



October 2011

Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County News

USDA Service Center

Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County FSA

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Hours

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

County Committee

Anthony Melora
Florence Ale
David T. Sheppard Jr.
Charles Muzzarelli Sr.
Lori Kertz

County Committee meets
2nd Wednesday of month

County Staff

Angela J. Andreoli, CED
Robert R. Maxwell, FLM
Ellen Schmidt, FLO
Lori Tobin, PT
Lorna Hofstetter, PT
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September 27, 2011

A Message From Secretary Vilsack

Some recent news stories have focused on suspicions and rumors about the Obama administration’s work on agriculture. The truth is that the President, EPA Administrator Jackson and I are listening to farmers, ranchers and producers so we can be the best possible partner for successful operations. These efforts are helping farmers enjoy some of the best incomes they have seen in decades.

Sadly, rumors and misconceptions have become the norm, not the exception, especially when it comes to regulations and how they might affect our nation’s producers.

First, it was that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was considering treating spilled milk like an oil spill. Not true. And in terms of water regulations, EPA has made it clear that recent rules do not seek to regulate land that occasionally ponds during heavy rains.

Regulation of farm dust is another frequently repeated myth, based on a congressionally-mandated review that the EPA has conducted every 5 years for decades. We all know you can’t farm without dust. And EPA has no plans to propose stricter standards.

And the Department of Transportation announced just last week that it has no intention of proposing any new regulations or rules on the transport of agricultural products, farm machinery, or farm supplies to or from a farm.

Perhaps more importantly, the Obama Administration has worked to be the most accessible and collaborative in history. The President and I are listening to farmers, ranchers and other producers and actively collaborating across the federal government to help everyone understand the facts of American agriculture.

I maintain a regular dialogue with Lisa

Jackson at EPA and we even visited farms in Iowa together. The collaborative partnership we enjoy is reflected in our policies: pursuing common-sense standards that will give farmers a seat at the table and let them make the decisions they feel are best for their own operations.

One result of this sort of collaboration is that in 2009 and 2010, the federal government issued fewer new rules than it did in 2007 and 2008.

As you hear from producers about their concerns, I know you will continue to be helpful in providing them with the information they need to help their operations succeed, and not to get caught up in rumor or exaggeration. And you should urge folks with additional questions to contact the EPA directly, where they should be able to get further help in separating fact from fiction.

EPA and USDA understand that if we are going to solve the major environmental challenges of our time – combating climate change, reducing soil erosion, and ensuring an ample supply of clean water and healthy food for our families – farmers must help lead the way.

NAP Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

The remaining application deadline dates for 2012 coverage are as follows:

11/20/2011- Apples, Apricots, Blueberries, Caneberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Grapes, Honey, Nectarines, Onions, Peaches, Pears,

Plums, Scallions & Shallots
12/31/2011- Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Greens, Herbs, Horseradish, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Parsnip, Peas, Potatoes, Radishes, Rhubarb & Turnips
3/15/2012- Beans, Brussel Sprouts, Cantaloupe, Celery, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Honeydew, Oats, Okra, Peppers, Pumpkins, Sorghum, Sorghum Forage, Soybeans, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Watermelon & Yams
5/1/2012- Nursery (**2013 coverage**)

Some of these crops are actually covered by independent crop insurance agents. This will vary by county.

The following crops are covered by independent crop insurance agents for these counties:

Atlantic County- Apples, Blueberries, Corn, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Nursery, Peaches, Potatoes, and Soybeans

Cape May County- Corn, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Nursery, Processing Beans and Soybeans

Cumberland County- Apples, Barley, Corn, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Nursery, Peaches, Potatoes, Processing Beans, Soybeans, Tomatoes, and Wheat

Producers who already have coverage on 2011 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2012, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. A new CCC-471, application for coverage is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage of the same crop or crops.

Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) or delete a crop(s) from the previous year's coverage or change crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee.

Producers with 2011 NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:

Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other

means of determining quantities of hay are required.

File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc.

For more information on NAP coverage please contact the office.

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.

Actively Engaged

USDA has rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by the FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and

- The total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members cannot exceed \$40,000.

Spousal Signatures

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.

2011 ELAP and LIP Sign-Up

The USDA Farm Service Agency's Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) has sign-up deadlines approaching.

Fact sheet for these programs can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov; click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets.

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

Both ELAP and LIP sign-ups require a Notice of Loss filed the earlier of:

- 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the participant.
- Oct. 31, 2011.
- or no later than January 30, 2012.

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 contact:

- **Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:**

www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429.

- **Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:**

www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547.

- **Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:**

www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506.

County Committee Elections

Be watching your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters starting on November 4, 2011. If, for some reason, you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office. Completed and signed ballots will be due back in the county office by the close of business on December 5, 2011.

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 cannot 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 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.

2011 DCP Final Payments

Final DCP payments for 2011 participants will be issued sometime after October 1, 2011. Producers who received an advance payment will be paid the balance they are due. Those who did not take an advance will be receiving their full payment amount. These payments will be deposited directly into personal bank accounts.

If there are any unearned payments, Commodity Credit Corporation will automatically subtract those amounts from the final Direct and Counter-cyclical Program payments you are about to receive.

| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------|---|
| October 10 | Office Closed- Columbus day |
| November 11 | Office Closed Veteran's Day |
| November 20 | NAP closing for Apples, Apricots, Blueberry, Caneberry, Cherry, Cranberry, Grapes, Honey, Nectarines, Onions, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Scallions & Shallots |
| November 24 | Office Closed Thanksgiving Day |
| December 26 | Office Closed Christmas Day |
| December 31 | NAP closing for Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Greens, Herbs, Horseradish, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Parsnip, Peas, Potatoes, Radishes, Rhubarb & Turnips |
| January 2 | Office Closed New Years Day |

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

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