



June 2010

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

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

County Committee meets
2nd 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
Dawn Freeman, PT
Ashlea Visconti, FLOT
Kelly Peterson, PT



June 16, 2010

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 Area (LAA) that is having an election this year is LAA #5. This area includes the following:

Cape May County	Maurice River	Estell Manor
Corbin City	Egg Harbor	Galloway
Egg Harbor City	Somers Point	Linwood
Northfield	Pleasantville	Absecon
Longport	Margate	Ventnor
Brigantine	Port Republic	Atlantic City

Election Timetable

June 15 Nomination period begins.
 Aug. 2 Deadline to submit nomination forms.
 Nov. 5 Ballots are mailed to eligible voters.
 Dec. 6 Deadline to return completed ballots to FSA county office.
 Jan. 1, 2011 New committee members and alternates are installed.

Nominations

Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee election will be accepted June 15 through Aug. 2, 2010. 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.](#)

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. 2, or postmarked by midnight Aug. 2, 2010.

Voting

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 5, and must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Dec. 6, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 6, 2010. 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 1:30 pm

April- October 7:00 pm

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



Tree Assistance Program Signup

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) signup for orchardists and nursery tree growers has begun at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices.

TAP provides help to orchardists and nursery tree growers who produce trees, bushes and vines for commercial purposes, to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged or destroyed by natural disasters. The 2008 Farm Bill expanded eligibility to include Christmas tree and nursery tree growers that were ineligible under prior legislation. Trees grown for pulp or timber are not eligible.

To be eligible producers must have suffered more than a 15 percent death loss due to the natural disaster after adjustment for normal mortality. TAP is a cost-reimbursement program, with payments covering up to 70 percent of replant costs and 50 percent of pruning, removal and other salvaging costs for replacing or salvaging damaged trees.

Producers can receive assistance for up to 500 acres of trees, bushes or vines. Producers must also have purchased a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or for 2008, obtained a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement through the buy-in provision. Eligible losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2008, and before Oct. 1, 2011.

For more information on the new TAP program, contact your county FSA office or the website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Transition Incentives Program

The Transition Incentives Program (TIP) was created to encourage retired or retiring owners or operators to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

TIP sign up began on Monday, May 17, 2010. If all program requirements are met, TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the date of the expiration of the CRP contract, provided the transition is not to a family member.

To be eligible, TIP requires that the retired or retiring farmer or rancher:

- Have land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that is in the last year of the contract.
- Agree to allow the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher make conservation and land improvements.
- Agree to sell, or have a contract to sell, or agree to long-term lease (a minimum of 5 years) the land under CRP contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher by Oct. 1 of the year the CRP contract expires.

Generally, TIP only applies to contracts that expire on September 30, 2010, or later. However, retired or retiring owners or operators with CRP contracts that expired on September 30, 2008, and September 30, 2009, may be eligible to enroll in TIP. To learn more about this program, producers interested in applying and participating in TIP should visit their USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office or www.fsa.usda.gov

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, contact your local FSA office.

Compliance

Compliance and spot checks will once again be utilized during the 2010 crop year. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, deficiency 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, Loan Deficiency Program, etc.



State and county offices shall view and print their producer spot check lists as posted on the designated web site. If an entity is selected from the national database that is no longer farming or participating in the 2010 crop year, a notation shall be made on the spot check list. For more information about the new spot check selection procedure, feel free to contact your local office for additional clarification.

Special Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

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 needed. 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 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.

Controlled Substances

Program participants convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for any and all program payments and benefits. If convicted, the participant shall be ineligible for direct and counter-cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible:

- for up to 5 years after the first conviction
- for up to 10 years after the second conviction
- permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants convicted of federal or state offense for the possession of a controlled substance shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits, as follows:

- up to 1 year upon the first conviction
- up to 5 years after a second or subsequent conviction.

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 2009 and prior year's production records must be submitted by July 15, 2010 in order to be used for your 2010 APH. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date, which in most cases is July 15th.**



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.

Take a new look at CSP

USDA has announced the release of new rules for NRCS' Conservation Stewardship Program, known as CSP. In addition, the deadline for submitting applications to local NRCS field offices has been extended to **June 25th**. Visit the NRCS national website at www.nrcs.usda.gov for details.

Highlights to note:

- Increased opportunity for applicants, more attractive financial incentives and payment options, and a split payment structure.
- Higher payment limit for joint operations has increased to \$80,000 for annual payments and to \$400,000 for the term of the contract.
- New minimum payment of \$1,000 for socially disadvantaged, beginning and historically underserved producers.
- Land designated as "pastured cropland" with higher payments.
- Enhancement "bundles" that merit higher ranking scores.
- Grass and legumes are now part of resource-conserving crop rotations.

Dates to Remember	
June 15	COC nominations period opens
July 5	Office Closed- Independence Day
July 15	Reporting deadline for most crops except small grains
July 15	Last day to report prior year's production for 2009 APH
August 1	NAP closing for Strawberries
August 2	Last day to file COC election nomination forms
September 1	NAP closing for Christmas trees, Fin Fish, Flowers & Grass (SOD)
September 6	Office Closed- Labor day
September 30	NAP Closing for Barley, Clover, Grass, Mixed Forage, Rye & Wheat
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program

Visit our Web site at
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj>

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