



FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWSLETTER



U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Hunterdon Somerset
County FSA**
687 Pittstown Road,
Suite 2
Frenchtown, NJ 08825

Phone (908) 782-4614
Fax (908) 782-0501
www.fsa.usda.gov/nj

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

Office Staff:
Doreen Beruck-County
Executive Director
Elizabeth Banko-Program
Technician
Laura LaFevre-Program
Technician
Marilyn Barnes-Program
Technician (Temp)

County Committee:
Frank Hahola-Chair
Robert Fulper II-Vice Chair
John Drake-member
Edward Jablonski-member
Gerald Lyness-member
Cynthia Niciecki-minority
advisor

The **Hunterdon
Somerset County
Committee meets the
third (3rd) Thursday of
the month at 8:30 AM.**

The **official
newspapers are the
Hunterdon Democrat
and the Courier.**

In this issue:
-general CRP
-CREP
-NRCS programs
-TAAF
-SAFE
-Wetland
Compliance
-Bank Account
Changes
-Farm Storage
Facility Loans
-Marketing
Assistance Loans
-SURE
-NAP

August 5, 2010

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)



A general CRP sign-up began on August 2, 2010 and will continue through August 27, 2010. During the sign-up period, farmers or ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general sign-up. Eligible cropland needs to have been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during four (4) of the six (6) years from 2002 through 2007.

CRP provides conservation practices that preserve the soil, clean water, and restore wildlife habitat. By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds, and streams. Producers enrolling acreage in CRP will plant long-term resource conserving covers in exchange for annual rental payments, cost share, and technical assistance. Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long term contracts for ten (10) to fifteen (15) years.

At the conclusion of sign-up, FSA will evaluate and rank the eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) for environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling land in CRP. The EBI consists of five (5) environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air, and enduring benefits) and cost. Decisions on the EBI cutoff will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI data for all offers. Those who have met the previous sign-up EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up.

USDA is authorized to maintain CRP enrollment up to thirty two (32) million acres. If you are interested, please contact the office for more information.

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

CREP is a voluntary program that pays participants to implement conservation practices on environmentally sensitive land. Eligible practices include installing and maintaining grass waterways, contour grass strips, filter strips, and riparian buffers. Program participants receive annual rental payments, cost share assistance, and other financial incentives (i.e. signing incentives) for contracts of ten (10) to fifteen (15) years.

Eligible cropland must have been cropped four (4) of the six (6) years between 2002 and 2007 and be physically and legally capable of being cropped in a normal manner. Marginal pastureland is also eligible, but only for riparian buffers, and if the land is adjacent or parallel to streams. Participants remove cropland or marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, trees, or other vegetation. Please contact the office for more information or to begin your application.

NEW NRCS FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Sign-up is underway through **August 31, 2010** for the 2011 NRCS EQIP and WHIP programs.



New for 2011: EQIP will include assistance for on-farm energy audits. EQIP, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, is a voluntary program for persons who are engaged in livestock, forestry, or agricultural production including organic.

WHIP, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, is a voluntary program for improving or developing fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

For more information, please contact NRCS at (908) 782-4614 extension 3.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS OF CATFISH AND ASPARAGUS

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAAF) of catfish and asparagus has recently been announced. Producers have until September 23, 2010, to apply for the program that will provide technical training and cash benefits to eligible producers whose crops have been adversely impacted by foreign competition.

Catfish and asparagus have been certified nationally. **Applications will be accepted through September 23, 2010.** FSA Form 229-1 and other needed documentation must be submitted by the closing date. Late applications will not be approved. Please contact the office for more information and an application. Information is also available online at www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa. Forms can be acquired online at <http://www.fas.usdas.gov/itp/taa/taatforms.asp>.

NEW JERSEY STATE ACRES FOR WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT (SAFE)



SAFE practices provide the flexibility to meet the specific needs of high-value wildlife species in participating regions of New Jersey, including Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. Producers within the region can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts for ten (10) to fifteen (15) years, depending on the proposal authorized in the area. In exchange, participants receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives, and cost share assistance to establish habitat-enhancing natural covers on eligible land.

Eligible SAFE projects include wetland restoration; establishment of permanent introduced grasses and legumes; permanent wildlife habitat; wildlife food plots; rate and declining habitat; habitat buffers for upland birds; bottomland timber establishment on wetlands; shallow water areas for wildlife; establishment of permanent native grasses. Implementation of these practices will benefit threatened, endangered, and special concern wildlife species and migratory birds and waterfowl. SAFE targets the most environmentally sensitive land and establishes the highest value conservation practices on generally smaller acres. SAFE will continue until the enrollment goals have been met. For more information, please contact the office.

