



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Warren-Sussex-Morris County FSA

101 Bilby Road, BLDG 1H  
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

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www.fsa.usda.gov/nj

**Hours**

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

**Staff**

Lindsay Caragher, CED  
John Snearowski, PT  
Diandra Brunstetter, PT  
Debbie Crisman, PT  
Virginia Brophy, FLM

**County Committee**

Scott Ashley  
Carl Sigler  
Holly Sytsema  
Robert De Block  
James Smith

County Committee meets  
the last Monday of month  
at 9:30am

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

- Aug 2 - COC nomination deadline
- Sept 1 - NAP closing date for grass Sod, fin fish, Christmas trees
- Sept 6 - Office closed for Labor Day
- Sept 30 - NAP closing date for barley, clover, grass hay, mixed forages, rye, wheat
- Sept 30 - missing DCP owner signatures to be returned to the office
- Oct - DCP 2010 payment go out



# FSA NEWSLETTER

## CRP Sign-up Opens August 2

A general sign-up will open for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) on **August 2, 2010**, and continue through **August 27, 2010**. During the sign-up period, farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general sign-up. CRP



provides conservation practices that preserve the soil, clean water, and restore wildlife habitat. Producers enrolling in CRP 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 10 to 15 years.

By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP also protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams. Acreage enrolled in CRP is planted to resource-conserving vegetative covers, making the program a major contributor to wildlife population increases in many parts of the country. As a result, CRP has provided significant opportunities for hunting and fishing on private lands.

FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) for environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in CRP. The EBI consists of five 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 of all the offers. Those who would have met previous sign-up EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up. In addition to the general sign-up, CRP's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing.

USDA is authorized to maintain CRP enrollment up to 32 million acres. All interested farmers and ranchers should contact the FSA office to learn more about this program.

## FSA County Committee Nominations

County committees play a crucial role in helping the county office staff implement the Farm Bill. Due to the important services that COC members provide, producers are encouraged to participate in the FSA county committee election process by nominating an eligible candidate. All nominations must have been received by **August 2, 2010**. FSA will mail ballots to producers beginning **November 5, 2010**. The voted ballots are due back at the local county office either via mail or in person by **December 6, 2010**. Ballots will be counted in the office on **December 9, 2010 at 9:30am**. The newly elected committee member will take office **January 1, 2011**.



The Hackettstown Office County Committee is made up of five (5) producers, each representing a Local Administrative Area (LAA). The Local Administrative Area up for election this year is LAA#5. **LAA #5 is made up of Morris, Bergen, Hudson, Essex and Passaic Counties.**

## Preventing Fraud

The FSA supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA assists RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office.

## Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing a crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the crop from harvest through the earlier of the date the loan is repaid or Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) takes title to the commodity. 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 a loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting and ensuring that the commodity meets CCC minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical and/or ACRE Programs to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a MAL may trigger procedures, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans. The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

## CREP & Continuous CRP

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a program designed to decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat and safeguard ground and surface water. CREP is a partnership with federal and state government and for specific geographic areas.

Environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) or Continuous CRP will be eligible for annual rental payments and cost-share of up to 50 percent on approved practices. These programs will remain funded, and continue to provide heightened environmental benefits.

## Electronic Services

If a producer has Internet access, program participants can access many services from home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours. To participate in these services, you must meet all program eligibility requirements. Online services have stringent security measures to protect your private information. To utilize electronic services a producer needs an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires an e-mail address and filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> followed by a visit to the county office for identity verification. If you have questions, or would like assistance establishing your account, just contact your local USDA Service Center and talk with our trained FSA personnel.

## Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers of Catfish, Shrimp and Asparagus

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAAF) of catfish, shrimp 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 and shrimp has been approved for Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. The FSA County Offices will accept application packets through **September 23, 2010**, on all three commodities. FSA Form 229-1 and other needed documentation must be submitted by the closing date. Late applications will not be approved. The application form is available at FSA offices or at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa/taafoms.asp>

You may contact the office for more details. Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at [www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa](http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa).



## **Wetland Compliance**

Producers renting or purchasing land that may have a converted wetland status need to check with the county office to learn if there are restrictions. 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 Nov. 28, 1990, must either be restored to wetland status or mitigated to regain eligibility for program benefits.
- wetlands that can be farmed under natural conditions cannot be manipulated in any way, unless the Natural Resources Conservation Service determines the work would have a minimal effect on the wetland values
- wetlands converted before December 23, 1985, can be farmed and maintained

Additional information about wetlands is available at the FSA office.

## **Compliance Spot Checks**

Compliance spot checks will be conducted on 2010 crops. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, deficiency loans, etc. for review, a nationwide selection of producers is employed. 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. For more information about the spot check selection procedure, contact the office.

## **Help Available to Stressed Farmers**

Recently, the economy, inclement weather, and other factors have hurt some farming operations around the country. These events can push a producer to the emotional breaking point. Watching your livelihood being threatened is difficult for farmers and ranchers, especially for those whose income is solely dependent on agriculture.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available to help. If you know a farmer or rancher who is under stress and is reluctant to ask for help, or if you just need to talk to someone, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Your call will be routed to the crisis center nearest you, where trained staffers are available 24/7. This nationwide service is free and confidential. Help is just a phone call away.

For more information, go to <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. This service is not affiliated with the United States Department of Agriculture.

## **Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers**

FSA assists beginning farmers and/or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at the office. Please contact Virginia Brophy at (908) 852-2576 x 110 or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) for more information.

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<b>Selected Interest Rates for August 2010</b>	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.50 %
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.625 %
Limited Resource - Farm Operating	5.00 %
Limited Resource - Farm Ownership	5.00 %
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency	3.75 %
Marketing Assistance Loans	1.250%
Farm Storage Facility	
7-year loan term	2.50 %
10-year loan term	3.00 %
12-year loan term	3.375 %

**Actively Engaged**

FSA wants to remind producers about 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 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 can't exceed \$40,000.

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