



## June 2011

### Coos-Carroll County USDA Service Center

4 Mayberry Lane  
Lancaster, NH 03584  
Ph: 603-788-4608, ext. 2.  
Fax: 603-788-2538

### Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### County Committee

Julie Hussey, Chair  
Eldora Farnsworth, Vice-Chair  
Jules Robinson, Member  
Richard Fortin, Member  
Wayne Cheney, Member

### County Office Staff

Patty Matte  
County Executive Director  
patricia.matte@nh.usda.gov  
Paulette Brendle  
Program Technician  
paulette.mckeeman@nh.usda.gov

### Website

www.fsa.usda.gov/nh

### Dates to Remember

<b>7/4</b>	Independence Day (office closed)
<b>7/15</b>	Crop reporting deadline
<b>7/15</b>	2010 Yield & Production Records Submitted
<b>7/27</b>	ECP sign-up deadline
<b>7/29</b>	2009 SURE deadline
<b>8/1</b>	COC Nominations due in County Office
<b>8/1</b>	Reconstitution Request Deadline
<b>9/5</b>	Labor Day (office closed)
<b>9/30</b>	NAP deadline for forage crops
<b>10/10</b>	Columbus Day (office closed)

## 2011 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, 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.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The goal is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and to represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers are wanted on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

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, 2011	The nomination period begins
Aug. 1, 2011	Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center
Nov. 4, 2011	Ballots mailed to eligible voters
Dec. 5, 2011	Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center
Jan. 2, 2012	Newly elected county committee members take office

### Who Can Hold Office

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

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a COC election
- Reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) in which the person is a candidate

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must 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

**We are currently looking for  
nominations for LAA # 1:  
Lancaster, Northumberland,  
Dalton, Whitefield and Jefferson**

### 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://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eFormsAdmin/FSA0669A\\_110331V01.pdf](http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eFormsAdmin/FSA0669A_110331V01.pdf)

Nomination forms for the 2011 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business Aug. 1, 2011.

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 at the office that administers a producer's farm records.

### 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.

### **FSA County Office Budget Crunch**

The FSA County Office's budgets are extremely limited this year, including our money for travel and postage. This has greatly impacted our ability to make farm visits. As such, we are encouraging all of our producers to visit the office to conduct business, and/or to correspond with us via phone, fax, or e-mail. We need help to keep your farm records accurate and up to date. Our office hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm - Monday through Friday or you can contact us at your convenience by sending us a fax, an e-mail, or voice mail 24 hours a day. Our office phone number is 788-4602; our fax number is 788-2538; and our e-mail addresses are listed on the front page of the newsletter. Please stop by the office or contact us after planting your crops to complete your 2011 Crop Reports.

### **Appeal Process**

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

## **Disaster Assistance**

The Farm Service Agency would like to remind crop and livestock producers throughout the state that have recently experienced severe damage from flooding, hail, high winds that FSA programs are available to assist with recovery.

FSA administers several important programs that help producers recover from disaster damage and livestock deaths. Among the key programs available to address impacts from disasters are the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program.

Fact sheets for all of these programs can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov); click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets.

We encourage all who have suffered a disaster due to the recent severe weather conditions to read the fact sheets and visit the FSA county office so they get a quick start in the recovery process.

## **Farm Reconstitutions**

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. To be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **Aug. 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

**Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

**Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

**DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

**Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

## **2009 SURE Sign-up**

Signup for the 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) will continue until July 29, 2011.

SURE is the disaster program that provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters. For producers to be eligible for SURE, they must have obtained crop insurance and/or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on ALL crops grown on the farm that are of economic significance. Those producers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource or Beginning Farmer do not have to meet this requirement.

A “farm” refers to all crop acreage in all counties/states that a producer uses. Producers must have suffered at least a 10% production loss on at least one crop of economic significance in order to be eligible.

If interested in signing up, you will need to report all acreage as well as provide production records, if not already on file. Call the office for more details.

## **2009 SURE Program Equitable Relief Policy**

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain catastrophic level crop insurance (CAT) on all crops in all counties, or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). FSA is currently processing applications for the 2009 SURE program. Some producers who missed the deadlines to purchase 2009 CAT and NAP policies, which might consequently not qualify for SURE benefits, may be eligible for “equitable relief”. The New Hampshire FSA State Committee has authority to grant equitable relief on a case-by-case basis for producers who unintentionally missed the 2009 coverage deadline. If granted equitable relief, farms are required to pay a \$250 per crop administrative fee. The farm would, then, be eligible for consideration under the 2009 SURE program. Normal SURE program rules will apply for farms granted equitable relief by the state committee.

