



Georgia Farm Service Agency Newsletter

August - September 2009

United States Department of Agriculture

Volume 6, Issue 4

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

14-Aug Deadline to report spring/summer-seeded crops

14-Aug Deadline to certify and pay for final cotton acres for BWEP 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:

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

20-Jan-10 Designation S2867 in 25 counties due to freezing temperatures

22-Jan-10 Designation N983 in 51 counties (PHYSICAL LOSSESS ONLY) due to high winds and tornadoes

30-Jan-10 Designation N987 in 8 counties (SEVERE PHYSICAL LOSSES ONLY) due to tornado

3-Feb-10 Designation S2869 in 16 counties due to freezing temperatures

4-Feb-10 Designation M1840, Amend. 1 in 3 counties due to severe storms, flooding, tornadoes and straight-line winds

8-Feb-10 Designation S2871 in 5 counties due to storms, excessive rainfall, and flooding, followed by low temperatures, frost, and freezes

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



Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Names Jonathan Coppess as Administrator for USDA's Farm Service Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on July 9 named Jonathan Coppess as Administrator for the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

"Jonathan Coppess brings a wealth of agricultural policy experience to USDA's leadership team," Vilsack said. "His farm background will be invaluable as President Obama and I work to assure the soundness of the safety net for American farmers and ranchers."

Previously, Coppess worked for U.S. Senator Ben Nelson as his Legislative Assistant for Agriculture, Energy and Environmental policy. He joined Senator Nelson's staff in February 2006, and practiced law in Chicago for four years before returning to Washington to work on agriculture policy.

Coppess grew up on his family's corn and soybean farm in west-central Ohio, where his father and brother continue the seven-generation farming operation. He holds a bachelor's degree from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and a law degree from The George Washington University Law School. Coppess and his wife, Susan, have a nine-month old daughter. They live in the Washington, D.C. area.

The FSA administers and manages farm commodity, credit, conservation, disaster and loan programs through a network of federal, state and county offices. These programs are designed to help producers manage their business risks and improve the stability and strength of the domestic agricultural economy.

Secretary Vilsack Visits Georgia



Secretary Vilsack, left, shown with CED Sara Smith and District Director Chad Scruggs.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, following his rural community forum at the Long County Courthouse in Ludowici, stopped at the Farm Service Agency county office in Jesup.

The purpose of the community forum and his visit was, first, to share information about the work USDA is doing to revitalize rural America and, second, to ask local residents how USDA can help the community participate in today's economy. Vilsack spoke briefly and then took questions from farmers from across

the Southeast. Concerns focused on the economy, current and proposed USDA regulations and subsidies, and energy needs. Vilsack said rural America may hold the key to cutting dependence on foreign oil and strengthening the food market.



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

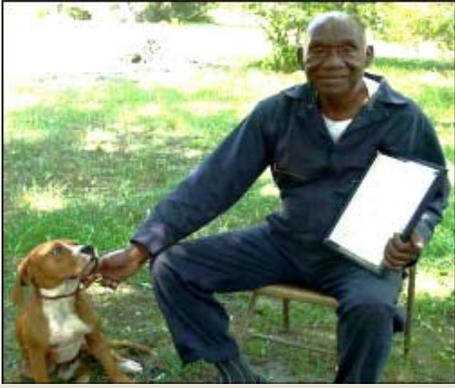
The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the main source for information contained in this educational newsletter. Eligibility and participation for all FSA programs is determined in accordance with FSA rules and regulations. Contact your local FSA Service Center to determine program eligibility.

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, audiotope, 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.

Johnson County Farmer Has New Hero



Mr. P. W. Wesley, a Johnson County farmer, is shown with his “Hero” dog. Hank is the dog’s name and saving a life is his game. At least that is what Hank did one day last October.