WETLAND COMPLIANCE

Producers, who are renting or purchasing land that may have a converted wetland status, need to contact NRCS to learn if there are restrictions.

The Farm Bill regulations provide that, unless exempt, persons are ineligible for benefits under certain programs administered by USDA, if they:

- Plant an agricultural commodity on wetland that was converted after December 23, 1985
- Convert a wetland after November 28, 1990 FSA may not approve any loan or loan guarantee to drain, dredge, fill, level, or otherwise manipulate a wetland, or to engage in any activity that results in impairing or reducing the flow, circulation, or reach of water except in the case of activity related to the maintenance of previously converted wetlands

The following provides permitted uses and restrictions of certain wetlands for compliance with Wetland compliance provisions:

- Wetlands can be farmed under natural conditions, but not converted
- Wetlands converted before November 28, 1990, cannot be planted to an agricultural commodity and retain eligibility for benefits
- Wetlands converted after November 28, 1990, must either be restored to wetland status or mitigated to retain eligibility for program benefits
- Wetlands that can be farmed under natural conditions cannot be manipulated in any way, unless the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) determines the work would have a minimal effect on the wetland values
- Wetlands converted before December 23, 1985, can be farmed and maintained

BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES

It is the USDA's intent that all FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for us to make timely payments, you need to notify the service center if you decide to change or close your bank account, or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Please let us know as soon as possible of any changes to your account routing number or bank name. Otherwise, your payments may be delayed.



FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOANS



The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of fifteen (15) percent, with Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining eighty five (85) percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of seven (7), ten (10), or twelve (12) years are available depending on the amount of the loan. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans: corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain; corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats, or barley harvested as other than whole grain; pulse crops (lentils, small chick peas and dry peas); hay; renewable biomass; fruits including nuts and vegetables. For more information about FSFL, please contact the office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS

Marketing Assistance Loans are available. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan even if you regain beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility requires compliance with the conservation and wetland protection requirements (AD-1026); beneficial interest requirements; complete acreage report; and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible, the commodity must have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence and in a storable condition, be merchantable for food, feed, or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained through the term of the loan, nine (9) months.

For more information or to apply for a marketing assistance loan, please contact the office.

SURE SIGNUP

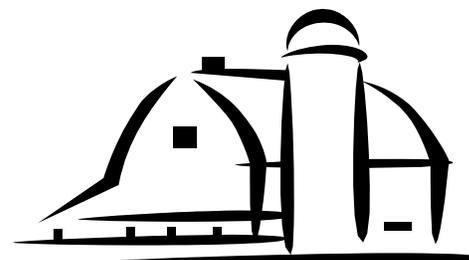


Sign up for the 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program for those who suffered crop production losses during the 2008 crop year will end on September 30, 2010.

SURE provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or crop quality losses. The program takes into consideration crop losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to sixty (60) percent of the difference between the SURE farm guarantee and total farm revenue. The farm guarantee is based on the amount of crop insurance and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on the farm. Total farm revenue takes into account the actual value of production on the farm as well as insurance indemnities and certain farm program payments.

Producers with a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary must have suffered at least a ten (10) percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. Producers must meet the risk management purchase requirement by either obtaining a policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, for all economically significant crops. If there is no Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may also be eligible for SURE if the actual production on the farm is less than fifty (50) percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. For SURE, a farm is defined as all crops in which a producer had an interest nationwide.

For more information on the new SURE program, please contact the office.



Hunterdon Somerset County FSA
687 Pittstown Road, Suite 2
Frenchtown, NJ 08825

DATES TO REMEMBER

August 27, 2010—last day to submit an offer for general CRP sign-up

September 1, 2010—NAP sales closing date for 2011 Christmas trees; fin fish; flowers; and sod

September 23, 2010—final date to submit an application for TAAF

September 30, 2010—final date to apply for 2008 SURE

September 30, 2010—NAP sales closing date for 2011 clover; grass; mixed forage; and rye

Continues: Sign up for continuous CRP, CREP, SAFE, Farm Storage Facility Loans

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 agriculture commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

NAP coverage is \$250 per crop, not to exceed \$750 per county or \$1,875 for multiple county producers. Producers who had coverage on 2010 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2011, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date.

Producers with NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits: 1) Timely file acreage reports; 2) keep track of harvested production using applicable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required; 3) file a “Notice of Loss” within fifteen (15) calendar days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc.

For more information on NAP coverage please contact the FSA office.

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S. W., Washington, D. C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”