



February 2011

## Warren-Sussex-Morris County FSA Office

101 Bilby Road, BLDG 1H  
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Phone: (908) 852-2576

Fax: (908) 852-4666

### Hours

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

### Website

[www.fsa.usda.gov/nj](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj)

### County Office Staff

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

### County Committee

Scott Ashley  
Carl Sigler  
Holly Sytsema  
Robert De Block  
James Smith

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

### IMPORTANT DATES:

- Feb 1 - Sorghum Checkoff  
Referendum Begins  
Washington's Birthday
- Feb 21 - Office Closed  
Washington's Birthday
- Feb 28 - Sorghum Checkoff  
Referendum Closes
- March 15 - NAP Closing Date:  
beans, brussel sprouts,  
cantaloupes, celery, corn,  
cucumbers, eggplant,  
honeydew, oats, okra, peppers,  
pumpkins, sorghum, soybeans,  
squash, sunflowers, sweet  
potatoes & yams, tomatillos,  
tomatoes, watermelon

## 2009 SURE Signup Underway

Signup for the 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment (SURE) program began **January 10, 2011**. 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. To be eligible for SURE, a portion of the farm must be located in a county, or contiguous to a county, covered by a qualifying USDA Secretarial Disaster Declaration. For 2009 SURE, producers in Warren, Sussex and Morris counties meet the aforementioned eligibility requirement. In addition, producers must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. A crop of economic significance is one that contributes, or is expected to contribute, 5 percent or more of the total expected value of all crops grown by the producer. A 2009 policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, must have been obtained for all economically significant crops. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage. Please call the office to schedule an appointment for signup.

## 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 spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

## IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive a CCC-1099-G detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on a CCC-1099-G is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the producers' responsibilities to report income to IRS. FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

## Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for USDA. All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

## Sorghum Checkoff Referendum

USDA will conduct a referendum on the Sorghum Checkoff Program **Feb. 1-28, 2011**, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. Ballots may be obtained in person, by mail or facsimile at FSA offices, or at:

[www.ams.usda.gov/sorghumpage](http://www.ams.usda.gov/sorghumpage).

Any eligible person engaged in the production or importation of sorghum from July 1, 2008, to December 31, 2010, is eligible to participate. Individuals are required to provide documentation such as a sales receipt or remittance form that shows they engaged in the production or importation of sorghum.

Sorghum Checkoff is a national, coordinated, self-help marketing program designed to strengthen the position of sorghum in the market place, maintain and expand existing domestic and foreign markets and uses for sorghum, and develop new markets and uses for sorghum.



## Adjusted Gross Income

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to USDA. The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits.

The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the IRS by June 15. These forms may be obtained from FSA or NRCS or online at:

<http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/main servlet>.

## 2011 DCP Signup

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through **June 1, 2011**. USDA urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2011 DCP contract.

USDA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2011, eligible producers may request partial direct payments as an advance on the total amount.

## 2011 ACRE Signup

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. ACRE signup has begun and will continue through **June 1, 2011**.

A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. The payment is based on 83.3% (85% in 2012) of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the state ACRE guarantee and the state revenue times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield. The total number of planted acres for which a producer may receive ACRE payments may not exceed the farm's total base. In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20% and marketing loan rates are reduced by 30%.

The decision to participate in ACRE is irrevocable. All owners and producers on the farm must agree to enroll. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

## CRP Signup

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup is set to begin on **March 14, 2011**, and continue through **April 15, 2011**. During the signup period, farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at the FSA Office

Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this signup provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this signup are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2011.

FSA administers the CRP program and will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) which shows the 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.

In addition to the general signup, CRP's continuous signup program will be ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. More information can be found online at:

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

## Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan.

Producers are to notify the Farm Service Agency office prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

## FSA Signature Policy

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 office 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 please contact the office.

## Conservation Loan Program

The Conservation Loan (CL) Program provides farmers with the funding necessary to implement conservation measures on their land. The available limit for a direct CL is \$300,000, and the limit for a guaranteed CL is \$1,119,000.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with applicants to develop a conservation plan containing approved conservation practices. Some potential conservation practices are: water conservation structures, forest cover, permanent pastures, manure digesters, and other installations. Please contact the office for more information.

## Maintaining the Quality of Loaned Grain

This year's large grain crop has its obvious up side, but there is a downside too. Many producers are hard pressed to find adequate storage for every bushel harvested. Overfilled grain storage bins can lead to grain quality problems.

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases. Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.



### Selected Interest Rates for February 2011

Farm Operating - Direct	2.25 %
Farm Ownership & Conservation Loans	4.75 %
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	1.25 %
Farm Storage Facility	
7-year loan term	2.750 %
10-year loan term	3.375 %
12-year loan term	3.625 %

#### Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff.

#### 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. Please contact the office for more information.

The U.S. Dept of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of 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, political beliefs, genetic information, 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 to 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.