Hank follows Mr. Wesley everywhere

he goes, even to the fields, and this past October was no different. Hank followed Mr. Wesley to the tractor and on to the field. Mr. Wesley was going to hook up to a piece of equipment, but lacked a few inches connecting. Mr. Wesley got off the tractor and, standing beside it, reached over to bump the starter to edge the tractor forward. Instead the tractor cranked and took off, pinning his foot and running up his leg and over his body, rendering him unconscious and his body broken. Hank stayed by Mr. Wesley, licking him in the face until he regained consciousness. Once Mr. Wesley came to, Hank stood rigidly by his side, allowing Mr. Wesley to put his weight on him (Hank) and pull himself up. Somehow Mr. Wesley and Hank managed to get back home. An ambulance was called and Mr. Wesley was rushed to the hospital. Mr. Wesley suffered from 4 broken ribs, a broken sternum, lacerated liver, bruised lung and cracked bones in his neck.

This heroic act earned Hank second place in the “Dog of Valor” award, a national award from the Humane Society of the United States for an “extraordinary act of courage by heroically helping a person in need.”

Hank was given to Mr. Wesley by a grandson. Mr. Wesley wasn’t sure what to make of the dog at first, but now is very glad Hank is in his life and says Hank can follow him anywhere.

Mr. P. W. Wesley is an advisor to the Washington County Farm Service Agency’s County Committee which serves Washington, Johnson, and Hancock counties.

Lowndes County FSA Outreach

Approximately 70 producers from the Valdosta area recently attended an Informational Outreach Meeting put together by the Lowndes-Echols-Lanier-Clinch County Office of



USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Valdosta. Information pertaining to the 2008 Farm Bill, basic program eligibility requirements, farm loan programs, direct and counter cyclical payment programs (DCP), noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP), and the County Committee nomination and election process was presented to the group.

Terrie Wolford, County Executive Director of the Lowndes-Echols-Lanier-Clinch County FSA Office, expressed her appreciation to the Farm Service Agency employees who “put forth much time and effort into this meeting to present quality information to minorities, socially disadvantaged, and limited resource producers and landowners.” FSA employees presenting information during the meeting included Chad Scruggs, Terrie Wolford, Kyndal Haney, Judy Kight, Pamela Dennis, Cindy Andersen, and Teresa Bryan.

Also attending the meeting were representatives from the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service; Southeast Agricultural Coalition, Inc.; Fort Valley State University; and Congressman Jack Kingston’s Office.

Help Available to Stressed Farmers

In the past year, the economy, inclement weather, drought and other factors have hurt many farming operations around the country. These events pushed some farmers to the emotional breaking point. Watching their livelihood being threatened is difficult for farmers and ranchers and especially for those who care about them.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available to help. If you know a farmer or rancher who is under stress and is reluctant to ask for help, or if you just need to talk to someone, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Your call will be routed to the crisis center nearest you, where trained staffers are available 24/7. This nationwide service is free and confidential. Help is just a phone call away.

For more information, go to <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. This service is not affiliated with the US Department of Agriculture.

Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| From the Counties | 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

FSA Announces New Provisions for Loans and LDPs

The 2008 Farm Bill included several changes to the marketing loan and LDP (loan deficiency payment) provisions.

Beginning with the 2009 crop year, loans and LDPs will no longer be subject to a payment limitation. However, farmers with average adjusted gross nonfarm income in excess of \$500,000 are not eligible for marketing loan gains or LDPs. Those farmers with nonfarm adjusted gross income in excess of \$500,000 will be eligible for the loan program; however, the loan must be repaid at principal plus interest, or by commodity certificate (for 2009). Effective with the 2010 crop year, commodity certificate exchange will no longer be available.

Another major change, beginning with the 2009 crop, is that the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will no longer apply premiums and discounts to warehouse-stored loans at the time of loan making. Loan rates will be adjusted for premiums and discounts if the loan is delivered or forfeited to CCC in

settlement of the outstanding loan. This change does not apply to peanuts or cotton.

