackson	5	Walton	4
Jeff Davis	3	Washington	4
Jefferson	3	Wayne	1
Jefferson	5	Webster	3
Jenkins	2	Webster	5
Lamar	2	Wilcox	1
Lamar	5	Wilkes	2
Laurens	3	Wilkes	5
Laurens	4	Worth	2

Producers are reminded when they have an address change due to 911 upgrades or relocation, to please contact your local FSA office to update your address.

Family Tradition

(Continued from page 3)

Global Berry Farms decided to be proactive and make certain that the fruit that comes out of our shed and others is going to be of the same quality. Fresh-packed produce is graded at the facility where the fruit is shipped, O'Berry said. Fresh fruit is randomly pulled from a pallet and graded. There is a monetary incentive to produce a higher quality fruit, she said. "That's been a big difference I have seen from going from tobacco farming to blueberry farming. There is an incentive for packing better quality fruit," O'Berry said. Once the price of fresh blueberries drops, blueberries are processed. Processed blueberries are frozen and are used in a variety of products, from muffins to purees.

The health benefits have pushed the fruit to the top of the consumers' want list. Blueberries are one of the highest rated health foods you can buy right now.

BY THE NUMBERS

13,000 years - Botanists estimate the blueberry has been around.

95 percent - The amount North America produces in world's commercial blueberry crop, according to the State of Georgia's Web site.

35 - Number of states where blueberries are commercially produced.

6 States - account for more than 90 percent of the highbush crop. They are Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, North Carolina, Georgia and Washington.

1 half cup of blueberries helps meet the government's recommended goal of two cups (four servings) of fruit a day for adults.

(This article was contributed by the Lowndes-Clinch-Echols-Lanier County FSA Office. Photos and excerpts of the article courtesy of *The Valdosta Daily Times*.)