



Gratiot County Farm Service Agency Newsletter

May 2010

Crop Reporting

The annual reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. All cropland acres on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the following programs:

- Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program(DCP);
- Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE);
- Marketing assistance loans, including LDP's;
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP);
- Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

Form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by:

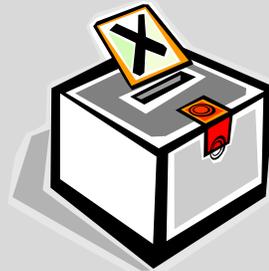
- **June 30, 2010** for fall seeded small grain crops (wheat);
- **July 15, 2010** for all crops, except fall seeded small grains.

Prevented Planting: report prevented planting no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage: report failed acreage at the time of disaster occurrence. This report will protect farm history and allows FSA to reconcile acreage requests from crop insurance companies. File any potential crop losses and/or failed crop acreage timely.

Reminder:

- **When you've finished planting, call for an appointment to report your crops -**



2010 COC Elections

For 2010, Local Administrative Area (LAA) 3 will be holding an election for the County Committee. LAA 3 includes Elba, Emerson, Hamilton, Lafayette, North Star, and Wheeler townships. Please consider nominating an eligible person that would impartially and accurately represent LAA 3 as a member of the COC. Nominations for candidates to run for the FSA county committee election will be accepted from June 15, 2010, through August 2, 2010. Please see the COC nomination form included in this newsletter.

-Attention Landowners-

FSA is finding that many of you are transferring your property into trusts. Regulations demand FSA to record revisions when land changes hands, even if it's from an individual to his or her trust. FSA needs proof of ownership to update farm records. This ensures that FSA program contracts list the correct landowner. **If you're to the point of recording deeds in your trust's name, contact FSA immediately.** Program payments will be delayed if information is not kept current.

Wetland Compliance

If you plan on clearing, draining, or dredging land, or perform tile maintenance of any kind, you need to file an AD-1026 with our office before you begin. Failure to do so could result in the loss of USDA benefits.

Gratiot County USDA Service Center

Gratiot County FSA
301 Commerce Dr.
Ithaca, MI 48847
(989) 875-3900 (phone)
(989) 875-4500 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee
Andrea Ackels
Scott Apple
Olan Humm
Doreen Slavik

**Gratiot County
Committee meets
the 2nd Wednesday of
each month**

Staff
Melissa Dettloff, PT
Shelly Dickinson, PT
Teri Hedrick, PT
Nancy Holland, PT
Sandy McCrimmon, PT
Jeff Pearsall, PT
Kay Perkins, PT
Tim Neuhardt, FLM
Steve Markley, CED
Field Reporters:
Ray Kindel
Dave Wright

Dates to Remember

June 15 – Deadline to submit forms CCC-927 & CCC-928 to IRS

June 30 – Deadline to certify fall seeded crops

July 5 - Office Closed – Independence Day

July 15 – Deadline to certify spring seeded crops and CRP; 2009 NAP production due to FSA office

August 1 - Deadline to request reconstitutions for 2010 crop year

Ongoing

-Continuous CRP & CREP
-Farm Storage Facility Loans



--Important CRP Information--



Maintenance

Contact the FSA office **prior** to conducting any maintenance on your CRP acres. CRP cover maintenance is the contract holder's responsibility and must be done according to the conservation plan, but remember, **mowing on an annual basis is not an acceptable method of weed and woody growth control**. If you're mowing each year, other options to control weeds must be explored. The COC has the right to deny maintenance requests if previous mowing has not adequately solved the problem. If you are to mow, mowing is allowed only on the portion of CRP in need of maintenance – not the entire contract acreage, unless approved. Also, remember producers may request COC permission to perform maintenance activities – such as spraying – outside the specified timeframe, but approval must be requested in writing and granted by the COC *before* you begin.

CRP Mid-Contract Management

If you have questions on CRP contracts that must have Mid-Contract Management performed in 2010 or 2011, contact the FSA office. Do not ignore letters you may receive addressing this issue. Mid-Contract Management is NOT maintenance. These are two entirely different CRP terms. Mid-Contract Management is not a basis for controlling weeds and woody growth on your CRP acreage. However, it must be performed on certain CRP contracts to ensure the original plant diversity, wildlife benefits, and protection of the soil and water resources. It includes duties such as interseeding, burning, and/or light disking. Available for cost-share and performed in the middle years of the contract, it promotes re-growth and continuing preservation of the plants listed in the conservation plan. If you have questions, refer to your CRP conservation plan or contact your FSA office.

Permissible Uses – Lanes and Paths

FSA is discovering CRP contracts with clearly defined paths or lanes across the contract acreage, especially on filter strips. Procedure states, "CRP acreage shall not be used as a lane or road under any circumstances." It also states, "Limited use of field margins and areas within a field enrolled in CRP is authorized ... only if this activity is conducted as part of the planting, cultivating, or harvesting of a crop *in an adjoining field*." The important thing for CRP participants to remember is: do not create lanes or paths on CRP acreage that will obstruct the growth of your cover *and* limit travel on CRP acreage to turn-around or headland type usage. Refer to your CRP Appendix or contact FSA with questions.

