



June 2009

# Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County News

## USDA Service Center

### Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County FSA

1317 S. Main Rd. Bldg. 3  
Vineland, NJ 08360  
856-205-1225 (phone)  
856-205-0691 (fax)

### Hours

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

### County Committee

Rita Muzzarelli  
Anthony Melora  
Florence Ale  
Sue Wheeler  
David T. Sheppard Jr.

County Committee meets  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of month

### County Staff

Angela J. Andreoli, CED  
Robert R. Maxwell, FLM  
Toni Brooks, FLO  
Ellen Schmidt, FLO  
Lori Tobin, PT  
Lorna Hofstetter, PT  
Ashlea Visconti, FLOT



June 18, 2009

## County Committee Elections

*"FSA Counts on You"*

Since COC elections happen only once a year, here is an election refresher. 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. In combined counties in some years, two seats may be up for election.

The Local Administrative Areas (LAA) that are having an election this year are LAA #1 & #3. These areas include the following:

### LAA # 1

Stow Creek	Greenwich	Hopewell
Upper Deerfield	Bridgeton	Shiloh Boro

### LAA # 3

Vineland	Buena	Buena Vista
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### Election Timetable

June 15 Nomination period begins.  
 Aug. 3 Deadline to submit nomination forms.  
 Nov. 6 Ballots are mailed to eligible voters.  
 Dec. 7 Deadline to return completed ballots to FSA county office.  
 Jan. 1, 2010 New committee members and alternates are installed.

### 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 and who participate or cooperate 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 at the county office or may be downloaded from [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsr\\_oom&subject=landing&topic=cce](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsr_oom&subject=landing&topic=cce).

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 the 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 or cooperate 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 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 felony
  - Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

### Meetings

Meetings are held once a month. At this time they are the second Wednesday of the month.  
**November- March 1:00 pm**  
**April- October 7:00 pm**

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

### 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. If you want a crop loan, a power of attorney form will need to be completed for husband and wife, if both do not come into the office to sign the forms on the day the loan is disbursed.

## DCP & ACRE Signup Deadline

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications. Signup in the ACRE option is also available through August 14, 2009.

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 will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this online 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.

## Crop Reporting

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres 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, Average Crop Revenue Election, marketing assistance loans, Loan Deficiency Payments, Conservation Reserve Program and the Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program.

Crop reported on form FSA-578, "Report of Acreage", must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acres by July 15<sup>th</sup> for most crops.

### **Prevented Planting:**

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

### **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.

Please call the office if you have questions about the reporting deadlines for the type of crops you grow.

## 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. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

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

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

## Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are "constituted" to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 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 per-

sons. 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 re-constitution is initiated in the system.

## 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 you participated in NAP, you can 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. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit production records as soon as harvest is complete. At this time 2008 and prior years production records must be submitted by July 15, 2009 in order to be used for your 2009 APH. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date, which in most cases is July 15<sup>th</sup>.**

## Timely Filing of Loss

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 a Notice of Loss is required for ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (notice of loss) in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

## Changes in Payment Limitations

The payment limitation provisions over the last 39

years have been expanded to more programs. Some of the changes in this area are listed below.

### **New forms for 2009 and subsequent years**

Anyone that plans to participate in 2009 programs is required to submit a completed CCC-902, CCC-926, and CCC-901, if applicable, for payment eligibility and payment limitation purposes. The form used prior to 2009 was named CCC-502.

### **Another change for 2009, all must make a contribution in an entity**

All partners, stockholders, or members with an ownership interest in the legal entity must make a contribution, whether compensated or **not** compensated, for active--\*

- personal labor,
- active personal management,
- or a combination of active personal labor and active personal management to the farming operation;

\*Note: there are exceptions for spouses.

## FSA Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman shall sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe  
For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from an eligible parent  
Note, by signing the applicable document, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc.
- When signing on one's behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form, or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc
- FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Examples of documents **not** approved for FAXED signatures include:



- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- NAP actual production history and approved yield record
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase
- Financing statement
- UCC financing statement
- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office
- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities
- All members of a general partnership must sign for the general partnership unless an individual is authorized to act on the behalf of the general partnership and bind all members
- Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office
- Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts shall consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.

Dates to Remember	
June 15	COC nominations period opens
July 3	Office Closed- Independence Day
July 15	Reporting deadline for most crops except small grains
July 15	Last day to report prior years production for 2009 APH
August 1	NAP closing for Strawberries
August 3	Last day to file COC election nomination forms
August 14	DCP Signup Deadline
September 1	NAP closing for Christmas trees, Fin Fish, Flowers, Grass (SOD) & Nursery
September 7	Office Closed- Labor day
September 30	NAP Closing for Barley, Clover, Grass, Mixed Forage, Rye & Wheat
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program

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<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj>

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