## **Weather Watch**

If you experience weather conditions that damage your crops, or could potentially cause a low yield, please give the office a call. We need to keep track of weather conditions that have adverse affects on crops. Also, if your crops are covered by NAP, and you suspect a loss of production you are required to notify us within 15 days of the date of the disaster or within 15 days of crop damage becoming apparent. (Including grasses) Please help us help you, report damaging weather at 788-4602 ext 2.

### Adjusted Gross Income

USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

This ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet>.

### FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule. For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

## Crop Reporting

The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. 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. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Load Deficiency Payments.

The certification form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. **The producer certification deadline is July 15, 2011.**

**CRP & NAP Certification:** Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Crop acreage for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

**Prevented Planting:** Prevented planting is to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date. Failure to report prevented planting acreage could result in loss of benefits for the SURE program or possibly other disaster assistance programs.

**Failed Acreage:** Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

## NAP Requirements

Producers with NAP coverage must remember to complete the following program requirements.

**Timely file acreage reports** – The deadline is July, 15 2011

**NAP Production Reporting** – Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year of participation in NAP, you may provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. **If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date.** Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. We recommend producers submit production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.**

**File a Notice of Loss** – Notify FSA within 15 days of damaging weather event, or within 15 days of crop damage becoming apparent. (Including grasses). The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing the CCC-576 is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

**Notify FSA** – prior to completion of harvest for all hand harvested crops.

### Deadlines to Purchase NAP Coverage

September 1	Value Loss Crops and Garlic
September 30	Forage Crops
November 20	Perennial Crops
December 1	Honey & Maple Sap
March 15	Annual Crop Coverage (spring seeded)

## Hispanic and Women Farmers

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

**Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process, please visit:** [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov) or call 1-888-508-4429

**Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation, please visit:** [www.blackfarmcase.com](http://www.blackfarmcase.com) or call 1-866-950-5547

**Keepseagle – The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement please visit:** [www.IndianFarmClass.com](http://www.IndianFarmClass.com) or call 1-888-233-5506

## Did You Know?

You can keep up with the state FSA news releases, county newsletters, program announcements and program participation guidelines on the web by going to: [www.fsa.usda.gov/nh](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nh)

If you would like to receive our newsletter via e-mail, please contact us and we will be happy to add you to our e-mail listing.

Coos-Carroll County FSA Office  
4 Mayberry Lane  
Lancaster, NH 03584



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## **Emergency Loans Available to Assist Producers with Losses**

This spring's weather proved to be a challenge for producers. Flooding, excessive rain and severe storms resulted in a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Hillsborough, Cheshire, Grafton and Coos counties in NH. As a result of this declaration, emergency loan money is being made available as direct loans from the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Emergency Loans assist farmers who have suffered physical or production losses. For production loss loans, applicants must demonstrate a 30 percent loss in a single farming enterprise.

Applicants may receive loans up to 100 percent of production or physical losses. Loan purposes include operating and real estate, restoring/replacing essential property, production costs for disaster year, essential family living expenses, reorganization and refinancing certain debts. The maximum indebtedness under the Emergency Loan program is \$500,000. The current interest rate for Emergency Loans is 3.75%. The final date to apply is February 15, 2012. For more information, contact the NH Farm Loan Team in Concord at 603-223-6003.

## **Emergency Conservation Program**

Severe flooding in April and May have caused severe damage in Coos and Carroll Counties. Farms suffering severe land damage may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Coos-Carroll Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office in Lancaster, NH. Sign-up for ECP will run from June 27 – July 27, 2011.

Assistance may be available if the damage

- will be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- affects the productive capacity of the farmland
- will impair or endanger the land

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the average eligible cost of restoration measures. The following types of measures may be eligible: Removing debris from farmland and grading, shaping, releveling, or similar measures

Producers who have suffered damage to their land due to the April-May flooding may contact the Coos-Carroll FSA Office at 603-788-4602, ext 2 by July 27, 2011.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (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."