



# FARM SERVICE AGENCY



November 2008

Rhode Island County FSA

## County Committee Elections

Ballots for this year's county committee election will be mailed to eligible voters on November 3, 2008. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency County Office by the close of business on December 1, 2008. If mailed, ballots must be postmarked by midnight December 1, 2008.

The candidates in this year's election are:

**LAA-3-Ruth James** has been nominated in Washington County.

**LAA-5-George Goulart Jr** has been nominated in Newport County.

Eligible voters who have not received a ballot should contact the FSA County Office staff.

**Voter Requirements:** Persons meeting requirements in **1** *or* **2**, *plus* **3**, below, is eligible to vote:

1. Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as either of the following:
  - an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper, *or*
  - a partner in a general partnership or member of a joint venture that has an interest in a farm as an owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper; *or*
2. Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm; *and*
3. Eligible to participate in any FSA program that is provided by law, regardless of the status of funding.

**Discrimination Prohibited** No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

## Final Payments for 2008 DCP

(Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program)

Final payment for 2008 DCP were made in mid October. Payments were deposited directly into personal bank accounts.

Producers who did not elect to receive an advance direct payment received their entire direct payment for the year in one lump sum after the end of the fiscal year (Sept. 30).

The direct payment for a crop equals 85 percent of the farm's base acreage times (x) the farm's direct payment yield times (x) the direct payment rate.



## Dates to Remember

- **November 3rd-** County Committee ballots mailed.
- **November 11th-** Veterans Day **Office Closed**
- **November 27th-** Thanksgiving **Office Closed**
- **December 1st-** Last day to return ballots
- **December 1st-** 2009 NAP application closing date
- **December 3rd-** Counting of ballots
- **December 25th-** Christmas **Office Closed**
- **January 1, 2009—**New Years Day **Office Closed**
- **January 1, 2009—** Elected members take office

# NAP

## (Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program)

USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) 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.

**December 1st NAP Closing Date** for fall seeded crops, all Value loss crops; including (Christmas trees, aquaculture, sod grass, and ornamental nursery). Forage crops, Specialty crops; (honey, maple sap). Perennial crops; (blueberries, strawberries, peaches, pears) and all other perennials. Eligible producers can apply for coverage of noninsurable crops using form CCC-471, "Application for coverage," and pay the applicable service fees at their local FSA office.

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 with farming interest in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees.

**The application and service fee must be filed by December 1, the application closing date for 2009**

### Eligible Crops

Crops must be noninsurable crops and agricultural commodities for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available, and must be any of the following commercially produced crops:

- Crops grown for food; Crops planted and grown for livestock consumption; Crops grown under a controlled environment, such as mushrooms and floriculture; Specially crops such as aquaculture, Christmas trees, ginseng, ornamental nursery and turf grass sod.

### Eligible Natural Disasters

An eligible natural disaster is any of the following:

- Damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes; An adverse natural occurrence, such as earthquake or flood; or a condition related to damaging weather or an adverse natural occurrence, such as excessive heat, disease or insect infestation.

The natural disaster must occur before or during harvest and must directly affect the eligible crop.

### Coverage Period for NAP

The coverage period for **annual crops** begins the later of: 30 days after application for coverage and the applicable service fees have been paid; or the date the crop is planted and does not exceed the final planting date and ends the earlier of: the date the crop harvest is completed; the normal harvest date for the crop; the date the crop is abandoned; or the date the entire crop acreage is destroyed.

The coverage period for **perennial crops**, other than those intended for forage, begins 30 calendar days after the application closing date and ends earlier of: 10 months from the application closing date; the date the crop harvest is completed; the normal harvest date for the crop; the date the crop is abandoned or the date the entire crop acreage is destroyed.

### FSA Use of Reported Acreage and Production

FSA uses acreage reports to verify the existence of the crop and to record the number of acres covered by the application. The acreage report and the production report are combined to calculate the approved yield (expected production for a crop year). The approved yield is the average of your actual production history (APH) for a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 10 crop years (5 years for Apples and Peaches). To calculate your APH, FSA divides your total production by your crop acreage.

