



NEWSLETTER



January 2012

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

County Office Staff

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

County Committee

Scott Ashley
Robert DeBlock
Carl Sigler
James Smith
Holly Sytsema

The County Committee meets the last Monday of the month at 9:30AM.

As meeting dates and times are
subject to change, please call
ahead if you plan on attending.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Jan 23 - Office Closed, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Jan 23 - DCP/ACRE sign-up
- Jan 23 - Office Closed, Washington's Birthday
- Mar 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

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to **Holly Sytsema** and **Carl Sigler** who were reelected to represent farmers on the FSA County Committee. Mrs. Sytsema was reelected to her second consecutive term and Mr. Sigler was reelected to this third consecutive term. FSA appreciates the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. Alternates were not selected in the LAA#1 election.

The election results for Local Administrative Area#4 are:

Carl Sigler - Elected to the county committee (COC),
Thomas Kucharski - 1st alternate to COC,
Patricia Godlewsky-Swider - 2nd alternate to COC

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation. The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

Sign-up for 2010 losses is currently open and will run 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.

For more information, or to set up an appointment for sign-up please call the office.

2012 DCP/ACRE Sign-up

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) enrollment will begin **Jan. 23, 2012** and will end **June 1, 2012**. Here are some important reminders:

- All producers planting on **DCP base** acres must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payment for the farm.
- Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1st in DCP/ACRE **must** be reported to the office such as:
 - Ownership changes
 - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
 - Change in crop shares arrangements

Note: Changes cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012. For more information, or to set up an appointment for sign-up please call the office.

IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive CCC-1099-Gs detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on CCC-1099-Gs 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.

Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to starting thinking about filing taxes. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement.

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information.

For more information on setting up a Level 2 account, please call the office.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

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.

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.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters. Signup for 2012 coverage is currently underway.

NAP applications are due at different times according to the crop being insured. Producers should apply for NAP coverage using form CCC-471 (Application for Coverage). Related service fees are due when the application is filed. The application and service fee **MUST** be filed by the crop sales closing date, listed below. The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 per producer for individuals with farming interests in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver for service fees. To qualify for coverage, a producer must share in the risk of producing an eligible crop.

Remaining 2012 NAP coverage closing dates are as follows:

March 15, 2012 - beans, Brussel sprouts, cantaloupes, celery, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, honeydew, oats, okra, peppers, pumpkins, sorghum, soybeans, squash, sunflowers, sweet potatoes, yams, tomatillos, tomatoes, watermelon

Remember: service fees must be provided when the application is filed. For more information please call the office.



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.



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>.

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. The Farm Service Agency 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.

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.

For more information, please contact the Farm Loan staff at (908)852-2576, option 2.

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 USDA Farm Service Agency 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.

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 office.

Selected Interest Rates for January 2012	
Farm Operating - Direct	1.50 %
Farm Ownership & Conservation Loans	3.50 %
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	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility	
7-year loan term	1.375%
10-year loan term	2.00 %
12-year loan term	2.25 %

Hispanic and Women Farmers Claim Process

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 Farmers and Ranchers Claims Adjudication Process**, please visit: www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429;
- **African American Farmers Settlement Agreement (Pigford II)**, please visit: www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547 or 1-866-472-7826;
- **Native Americans Farmers Settlement Agreement (Keepseagle v Vilsack)**, please visit: www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506.

All media calls can be forwarded to the
 USDA, Office of Communication at (202)720-4623.

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, audiotope, 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.