In addition, beginning with the 2009 crop year, CCC will no longer require federally or state-licensed grain warehouses to enter into a separate storage agreement contract with CCC in order to be eligible to store grain or rice pledged as loan collateral for a CCC loan. CCC may require a storage agreement on a case-by-case basis as deemed appropriate. These warehouse contracting changes do not apply to peanuts and cotton; therefore, warehouses storing peanuts and cotton must continue to enter into storage agreements with CCC in order to store CCC loan collateral.

Commodities stored in unlicensed warehouses (neither Federal nor State licensed) are ineligible for loan. In prior years, commodities could be stored in unlicensed facilities and a loan made if they were immediately redeemed from loan with commodity certificates.

Producers with questions regarding changes to marketing loans and LDP provisions may contact their local FSA office.

Livestock Disaster Programs Update

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, disease, wildfires, extreme heat and extreme cold. Eligible losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2008, and before Oct. 1, 2011.

At the present time, the software to process applications through the automated system has not yet been made available. However, the Federal Regulations were published on July 2, 2009 which will make LIP effective Monday, July 13, 2009. As this article is being written, there is no process in place to begin making payments; but it is anticipated this process will be in place later this fall. However, "manual" Notices of Claim and Applications for Payment can be accepted, and ARE REQUIRED in certain instances to be filed by the dates specified in the following chart.

The following table provides the final dates to file a notice of loss and/or application for payment for either 2008 or 2009 livestock losses.

| Date of Livestock Death | Final Date to File a Notice of Loss | Final Date to Submit an Application for Payment |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Calendar Year 2008 | Sept. 13, 2009 | Sept. 13, 2009 |
| Jan. 1, 2009 to July 12, 2009 | Sept. 13, 2009 | Jan. 30, 2010 |
| July 13, 2009 to Dec. 31, 2009 | 30 days after death is apparent | Jan. 30, 2010 |

It is extremely important that producers suffering livestock losses in calendar year 2008 come in to their local FSA office NO LATER THAN September 13, 2009, and file the required Notice of Claim and Application for Payment. Producers that suffered livestock losses in calendar year 2009 PRIOR TO JULY 13, 2009, must also file a Notice of Claim by the same date – September 13, 2009. The Application for Payment on 2009 losses can be filed up until January 30, 2010. Failure to file the necessary forms by the applicable deadline date could result in loss of program benefits.

There is still no word on when the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) will be announced and producers can sign-up for benefits. As stated previously, when LFP becomes available there will be news articles announcing the sign-up, as well as additional information provided in the Georgia State FSA Newsletter.

Farm Programs

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

Acreage Reporting Deadline

Because of extreme weather conditions many producers have not filed a 2009 acreage report. Producers may also need to request prevented planting or report failed acreage if applicable. Where the crop acreage deadlines have not passed for 2009, the final crop reporting dates are extended to **August 14, 2009**, with the exception of the Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP).

Producers enrolled in NAP are required to file an acreage report by the extended acreage reporting date but no later than 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest if that is earlier than the extended acreage reporting date.

Acreage reports filed after August 14, 2009, will require a late filed fee.

Additional information on acreage reporting is available at county Farm Service Agency offices or on line at www.fsa.usda.gov.

CRP/SAFE (State Acres For wildlife Enhancement)

The "State Acres For wildlife Enhancement" (SAFE) program was recently announced for Georgia producer participation in 117 counties in the Longleaf priority area. The project, "Restoring Native Pine Savanna," has a goal to enroll 4800 acres of 10 to 15 year-old pine trees expiring from Conservation Reserve Program contract September 30, 2009. CRP participants enrolling in this program will not have to forgo their CRP rental payment when thinning is performed. They will, in addition, receive CRP cost share assistance for carrying out the pre-commercial thinning as recommended by forestry.

Landowners can enroll by visiting their local FSA Service Center. To obtain more information contact your local FSA office or visit the FSA web site at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) came out of the new Farm Bill. The purpose of BCAP is to support the establishment and production of crops for conversion to bio-energy in project areas and to assist with the collection, harvest, storage and transportation of eligible material for use in biomass conversion facilities. Participants will be eligible for a dollar for dollar match, up to \$45 per dry ton for biomass that is delivered to a designated conversion facility.

