



May 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

### Staff

Angela Andreoli, CED  
Robert Maxwell, FLM  
Ellen Schmidt, FLO  
Matt Pavone- FLO  
Lori Tobin PT  
Dawn Freeman, PT



April 30, 2012

## 2012 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, large or small operation. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and to represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

### Election Period

June 15, 2012 - The nomination period begins.

Aug. 1, 2012 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center

Nov. 5, 2012 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters  
Dec. 3, 2012 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

Jan. 1, 2013 - Newly elected county committee members take office

### Who Can Hold Office

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 Local Administrative Area (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 other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services

### Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sa0669a\\_commiteelectform.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf)

Nomination forms for the 2012 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business **Aug. 1, 2012.**

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate.

Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are

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filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

### **Who Can Vote**

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to 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 of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

### **2012 DCP/ACRE Signup Continues**

Enrollment for the 2012 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program has begun and will continue through **June 1, 2012**.

USDA urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up for DCP, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2012 DCP or ACRE contract.

### **SURE Signup**

Signup for the 2010 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments program (SURE) began earlier this year. The SURE 2010 program is for those who suffered crop production losses during crop year 2010.

Producers have until June 1, 2012 to apply. If you are unsure if you are eligible please call the office at 856-205-1225 ext. 2.

For more information on the SURE program, please visit the county office or go online to: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

### **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.

### **E-File**

Don't have time to visit your local office to complete and submit a form? You may be able to do it online. You can use online services for a variety of USDA service center programs including finding and printing forms 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Creating an E-Authentication account will allow you access to an even wider range of USDA applications.

Please call the office for more information.

### **Farm Loans Available**

There are several types of Farm Loans available from the Farm Service Agency. The following lists the types available:

- Direct Operating or Farm Ownership Loan
- Emergency Loans
- Guaranteed Operating Loan or Farm Ownership Loan
- Youth Loans

Please contact the office for more information.

### **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 and verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2011 production records as soon as harvest is complete. ***All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date, which is July 15th.***

### **Acreage Reporting**



**A**creage reporting time is 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 2012 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. Some deadlines will be changing for the 2013 crop year.

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

### **Timely Filing of Loss**

**T**he 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.

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

### **Bank Account Changes**

**C**urrent 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.

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

### **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 ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution at the local FSA office.

Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 2, 2012 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.

If payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded. Request for recons should be filed by June 1.

Dates to Remember	
May 28	Office Closed- Memorial Day
May 31	Reporting deadline for Small grains
June 1	DCP/ACRE signup deadline
June 1	SURE 2010 sign up deadline
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 2012 NAP APH's
August 1	Last day to file COC election nomination forms
August 1	NAP closing for Strawberries
September 1	NAP closing for Christmas trees, Fin Fish, Flowers & Grass (SOD)
September 3	Office Closed- Labor Day
September 30	NAP Closing for Barley, Clover, Grass, Mixed Forage, Rye & Wheat
September 30	Final date to report value loss crops for 2012: ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, aquaculture, ginseng & turfgrass sod
Continuing	Sign up under Continuous Sign Up (CRP) programs

### 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.