



2010 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, with large or small operations. 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.

The Farm Service Agency is looking for individuals interested in serving on the County Committee. Any eligible person residing in one of these townships who is interested in running for County Committee, or would like to nominate an individual to run for County Committee, must complete a nomination form. The Nomination form for County FSA Committee Election (FSA-669A) is available at your local FSA office. You may also go online and download the form from our Ohio FSA website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/oh>. The form is located under the "I Want To" section.

Members of socially disadvantaged groups (a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) are strongly encouraged to complete the Nomination Form for County FSA Committee Election (FSA-669A) and nominate themselves or another eligible candidate.

Committee members make decisions on applications for federal farm program and disaster payments. Committee members play a vital role by helping local farmers manage tough financial times and natural disasters. County committee members make many other important decisions that affect local farmers such as whether haying and grazing should be allowed on Conservation Reserve Program land.

For more information regarding the County Committee Elections, talk to your local County Committee, or stop in the office for details on the types of decisions county committee members make. You can also visit the County Committee Elections website to learn more about the County Committee Election process and read over the fact sheets at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>.

The nomination period begins June 15th and runs until August 2, 2010. Nomination forms for the 2010 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by close of business on Aug. 2, 2010. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters November 5th and must be returned by December 6, 2010. The elected Committee Member and Alternates will take office January 1, 2011.

For more information about county committee elections, contact the county office staff.

Final Loan and LDP Availability Date

Producers are reminded that the final commodity loan and LDP availability date for 2009 Crop Year Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Safflower Seed, Small Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower seed **will be June 1, 2010**.

Will A General CRP Sign-up Happen This Year?

A CRP general sign-up may occur in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, however the National FSA office said details and the specific sign-up start date will be announced upon completion of an Environmental Impact Statement. The completion of the Environmental Impact Statement is expected to finish later this summer. Until then, producers are encouraged to utilize other whole field CRP practice opportunity such as SAFE and Wellhead Protection Areas.

Maintaining Stored Grain Quality

With the high temperatures this spring, producers are reminded to keep an eye on the condition and quality of the stored grain. Remember to contact your local FSA office if you notice changes in the condition and quality of the stored grain.

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www.fsa.usda.gov/oh



Have You Contacted Your Local FSA office? ACRE/DCP Program Enrollment Deadline Rapidly Approaching.

Steve Maurer, the Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, is asking Ohio producers, "Have you contacted our FSA office?" The June 1, 2010, deadline for enrollment into the 2010 Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program or the traditional Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) is rapidly approaching. **This deadline is mandatory for all participants and USDA will not accept any late-file applications. The National FSA office will not extend the sign-up deadline date, past June 1.**

Maurer explained that, "With the favorable spring weather conditions, it is critical for producers to begin the enrollment process as soon as possible". Over 90,000 farms were enrolled in DCP/ACRE Program during 2009. "To date, approximately less than 38% have been enrolled in 2010 DCP/ACRE Programs. At the current rate of enrollment, a significant number of farms eligible for 2010 DCP/ACRE will not be enrolled by the June 1, 2010, deadline."

All signatures of producers receiving a share in DCP/ACRE payments are required by the June 1, 2010, deadline. It is important producers contact their local FSA office to set up appointments **well before** the June 1, 2010, deadline.

For more information about the DCP/ACRE programs please visit your local FSA office.

CRP Participants – Think Twice before Mowing

A few years ago, mowing of CRP grass cover was a widely accepted practice by many participants, if for no other purpose than aesthetics. Today with more research and understanding, it has been shown that undisturbed grass cover will reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and is more beneficial to wildlife than annually mowed grass covers.

Undisturbed CRP covers could appear unattractive to those that do not understand its value. Wildlife, especially grassland birds including pheasants and quail, and pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, view undisturbed CRP cover as a source of food and habitat suitable to raise their young. Wildlife will not utilize CRP cover if plants are not allowed to mature. Game birds and bees are disappearing because of habitat loss.

Undisturbed grass cover does not include noxious weeds such as thistle and teasel or woody species like trees and multiflora rose. These noxious weeds must be controlled by spot mowing affected areas or spot spraying of an approved herbicide. These treatments will have a minimal effect on the CRP practice cover's ability to meet the purposes of erosion control, water quality, and wildlife habitat. Spot mowing is less expensive than mowing the whole practice. Aesthetic beauty should not replace good land stewardship and economics.

Unnecessary disturbance of CRP cover is considered a violation of the terms and conditions of the CRP contract and conservation plan. Violations could potentially result in hefty penalties including contract termination and refund of all contract related payments.

Properly maintained CRP cover can be very attractive if noxious weeds and invasive species are controlled and grasses and wildflowers are allowed to mature. Please scout your CRP fields before weeds go to seed. Contact your local FSA office for permission to spot treat your CRP grass cover during Ohio's primary nesting season (March 1st – July 15th). Plan to have your CRP cover assessed for the need of mid-contract management activities that are designed to enhance your CRP cover for wildlife. Mid-contract management is a contractual obligation that is outlined your CRP-1 Appendix and conservation plan. Contact your local FSA office for more information on proper maintenance and management of CRP practice cover. Remember, beauty is in the eye of the conservationist.