The Approved yield may be calculated by using substantially reduced yield data if you do not report acreage and production, or report less than 4 years of crop production.

To remain eligible for NAP assistance crop information must be reported annually.

**Do you remember the Calendars the FSA Staff members distributed to you around acreage reporting time?**

**The Calendar serves as a great tool to help you in keeping records of your planting dates, harvesting dates, and production amounts.**

At the end of the growing season the County Office Staff will gladly make copies of your annual records and return them to you.

It is the producer's responsibility to report the total amount of unit production to FSA.

## Changing Banks

Verifiable production records for an eligible crop must be submitted by the producer to support an application for payment or as required to support a certification of production.

In the event the submission of production records is required and verifiable records are not available, the producer shall provide other forms of documentation.

For each crop for which an acreage report is filed, the producer must report all production for that acreage no later than the immediately subsequent crop year acreage reporting date for the crop. Except for grazed forage, controlled environment crops, and value loss crops, production must be reported for any NAP crop acreage

Failure to report production by the production reporting deadline: shall have adverse implications for future year approved yield calculations could result in future ineligibility for NAP assistance on this crop.

## Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers 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, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

Farm ownership loans (FO) and farm operating loans (OL) may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,094,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans 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 also available through FSA.

Direct loan limits have increased to \$300,000 operating loans and \$300,000 farm ownership loans. **We have only operating loan money available at this time.** For detailed information, please contact the county office Farm Loan Team.

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This innovation has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. It has been calculated that having a problem with a payment is 20 times greater with checks than with Direct Deposit. Another benefit is that Direct Deposit to your account can be made within 48 hours.

To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

## The "Ten Acre" Legislative Change

On October 13, 2008, HR-6849 was signed into law and amended the commodity provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill to permit producers with small-acreage to participate in farm programs for the 2008-crop season. The Farm Bill modification for 2008 suspends the provision that prohibits Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) payments on eligible commodities if the sum of the base acres on the farm is 10 acres or less.

The legislation extends the 2008 crop year signup for producers with 10 base acres or less, until November 26, 2008. This regulation change ensures that no penalty can be assessed by USDA against participants who fell into this 10-acre prohibition, for failure to submit reports or timely comply with program requirements. The law also provides clarification on various aspects of the new standing disaster assistance program, specifically how minor acreages and grazing land are supposed to be treated under the program.

Producers with ten base acres or less are encouraged to contact their local FSA office before November 26, 2008 to schedule an appointment to enroll in the 2008 DCP farm program.

## RI Farm Service Agency

60 Quaker Lane Suite 49  
Warwick, RI 02886

Phone: 401-828-3120 Option 2  
Farm Loan: Option 9  
Fax: 401-821-0780

### County Office Staff:

Melissa Turrisi, CED

Anne Belleville, PT

Devon Marsden, PT

Leila Naylor, PT

### Farm Loan Staff:

Roxanne Boisse, FLM

Sandy Ford, PT

Olawale Alesh, SCEP

### County Committee Members

Ruth James-Chairperson

Vincent Confreda-Vice Chair

Victor Hoogendoorn-Member

George Goulart-Member

James Steere-Member

## Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

### Program Workshop

The 2008 Farm Bill was recently approved! Come learn about **NRCS' opportunities that are available to assist you** with soil, water, air, plant, and animal concerns. Whether or not you are familiar with NRCS' programs, technical and financial assistance available, have completed an application, or plan on completing an application, the workshop will provide valuable information including:

Summary of programs available to address common conservation needs (e.g., invasives, water quality, soil erosion)

Review Application Process

Review Planning Process

Review Contract Process

The workshop will be held on  
**Tuesday, December 9, 2008 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at:**

USDA Conference Room

Natural Resources Conservation Service

60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46

Warwick, RI 02886

**Please contact NRCS at (401) 822 8848 to register for the workshop by Friday, December 5, 2008. You may also contact us to inquire about future workshop dates and locations in your district!**

Although NRCS accepts applications for assistance throughout the year, our next milestone application deadline is February 15, 2009.

**Were on the web [www.usda.fsa.gov](http://www.usda.fsa.gov)**

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