



July 2009

Atchison County Newsletter

Atchison County USDA Service Center

Atchison County FSA
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Hours

Monday—Friday
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Duane Klute, Chairperson
Craig Heits, Vice-Chair
Julie Joesting, Member

Meets 2nd Wednesday of every month at 8:00 a.m.

Staff

County Executive Director
Corey Leshner

Farm Loan Manager
Bob Dreyer

Farm Loan Officer
Roger Uptergrove

Program Technicians
Nancy Daugherty
Pam Husing
Patricia Lane
Marilyn Thurnau
Karen Vette

Field Assistant
Robert Smith

I hope everyone is having a safe and enjoyable summer so far. As I've been around the county, the crops this year appear to be doing very well. With the exception of some wet areas here and there, most everyone I've talked to is very pleased with the good fortune we have had this year. Hopefully our good fortune will continue and there will be a bountiful harvest this fall.

Sign up for the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) and the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) continues through August 14, 2009. In regards to ACRE, public meetings were held this past month. No future meetings are scheduled prior to the August 14th deadline. With that said, if you would like to discuss ACRE individually or have a group and want me to come give a discussion about ACRE, do not hesitate to ask. It is important to realize that if you choose to enroll a farm into ACRE, signatures from all owners and operators on the farm will have to be received in the office by the deadline. There is a more detailed article concerning ACRE later in this newsletter.

Crop reporting is going well this year. The deadline to report acres has been extended to August 14, 2009. Producers are encouraged to call ahead so we can make sure we have your files ready when you arrive. Also, in addition to telling us what crops you have planted and where they are planted, you will need to be able to report the plant dates.

The deadline for County Committee Nominations is fast approaching. This year, nominations may be accepted from eligible voters residing in the townships of Lincoln, Tarkio, Colfax and Dale. All nominations must be received in the office by August 3, 2009.

CRP producers are reminded that the non-disturbance period to protect the habitat of ground nesting birds ends July 15. The enclosed article on CRP Management discusses haying and grazing options and mid-contract management practices.

Compliance and spot checks will once again be utilized during the 2009 crop year. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, loans, etc., for spot check and review, a nationwide selection of producers is used to achieve a statistical sampling of participating producers. Spot check selections are to be conducted based on a producer's participation in Conservation Reserve Program, Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program, Marketing Assistance Loans, Loan Deficiency Payment Program, etc. If you are selected for spot check, you will be notified.

Summer is always a busy time at the FSA office and I want to thank everyone for their patience especially during acreage reporting. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call.

Corey Leshner

2009 Crop Reporting

Acreage reports are required in order to be eligible for program benefits if you participate in DCP, ACRE, SURE CRP, NAP, or to apply for grain loans or LDP payments. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs.

When you report your Crop Acreage you must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. The reporting deadline for all crops and CRP acreage has been extended, *this year only*, to **August 14, 2009**.

You will need to know your planting dates when you report. Acreage reported after Aug.14 will be considered late filed and a measurement service fee (min. \$46/farm) will be charged for a field visit to verify physical evidence.

You must report your intended use of insured NAP crops the earlier of 15 days before normal harvest of the crop or its final reporting date. Your reported acres to crop insurance should match FSA's.

Production evidence for insured NAP crops must also be provided every year by the final acreage reporting deadline for the crop.

County Committee Elections

COC elections are held only once a year. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA selects one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee. Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election.

Nominations

Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee election will be accepted June 15 through Aug. 3, 2009. Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election, who participate in an FSA program, and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the 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. The nomination form, FSA-669A, is available on line at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce> or at your FSA Office. To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected. The completed nomination form must be returned to the county office by close of business on Aug. 3, or postmarked by midnight Aug 3, 2009

Voting

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 6, and must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Dec. 7, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 7, 2009. Agricultural producers of legal voting age can vote if they participate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm can also vote. No one can be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

Candidate Eligibility

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the following basic eligibility criteria:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services

For additional clarification about county committee elections, contact your local FSA county office staff.

Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) & Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE)

Sign-up for the 2009 Direct & Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program and ACRE enrollment have been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late filed application after that date. FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price. The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 Account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov>, followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

Average Crop Revenue Election

The ACRE program is an innovative alternative to the traditional farm safety net available through Counter Cyclical options of DCP. Many producers are uncertain of what ACRE is all about, not to mention whether or not it is a good option for their operation. ACRE works differently than programs authorized by previous farm bills. For one thing, FSA cannot tell you what your payment will be. The calculations can appear daunting and are contingent upon six variables; three of which will not be known until after you make your election decision. And if your decision is to participate in ACRE, you live with it through the 2012 program year. This includes a 20 percent reduction in direct payments, a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates, and no countercyclical payments.

ACRE provides revenue protection when national average prices and/or state farm yields cause revenue to fall below established benchmarks. It is possible that no ACRE payments will be issued to program participants. However, it is also possible that ACRE payments will be issued and those payments could far exceed the reductions. Acre payments are made when both state and farm-level triggers are met. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

It is important to make an informed decision regarding your DCP or ACRE program election. In-depth comparison information is available at the following USDA website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp>

CRP Management Reminder

CRP Producers are reminded that the non-disturbance period to protect the habitat of ground nesting birds begins May 1 and extends through July 15. **This means that no activity can be conducted on CRP during this time period including mowing, weed control, and management practices.** If there is a severe noxious weed problem in the field, producers can request approval from the County Committee to spot treat. As of July 16, permitted activity may resume.

Certain CRP acreages can be hayed or grazed every third year by filing a request at the FSA office prior to haying or grazing and paying 25% of the CRP rental rate fee.

If you participated in the Critical Use Feed Program in 2008, you are restricted from haying or grazing any acreage in that field or at a minimum twice the acreage actually hayed or grazed for the standard three year period.

CRP Mid-Contact Management Practices that may begin on July 16 are disking, burning warm season grass, and spraying warm season grass.

Please contact the office if you have any questions concerning management and operation of your CRP acreage.

Successor in Interest

Many FSA programs will allow payments to be made to heirs or successors when a program participant passes away. Additionally, contracts in programs such as CRP must be revised to reflect the successor(s) to a deceased participant's interest.

In the event of an FSA program participant's death, it is important that FSA be notified. Entities and joint operations that participate in FSA programs also need to notify FSA if a shareholder or member passes away. FSA benefits are reported to IRS and maintaining current, accurate records about participants is vital to ensuring that those payments are reported correctly.

FSA Farm Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,094,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth loans, loans to beginning farmers, and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants, are also available through FSA.

For detailed information about loan eligibility or the different available loan programs, just contact the county office staff for

Dates to Remember

August 3	Nomination Period Ends for County Committee Election
August 14	Crop acreage reporting deadline
August 14	ACRE sign-up deadline
August 14	DCP sign-up deadline
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program

Selected Interest Rates for July 2009

90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.50%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.625%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	3.25%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.50%

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