2009 ACRE Program Production Reports

Producers that participated in the ACRE program for 2009 are required to report 2009 production to be used to compute 2009 ACRE payments, if applicable, and 2010 benchmark farm yields. The reporting deadline date for 2009 production reports has been extended **until July 15, 2010** for small grains and other crops. Production reports may be submitted by the 2009 crop year operator, owner or other producer with an interest in the reported acreage. Failure to file a production report (FSA-658) for a farm enrolled in ACRE will result in the farm's producers being ineligible for any ACRE contract payments and the actual yield used to determine future benchmark farm yields will be zero.

2009 ACRE Benchmark Farm Yields

Producers that participated in the ACRE program for program year 2009 must establish a benchmark farm yield for each covered commodity that was planted. A benchmark farm yield is the Olympic average of the average yield per planted acre for the farm for the 5 most recent crop years. For 2009, the benchmark farm yield is comprised of data from crop years 2004 through 2008. Because of situations where producers did not have control of farms for the preceding 5 years or a specific covered commodity may not have been planted on the farm in 1 or more of the preceding 5 crop years, "plug yields" were established by commodity and county. Producers may use the ACRE plug yield to establish the benchmark farm yield or may report production evidence.

Production must be reported on form FSA-658. Producers will be required to certify, but not submit, the documents

to support their production at the time FSA-658 is filed. However, the documentation will be required at a later date to verify the reported production. The production reporting deadlines to establish the 2009 benchmark farm yields has been extended until July 15, 2010 for small grains and other crops.

Selected Interest Rates for May 2010	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	3.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	3.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	4.125%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	4.375%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.500%

Farm Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

State Executive Director, Steve Maurer, reminds interested applicants that FSA offers loans for farmers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, applicants might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

FSA makes two different types of loans, direct and guaranteed. Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans (loans made by a commercial lender where FSA acts as guarantor) can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,094,000. Emergency loans are a type of direct loan for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for Socially Disadvantaged Applicants are other types of direct loans also available through FSA.

Socially Disadvantaged Applicants (SDA) are one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as a member of the group without regard to their individual qualities. SDA groups are Women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Certain FSA loan funds are targeted to beginning farmers and SDA.

For detailed information on loan eligibility or the different loan programs available, contact your local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official.

Sign-up Begins For Tree Assistance Program

Orchardists and nursery tree growers may apply to receive Tree Assistance Program (TAP) benefits beginning May 10, 2010, for losses suffered during calendar years **2008** and **2009**, and for losses suffered during **January 1, 2010, to May 7, 2010**. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines that were lost by natural disasters occurring on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists and nursery tree growers must:

- suffer qualifying tree, bush, and vine losses in excess of 15 percent mortality (after adjustment for normal mortality) from an eligible natural disaster for the individual stand
- have owned the eligible trees, bushes, and vines when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which eligible trees, bushes, and vines are planted
- replace eligible trees, bushes, vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

The following table provides the final dates to submit a TAP application and supporting documentation.

DATE OF LOSS	FINAL DATE TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
Calendar Year 2008	July 6, 2010
Calendar Year 2009	July 6, 2010
January 1, 2010, to May 7, 2010	July 6, 2010
May 8, 2010, to September 30, 2011	Within 90 calendar days of the disaster event or date when the loss of trees, bushes, or vines is apparent.

For more information about the TAP, please visit your local FSA office or to read the TAP factsheet go to: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/tap051010.pdf.

Removing CCC Loan Collateral

Producers are reminded, if you have grain under Commodity Credit Corporation loan it cannot be removed or disposed of without prior county office staff authorization or repayment. The county office staff may issue release authorizations based on a telephone or in person request when you are ready to move the grain. A loan violation is subject to monetary and administrative penalties, such as

repaying the loan at principal plus interest, liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans and loan deficiency payments.

All commodity loans are subject to spot check. Locking in a market loan repayment rate is not a marketing authorization. If you are planning to move CCC loan grain, call the county office staff, before you HAUL!

FSA Reminds Producers of Disaster Assistance Payment Limit

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) would like to remind producers that the 2008 Farm Bill provides disaster assistance programs for crop and livestock losses experienced by producers in 2008 and subsequent years with a collective limit of \$100,000 in annual payments. For 2008, this limitation is applied to the “person” as determined for the farming or livestock operation for that program year. For the years 2009 through 2011, this limitation is applied to the individuals and legal entities by direct attribution.

FSA's disaster programs include the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), and Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE).

Additional limitation information about FSA program payment limitations is available at local FSA offices.

Dates to Remember	
May 31	Memorial Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
June 1	Deadline to apply for 2009 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.
June 1	Deadline to sign-up for 2010 ACRE and Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.
June 15	County Committee Nomination period begins.
June 15	Deadline to submit the CCC-927 and CCC-928 consent forms to the IRS.
June 30	Final certification date for small grains.
July 5	Independence Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
July 15	Final certification date for all crops except small grains.
Aug. 2	Final date to request farm reconstitution for current fiscal year.
Aug. 2	Last day to file County Committee Nomination forms.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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