



## FSA Announces SURE Sign-up

Signup for the 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) began Jan. 10, 2011. SURE provides benefits for 2009 crop year farm revenue losses due to natural disasters.

A farm enrolled in SURE is eligible when either:

- a portion of the farm is located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration (USDA Secretarial Declarations only) or a contiguous county (all counties serviced through the Columbus office are eligible); or,
- the actual production is less than 50% of the normal production.

The Columbus Service Center will be hosting an informational meeting for interested producers Wednesday February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 am.

## County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Louis Parzenese (LAA 4) and John Hunter (LAA 3). John and Lou were re-elected to represent farmers on the county committee. Julia Levoch-Day has been elected to serve as the 1<sup>st</sup> alternate for LAA 4.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

## Producer Meetings

In an effort to keep our customers informed about program eligibility and requirements, the Columbus Service Center will be hosting a series of meetings in the coming months.

All meetings will be held at the Columbus Service Center at 10:00am on the dates below:

- February 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)
- March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Non-insured crop Assistance Program (NAP)
- March 16<sup>th</sup> – Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program,
- April 13<sup>th</sup> - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and other conservation programs.

## Farming Operation Changes

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

## FSA Office Burlington Camden Ocean Counties

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Columbus NJ 08022

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[www.fsa.usda.gov/NJ](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/NJ)

### Hours

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

### County Committee

George H. Adams Sr.  
Marilyn L Russo  
Louis Parzanese  
John H Hunter  
Ralph W Wainwright

### COC meets:

2nd Tuesday of Month

### County Staff

Nick Morolda CED  
Robert Maxwell FLM  
Jim Mellor PT  
Craig Christo PT  
Julia Coriarty PT





### **March 15<sup>th</sup> NAP Deadline**

Be sure to cover the following crops before March 15<sup>th</sup>.

- Beans
- Brussels sprouts
- Cantaloupe
- Celery
- Corn (insured)
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Honeydew
- Oats (insured)
- Okra
- Peppers
- Pumpkins
- Sorghum
- Soybeans (insured)
- Squash
- Sunflowers
- Sweet potatoes
- Yams
- Tomatillos
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon

NAP compensates producers that experience catastrophic losses that are weather related for covered crops. Producers that enroll in NAP must complete an acreage report and provide production after harvest.

Producers must report losses 15 days after the loss is apparent and may not destroy the crop until it has been appraised by FSA. Failure to do so will result in the ineligibility of that crop.

### **Foreign Buyers 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.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and 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 (FSA-153) 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 real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

### **Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance**

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

### **Special Accommodations**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

### **Controlled Substance**

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits.

Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

### **Power of Attorney**

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

### **Bank Account Changes**

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

### **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 staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

## 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.

## Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to starting thinking about filing taxes. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement.

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information.

## IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive CCC-1099-Gs detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on CCC-1099-Gs is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the producers' responsibilities to report income to IRS.

FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

## Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) is a federally funded program that helps producers reduce their risk when growing food and fiber crops, specialty crops and crops for livestock feed. These benefits are only available for crops for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is not available. Application for coverage must be filed by the applicable crop's application closing date.

Production records for all crops must be reported to FSA no later than the application closing date for the crop for the following year. FSA requires that any production reported in a loss year be verifiable according to Agency specifications. *NAP Losses must be reported within 15 days of loss.*

## Conservation Loans

Did you know that FSA has loans to help you implement your NRCS approved conservation plan?

Many farmers who need and want to implement conservation measures on their land do not have the "up front" funds available to implement these practices.

The goal of FSA's Conservation Loan (CL) program is to provide farmers access to credit to implement these practices. Please contact our office for more information.

Selected Interest Rates for January 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans - Direct	1.75%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct	4.5%
Limited Resource Loans	5.00%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	2.5-3.375%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.25%
Conservation Loan	4.5%

## Conservation Corner

FSA has many programs to help you meet your conservation goals.

### Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Through CRP, you can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP allows agricultural landowners and producers to install practices that protect water quality and combat erosion with 100% of the cost covered (50% federal cost share, 40% incentive payment, and 10% state cost share).

Aside from grassed waterways and buffers, CREP can also cost share for exclusionary fencing for livestock as well providing for alternate watering source.

### State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

SAFE provides cost share to protect and enhance wildlife habitat on private lands. Practices include, but are not limited to, establishing permanent cover, wildlife food plot, and weed control.

SAFE participants are eligible for cost share as well as signing, incentive, and annual rental payments (depending on the contract specifications).



# JANUARY 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	<b>10</b> 2009 SURE Sign-up Begins	11	12	13	14	15
16	<b>17</b> Martin Luther King Jr. Day <u>Office Closed</u>	18	19	20	<b>21</b> CSP NRCS, Conservation Stewardship Program Sign-up Deadline	22
23	24	25	26	27	<b>28</b> GRP Sign-up Deadline	29
30	31	<b>February 2nd</b> SURE Meeting 10:00 am				

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