For more information on BCAP, please contact your local FSA office or visit the FSA web site at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Foreign Landowner Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

2010 Nursery Crop Year and Application Closing Date

FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) application closing date for 2010 nursery is **September 1, 2009**. When low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs due to natural disaster, NAP can provide financial assistance.

The NAP coverage period and NAP year for 2010 nursery crops has been changed to June 1, 2009, through May 31, 2010. However, the 2010 NAP coverage will be retroactive to June 1, 2009. For those producers who obtained 2009 NAP coverage for nursery, and choose not to obtain 2010 continuous coverage, the 2009 NAP coverage for nursery will continue until September 30, 2009.

NAP coverage may be continued for each subsequent year for the same crop or crops, if the producer pays the applicable service fee by the next year's application closing date. To apply for continuous coverage, producers must pay the applicable service fee before the application closing date.

Producers considered as limited resource are not subject to annual fees. Eligible producers must apply for coverage of noninsurable crops and pay the applicable service fees at their local FSA office. The service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 per producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Contact your local office for more information or at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Farm Loan Programs

David Laster, Chief

FSA Loans – Helping to Ensure the Stability of Georgia’s Family Farms

Georgia FSA makes hundreds of loans each year to farmers who need a helping hand. Whether it’s a young person or a young family trying to buy their first farm or a veteran facing temporary adversity, FSA provides financial assistance that helps to ensure the well being of Georgia agriculture.

FSA lends money and provides credit counseling and supervision to eligible loan applicants who operate family farm size operations. A family farm size operation is generally considered to be one that a family can manage and operate by itself. FSA makes direct loans and also provides guarantees on loans made by eligible conventional lenders.

Under the Guaranteed Loan Program FSA guarantees loans made by eligible conventional agricultural lenders up to 95% of any loss. All loans must meet qualifying criteria to be eligible for guarantees, and FSA will monitor the lender’s servicing of the loan. Farmers interested in Guaranteed Loans apply directly with a conventional lender, who then arranges for the guarantee.

For those unable to qualify for a Guaranteed Loan, FSA offers Direct Loans. Funding for Direct Loans is more limited and applicants sometimes must wait until funds are available before they can receive a loan. FSA works with the applicant to analyze the situation, provide technical assistance, and tailor the loan to meet unique circumstances of the applicant. Loan funds can be used for a variety of agricultural purposes to assist the applicant achieve a viable farming operation.

In Georgia, FSA administers its Farm Loan Programs through 72 County Offices and 11 Farm Loan Offices. For Direct Loans, interested farmers can apply at the FSA County Office or USDA Service Center serving the area where the farming operation is conducted. For a Guaranteed Loan, interested farmers should apply to a commercial agricultural lender who participates in the FSA Guaranteed Loan Program. The lender then submits the loan proposal to the local FSA Farm Loan Office for consideration of a FSA guarantee. Farmers seeking more information on the availability of farm loans are encouraged to contact their local FSA office. FSA is an equal opportunity lender.

Loans Available To Rural Youths

FSA makes operating loans to eligible individual rural youths to establish and operate income-producing agriculture-related projects. The project must be of modest size, educational, and initiated, developed, and carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, or similar organizations.

Each project must be part of an organized and supervised program of work. The project must be planned and operated with the help of the organization adviser, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience in agriculture-related skills.

Each year, many young entrepreneurs take advantage of these loans and gain valuable business experience in the process.

To qualify for a loan, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- be a U.S. citizen (or permanent resident).
- be between 10 and 20 years old.
- live in a town of less than 50,000 people.
- be unable to obtain a loan from other sources.
- conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised work program.