Wind Turbines

There are many questions from owners who could potentially have wind turbines on their land. FSA regulations call for an approval process which allows wind turbines on land under CRP contract. However, several steps must be taken to receive approval. 1) A request must be placed with the FSA office. 2) FSA will perform an environmental review, which requires approval by a grading authority. 3) If the environmental review is confirmed, the COC can authorize the installation of the turbine. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Access roads, transformers, substations, and other ancillary equipment will *not* be allowed on CRP contract acreage. By rule, this land is split from the contract and terminated, with the contract holder repaying all previous payments plus interest plus liquidated damages. Also, if the construction of the turbine causes damage to the CRP cover that is to remain under contract, the cover must be reseeded at the contract holder's expense. Contact FSA with questions regarding the construction of turbines on land enrolled in FSA programs.

Certification

Don't forget to report your CRP acreage by July 15th; this is done annually and necessary to obtain your payment in October.

Open Sign-Up for CRP

FSA understands there will be open CRP sign-up sometime this summer. As of yet, there is no beginning date or deadline. Please pay attention to future newsletters and press releases in local newspapers for this information.



NAP (Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program) Notes

- For producers with NAP policies, turn in your 2009 production for NAP crops to the FSA office by July 15th. **This includes producers with 2009 policies for alfalfa, pickles, and other vegetables.**
- Fall seeded crops, such as alfalfa, must have their 2011 NAP policies purchased by September 30, 2010

FSA-669A
(03-24-10) **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
Farm Service Agency

NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

1. NAME OF NOMINEE (<i>Type or Print Nominee's Full Name</i>)	TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY FSA OFFICE	
2. ADDRESS OF NOMINEE	4. INITIALS OF EMPLOYEE RECEIVING FORM AND DATE RECEIVED	
3. NOMINEE'S CERTIFICATION: <i>I hereby agree to have my name placed on the ballot, that I will serve if elected, and if there is a conflict of interest, I will resign such position.</i>	5. COUNTY Gratiot	
	6. LAA <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	7. STATE Michigan
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>I DO want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I DO NOT want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.</i>	8. NOMINATOR'S CERTIFICATION: <i>If this nomination is by other than self, the following eligible voter or representative of a community based organization hereby nominates the afore-named person to be a candidate in the next County FSA Committee election for the county.</i>	

3A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE	3B. DATE	8A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR	8B. DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Check here if nominee is a write-in candidate.</i>		<i>(If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required).</i>	

9. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

VOLUNTARY INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PURPOSES: The following information is requested by the Federal Government in order to monitor FSA's compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination against program participants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, handicapped condition, or age. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your nomination or to discriminate against you in any way.

ETHNICITY <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino	RACE (Choose as many boxes as applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White	GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

Complete the form as follows:

LAA 3: Elba, Emerson, Hamilton, Lafayette, North Star, and Wheeler

ITEM 1 Type or Print the nominee's full name. The nominee must be:

- A. Eligible to vote in the designated County FSA Committee election.
- B. Eligible to hold the office of County FSA Committee member.
- C. Willing to serve if elected.

ITEM 2 Enter the nominee's current address.

ITEM 3 The nominee must check one of the boxes to indicate a preference regarding the settling of tied votes.

ITEMS 3A & 3B The nominee must sign and date.

ITEMS 8A & 8B The nominator must sign and date. *(If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required.)*

ITEM 9 Completing this item is voluntary.

ALL FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY OFFICE OR POSTMARKED BY AUGUST 2, 2010.

NOTE: *The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246). The information will be used to obtain nominees for election to the County FSA Committee. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for County Personnel Records, USDA/FSA-6. Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination of ineligibility for nomination for election to the County FSA Committee.*

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0229. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of appropriate criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.

This form is available electronically.

Form Approved - OMB No. 0560-0229

FSA-669A
(03-24-10)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

This form allows individuals to nominate themselves or any other person as a candidate. If additional forms are needed, this one may be copied or may be obtained at the County FSA Office or obtained electronically at <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Each form submitted must be:

- A. Limited to one nominee.
- B. Signed and dated by the nominee in Item 3. Nominee must sign if willing to have his/her name placed on the ballot and agrees to serve if elected.

Note: Name shown on ballot will appear exactly the same as in Agency records.

- C. Delivered to the County FSA Office or postmarked no later than August 2, 2010.
- D. Signed and dated as a write-in candidate if elected as a member and willing to serve on the COC.

The County FSA Committee is responsible for reviewing each form to determine the eligibility of nominees. A person who files this form and is found ineligible will be so notified and have an opportunity to file a challenge.

Persons nominated should actively participate in the operation of a farm or ranch and be well qualified for committee work. A producer is eligible to be a County FSA committee member if the producer resides in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) in which the election is to be held and is eligible to vote.

Federal regulations may prohibit County FSA Committee members from holding certain positions in some farm, commodity, and political organizations if such positions pose a conflict of interest with FSA duties. The positions include functional offices such as president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer; and positions on boards or executive committees. Conflict of interest restrictions also apply to employees, operators, managers, and majority owners of tobacco warehouses. Questions concerning eligibility should be directed to the County FSA Office.

A candidate has the option to request that all voted ballots for an individual county committee election be returned to the respective State Office in lieu of being returned to the county office. This request must be in writing and submitted to the local County Executive Director prior to the announced end of the nomination period.

The duties of County FSA Committee members include:

- A. Administering farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office.
- B. Informing farmers of the purpose and provisions of the FSA programs.
- C. Keeping the State FSA Committee informed of LAA conditions.
- D. Monitoring changes in farm programs.
- E. Participating in county meetings as necessary.
- F. Performing other duties as assigned by the State FSA Committee

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program 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, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW. Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please contact (989) 875-3900, ext. 2.