



April 2012

## Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County News

### USDA Service Center

**Atlantic/ Cape May/  
Cumberland County FSA**  
1318 S. Main Rd. Bldg. 5A  
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  
Charles Muzzarelli Sr.  
Lori Kertz  
James Wenger

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

### County Staff

Angela J. Andreoli, CED  
Robert R. Maxwell, FLM  
Ellen Schmidt, FLO  
Matthew Pavone, FLO  
Lori Tobin, PT  
Dawn Freeman, PT



03/28/2012

### NAP Production Reporting

**P**roduction 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 and verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2011 production records as soon as possible so we may update your file.

***All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date, which is July 15th.***

### Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP)/ Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE)

**D**CP contracts are available for the 2012 growing season to producers that operate farms with base acreage (history of reporting grain). If you would like to enroll in ACRE instead of DCP, please call or visit the office. You can sign up now until **June 1, 2012**. Payments will be issued in October. Payments are made on 83.3% of base acreage times the payment yield, the payment rate and the producer share. (ACRE direct payments are reduced by 20%)

We are prohibited from making payments on farms with 10 or fewer acres of crop base. (Crop base acres are not actual acres, but a history of crops reported to our office between 1998 and 2001 or prior.) If you have a farm(s) in this category, you may combine your farm with 10 base acres or less with another farm that has base acres to increase the amount of base to over 10 acres. If you

do not own the farm, you will need to get the owner's signature on our reconstitution form in order to do this. If your farm is reconstituted after the sign up deadline, the contracts for the new resulting farm(s) must be signed within 30 days. All producers on a farm must designate their shares on the contract (CCC-509). The contract must be revised if there is a successor in interest. In order to be eligible, all forms must be on file, including an AD-1026, CCC-902, CCC-931 and any other applicable forms.

Any crop may be planted on DCP cropland in excess of the base acres on a farm. Our area is designated as a double cropping region which means a fruit or vegetable (FAV) may be planted on base acreage enrolled in DCP without violation or payment reduction if planted before or after a covered commodity. Planting of a FAV on base acreage (when not double cropped with a covered commodity) will result in payment reduction and possible violation if no FAV history is present on the farm or with the grower.

The ACRE program provides grain producers an option to protect against declines in market revenue. Producers who elect and enroll a farm in ACRE agree to: (1) forgo counter-cyclical payments, (2) a 20% reduction in direct payments, and (3) a 30% reduction in the marketing assistance loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm. You must annually report the farm's crop acreage and submit production reports by farm number. Eligible commodities for ACRE payments include: Corn, Soybeans, Wheat, Oats, Barley and Grain Sorghum. ACRE payments are issued when both the actual State and Farm Revenues fall below the State and Farm ACRE Guarantees. Benchmark Farm Yields will be established using production evidence and/or crop insurance yields. When the ACRE payment acreage ex-

ceeds the total base acreage on the farm, you must choose the number of payment acres and commodity (not to exceed the total base on the farm). Once enrolled in ACRE on a farm, you cannot switch back to DCP through 2012. ACRE payments, if triggered, will be made one year later in October 2013, after the end of the marketing year. Please call for more details.

### **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)**

The sign-up for 2010 losses runs through **June 1, 2012**. The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop year 2010. SURE is available to eligible producers on:

- Farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties, that have incurred crop production or quality losses, or both, and includes all crops grown by a producer nationwide, except grazed crops.
- Any farm in which, for the crop year, the actual production on the farm because of disaster-related conditions is 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

### **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:** [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov) or call 1-888-508-4429
- **Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:** [www.blackfarmercase.com](http://www.blackfarmercase.com) or call 1-866-950-5547
- **Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:** [www.IndianFarmClass.com](http://www.IndianFarmClass.com) or call 1-888-233-5506

### **FSA Adopting GovDelivery**

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation. Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will

provide notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail.

FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars.

County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

Producers can now subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>.

### **Bank Account Changes**

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. For timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA office if the 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.

### **Farm Loan Programs**

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000. This makes the maximum combination of direct and guaranteed loan indebtedness \$1,514,000.

The one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans has increased from 1 percent to 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan, for loans obligated after October 1, 2011.

### **CRP General Sign-Up**

There is a four-week Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup which began on March 12, 2012 and ends on April 6, 2012.

CRP is a voluntary program available to agricultural pro-

ducers to help them use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and develop wildlife habitat. In return participants receive rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. Producers with expiring contracts and producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP. Producers also are encouraged to look into CRP's other enrollment opportunities offered on a continuous, non-competitive, signup basis. For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or go online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

### **New Continuous CRP Initiative**

FSA has announced a new conservation initiative to protect up to 750,000 acres of the nation's most highly erodible croplands. This initiative will assist producers with targeting their most highly erodible cropland (land with an erodibility index of 20 or greater) by enabling them to plant wildlife-friendly, long-term cover through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Producers can enroll land on a continuous basis beginning this summer at their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office. With the use of soil survey and geographic information system data, local FSA staff can quickly determine a producer's eligibility for the initiative.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office or visit FSA's website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp) for additional information regarding CRP.

### **Actively Engaged**

USDA has amended the 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 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 when 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 by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

### **Acreage Reporting**

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline on small grains and a July 15<sup>th</sup> deadline on all other crops.

Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the **earlier** of May 31<sup>st</sup> for small grains and July 15<sup>th</sup> for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

### **BCAP Project Area Sign-up**

Applications are being accepted for the USDA Farm Service Agency's next round of Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) Project Areas. Proposals will be accepted until April 23, 2012.

BCAP provides incentives to farmers and forest landowners to grow non-food crops to be processed into biofuels. Because most energy crops are perennial and take time to mature before harvest, BCAP is designed so sufficient quantities of feedstock will be available to meet future demand. Since these crops can grow where other crops cannot, it provides farmers new opportunities to diversify into more markets.

The BCAP Project Areas where these crops are grown will be selected from proposals producers or biomass facilities submit to FSA. The Request for Proposal and

additional information can be found at:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap>.

You may contact the local FSA office for more details.

### **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 future.

### **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, contact any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
April 6	General CRP sign up ends
April 23	BCAP sign up ends
May 1	RMA Nursery Deadline for 2013
May 28	Office Closed- Memorial Day
May 31	Reporting deadline for Small grains
June 1	Sign up deadline for SURE 2010
June 1	2012 DCP Enrollment closes
July 4	Office Closed- Independence Day
July 15	Reporting deadline for all crops except small grains
July 15	Last day to report prior year production for 2011 NAP APH's
August 1	NAP closing for Strawberries
September 1	NAP closing for Christmas trees, Fin Fish, Flowers & Grass (SOD)
September 3	Office Closed- Labor Day
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program

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

### **Civil Rights/Discrimination Complaint Process**

As a participant or applicant for programs or activities operated or sponsored by USDA you have a right to be treated fairly. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, you may file a discrimination complaint. The complaint should be filed with the USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights within 180 days of the date you became aware of the alleged discrimination. To file a complaint of discrimination, write 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.