These loans may be used to finance many kinds of income-producing agricultural projects. The loan funds may be used to buy livestock, seed, equipment, and supplies; buy, rent, or repair needed tools and equipment; and pay operating expenses for the project. To apply, the applicant must submit completed plans and budgets signed by the project advisor and parent or guardian along with the FSA application for loan assistance.

These loans have a maximum loan amount of \$5,000 (total principal balance owed at any one time cannot exceed \$5,000); have an interest rate which is determined periodically, based on the cost of money to the federal government. The loans will be secured, in addition to promissory notes, by liens on the products produced for sale and on chattel property, including livestock, equipment, and fixtures purchased with loan funds. The youth loans will have a repayment schedule which varies depending on the type project for which the loan is made.

For more information interested persons may contact any of the Farm Service Agency offices located in local USDA Service Centers throughout Georgia.

Loan Funds for Conservation Programs and Practices

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) have worked cooperatively to make USDA conservation programs more available and readily accessible to beginning, small, and limited resource producers. As producers move from initial conservation program contract development into the implementation stage, many face the inability to acquire capital investment for their cost-share portion needed

(Continued on Page 8)

County Committee Elections

Farm Service Agency County Committee Election

Overview

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 (USDA).

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers

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, 2009 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>

August 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms at the local USDA Service Center

November 6, 2009 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

December 7, 2009 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

January 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office

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.

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/elections>.

Nomination forms for the 2009 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2009.

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.

Don't Miss Out on Voting

Ballots will be mailed to voters by Nov. 6, 2009, and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by Dec. 7, 2009. Eligible voters must contact their local FSA county office before the final date if they did not receive a ballot.

Uniform Guidelines

USDA issued uniform guidelines for county committee elections to help ensure that FSA county committees fairly represent the agricultural producers of a county or multi-county jurisdiction, especially minority and women producers. Minority persons are African-Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asians, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders. The guidelines govern the FSA county committee election process and are designed to increase participation by minorities and women.

The following are just some of the specifics of the guidelines that are now in effect:

- If no valid nominations are filed, the secretary of agriculture may nominate up to two individuals to be placed on the ballot.
- County committees must annually review local administrative area boundaries to ensure the fair representation of minority and women producers in their county or multi-county jurisdictions.
- FSA county offices shall actively locate and recruit eligible candidates identified as minority and women farmers and ranchers as potential nominees for the county committee elections through outreach and publicity, including the development of partnerships with community based organizations.

(Continued on Page 8)

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.

FSA Loans – Helping to Ensure the Stability of Georgia’s Family Farms

(Continued from Page 6)

for contract implementation. Even with increased cost-share rates, the challenge of providing the upfront share may present an insurmountable barrier to full contract implementation.

FSA has several loan programs available that may help mitigate the upfront costs associated with USDA conservation program implementation. A primary objective of the FSA farm loan program is to assist small, beginning, and socially disadvantaged (minority and female) producers. The loan programs are not new and have been used successfully in conjunction with conservation programs in certain states across the country.

While collateral is required for the loan, and a business plan must indicate that the loan can be repaid, FSA loans can be used for various farm purposes such as farm improvements, which would cover conservation projects and practices, and payment of costs associated with land and water development for conservation use purposes. Loan funds may be used to finance the producer’s share of the project cost, and also as interim financing on the Federal cost-share portion paid upon completion of the conservation program project.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available on the FSA Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov, or by contacting your local FSA county office.

Farm Service Agency County Committee Election

(Continued from Page 7)

To read the guidelines in their entirety, visit the County Committee Elections page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>.

In addition to minority and women producers, USDA strongly encourages beginning farmers to actively seek a position on a county committee.

Role of Advisors

In addition to elected members, FSA county committees may also include advisors. Advisors are appointed to county committees in counties or multi-county jurisdictions that have significant numbers of minority or women producers and lack such members on FSA county committees. Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interests of minorities and women in decisions made by county committees. FSA state committees officially appoint advisors who are recommended by county committees or community based organizations.

For More Information

For more information about FSA county committees, visit a local FSA or USDA Service Center or the Web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>.