



Alaska FSA News

June 2007

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OF
AGRICULTURE**
Farm Service
Agency

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COC Election Nominations

From **June 15 through Aug. 1**, farmers and ranchers can nominate eligible peers as candidates for election in **LAA-1** and **LAA-2** of the Northern County Farm Service Agency County Committee, and **LAA-4** and **LAA-5** of the Southern County FSA COC.

This is an important time for Local Administrative Area communities, because county committee members make decisions that have significant effects on you and the area's agricultural sector as a whole.

For example, committee members make decisions on applications for federal farm program and disaster payments. Committee members play a vital role by helping local farmers and ranchers manage tough financial times and natural disasters.

County committee members make many other important decisions that affect local farmers and ranchers, such as whether haying and grazing should be allowed on Conservation Reserve Program land. Talk to a county committee member or the County Executive Director for details on the types of decisions county committee members make.

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet basic eligibility requirements. Contact the county office staff or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections> for details about candidate eligibility. Nomination forms can be obtained at the county office or online at the above address.

Remember, the nomination period runs June 15 through Aug. 1. Voting takes place in the fall. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters by Nov. 2. Dec. 3 is the last day to return voted ballots to the county office. Newly elected committee members and alternates take office Jan. 1, 2008.

Heads up: Producers in LAA-1/LAA-2 of the Northern County, LAA-4/LAA-5 of the Southern County.

A separate mailing with boundary description for LAA's up for election along with a FSA-669A is being sent for your convenience.

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the 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.

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

Preventing Fraud & Waste

The Farm Service Agency and Risk Management Agency are partners in preventing fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. In addition, FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to FSA or RMA.

Acreage Reporting

The timely filing of an acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a number of programs, including Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, as well as marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments.

To be timely, you must file an FSA-578 by June 15, 2007.

To be considered timely, acreage reports for:

- prevented planted acreage must be filed no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date for the applicable crop
- failed acreage must be filed before the disposition of the crop.

FSA will accept crop certifications from farm operators, farm owners, persons authorized by power of attorney and tenants and sharecroppers, for which they have a share.

Crop acreage reports from producers are accepted for multiple future applications.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

Low cost loans for storage facilities are available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, rice, soybeans and corn.

The seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Eligible facilities include new conventional-type cribs or bins and new and remanufactured

oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures.

All Farm Storage Facility Loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85 percent of the net cost of the storage or handling equipment, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment is also required. For details, contact the county office staff.

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

If you are a farmer or rancher who has participated in a farming operation for at least three but no more than 10 years, you may qualify for beginning farmer targeted loan funds with Farm Service Agency.

The program is designed to assist these farmers by providing direct and guaranteed loans when they are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources.

If you believe this program could be of benefit to you, please contact the county office staff for more information. Our loan officials will welcome your interest.

Youth Loan Projects

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other youth organizations. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the

Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien

- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Live in the open country or in a town of less than 10,000 people
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office. We'll help prepare and process the application forms and answer any questions you may have about the program. Remember, FSA is an equal opportunity lender.

Haying or Grazing CRP Acres

Haying or grazing Conservation Reserve Program acres may be permitted, but you need prior approval from the county committee, and you must have an approved plan. Acres may be hayed or grazed once every three years, and a 25 percent payment reduction is assessed for every approved acre hayed or grazed.

Haying and grazing is not authorized under managed or emergency provisions during the primary nesting and brood-rearing season, which for the Northern and Southern Counties are May 15 through June 25.

Detailed information is available from FSA county office staff.

Signing for Entities

To sign FSA forms for trusts, limited liability companies, cooperatives, partnerships or corporations, producers need a document on file at the county office saying you're authorized to sign for the entity. It could be a copy of the articles of partnership or articles of corporation or a valid power of attorney.

You also have to know how you're supposed to sign. In almost all instances, **when you are signing for an entity, your signature has to include "by" or "for,"** indicating you're signing in a representative capacity.

Remember, if you've established an entity for your operation, you can no longer sign forms and contracts as yourself. When you have signing authority for an entity, you have to sign forms on behalf of the entity.

If you have questions about the proper way to sign forms and contracts for your entity, contact the county office staff. We can review the records and help determine the acceptable signature for your situation.

Wetland Blue Dot Identifiers

Before the implementation of the FSA Common Land Unit (CLU) project, maps created for producers contained labels and delineations of Natural Resource Conservation Service wetland determinations. The move to using CLU and other digital data to create producer

maps brought about the blue dot to represent these wetland determinations. **A blue dot on a map provides no information other than the fact that a determination exists in the area.** The intent of the blue dot is simply to provide a wetland symbol on producer maps until a wetland layer, including delineations of the wetland area, can be completed by NRCS.

In response to concerns expressed about the use of the blue dot symbols, some changes will be made to how wetland determinations are identified on maps. Wetland types will be grouped into the following three categories referred to as Wetland Determination Identifiers on CLU maps:

- **"Restricted Use"** (W, CW, CW+YR, AW/W, GFW, GFW+YR, RSW, RSW+YR, RPW), which is represented by a **red octagon**
- **"Limited Restrictions"** (FW, FWP, CWNA, AW/FW, CWTE, TP, WX, MIW, MW, MWM, CMW, NI, OW, Easement), which is represented by an **upside-down yellow triangle**
- **"Exempt from Conservation Compliance Provisions"** (PC, NW, PC/NW, CC, NW/NAD, AW), which is represented by a **green square**.

All FSA producer maps will feature the following disclaimer:

"Wetland identifiers do not represent the size, shape, or specific determination of the area. Refer to your original determination (CPA-026 and attached maps) for exact wetland boundaries and labels, or contact NRCS."

Additional information on map wetland identifiers can be provided by either FSA or NRCS staff.

Foreign Investors Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Disclosure Act 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 country are required to report the transaction to FSA within 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, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in the real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Selected Interest Rates for June 2007

Farm Operating Loans — Direct	5.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.375%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.0%
Emergency Loans	3.75%

Dates to Remember

June 15, 2007	Last day to certify acres
August 1	Last day to Submit Nominating Petitions for COC Election

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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.