



**SOUTHWEST KANSAS** -- Finney, Grant, Hamilton, Haskell, Kearny, Lane, Meade, Morton, Seward, Scott, Stanton and Stevens

*July 2007*

### County Committee Nominations

Would you or a producer you know be a good nominee for the FSA county committee? Nominations are being accepted until **Aug 1**. Elections take place this fall. You can participate in the county committee election process by nominating candidates by the August 1 deadline. Nomination of minority and women producers has increased by 35 percent in recent years.

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area in which the person is a candidate.

Producers may also nominate themselves, and organizations representing minority and women may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>; click on News & Events, then County Committee Elections. Nomination forms for the 2007 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1, 2007.

This year's elections take place Nov. 2 - Dec. 3. Newly elected committee members and alternates take office January 1, 2008.

### New DCP Enrollment Deadline Aug. 3

The sign-up deadline for the 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has been extended to Aug 3. The late-file fee of \$100 will only be assessed for farms that are enrolled after Aug 3 and before Sept 28, 2007.

### Final Acreage Reporting By AUGUST 1

Farm operators have until **August 1, 2007** to turn in acres devoted to corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), any ground in fruit or vegetable crops, plus any cropland seeded to grass or lying idle. Failure to report 100% of the cropland on the farm by the deadline can result in loss of or diminished benefits under CRP, NAP, the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP), marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP). Acres reported after August 1 are subject to a late-filing fee.



Remember, there are limitations on planting of fruits and vegetables on base acres enrolled in DCP. Please be sure that you have checked with your local FSA office and understand the possible effect of planting these crops.

### Foreign Investors Rule

Foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land are required by law to report their land holdings, acquisitions, leases of 10 years or more, and land use changes within 90 days to the local FSA office. Failure to report these changes can result in a civil penalty of up to 25% of the fair market value of their interest in the agricultural land.

### Emergency Loans Available For Cattle Losses

Cattlemen who suffered losses from the 2006 drought and severe ice storms and related bitter temperatures in December and January may want to consider applying for low interest Emergency Loans through their local FSA farm loan office.

If you had uninsured death losses to baby calves, stocker cattle, and mature breeding stock that occurred between December 20-21, 2006 and December 28-31, 2006 you could be reimbursed for the full value of those losses. 2006 drought effects such as reduced weaning weights, sale of breeding stock, reduced weaning percentage, and increased feed costs can also qualify for low interest Emergency loan assistance.

FSA loan officials and area bankers have expressed concern that much of the economic loss of income will not be felt until after producers sell the fall born 2006 and spring born 2007 calf crops in late 2007 or early 2008. Area cattle producers are reporting much higher than normal death losses through these time periods due to the severe winter storms.

Emergency disaster loan assistance was made available since that time, but, **deadlines to apply expire as early as September 24, 2007**, prior to the lost revenue from death losses.

Applicants may receive loans up to 100 percent of livestock physical losses. Loan purposes include both operating and real estate, and repayment terms, depending on the loan purpose and type of collateral securing the loan.



### Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetlands

Eligibility for farm program benefits requires that you file the "Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification" form number **AD-1026**. You no longer need to file this annually, as it is now a continuous form. You are responsible to report if there are any changes in your operation that would affect the HEL/WL certification since the most recent **AD-1026** was filed.

By signing the **AD-1026** you certify, in part, and agree to: a) not plant or produce an agricultural commodity on HEL fields unless you are first actively applying an approved conservation plan or system on the HEL land; b) not to produce/plant an agricultural commodity on wetlands; and c) not to convert wetlands by draining, dredging, filling, leveling, etc..

Contact your NRCS or FSA office if you plan to plant an ag commodity on land that needs a HEL determination. If the land is then determined to be highly erodible NRCS will work with you to develop a conservation plan for those acres.



## CRP ACREAGE MAINTENANCE

If you participate in the Conservation Reserve Program you are responsible for properly maintaining the CRP acres. CRP contracts include an extra \$5.00 per acre in the annual contract payment to assist in covering the expense of applying chemicals, clipping, and utilizing other maintenance/control methods.

The nesting period for wildlife ends on July 15. Throughout the nesting season weed control should be limited to spot treatments so the wildlife habitat is not adversely affected. More aggressive weed control measures can be utilized on CRP beginning July 16. You must be aware of weed or other maintenance problems on acreage enrolled in your CRP contract. If you have areas in your CRP where the density of the weed population has choked out the CRP grasses, or has just begun to adversely affect the CRP grass you should immediately contact your FSA for technical advice on the best treatment for your situation. Maintenance violations can lead to significant penalties or even termination of the CRP contract.

**Noxious weeds** (examples include: bindweed, Johnson grass, musk thistle, and sericea lespedeza) must not be allowed to go to seed on CRP. If you are having a problem with these weeds please visit with personnel at your Natural Resources Conservation Service office. They will be glad to assist you in developing methods to control noxious and other weeds.

A CRP contract prohibits: 1) mowing CRP around irrigated circles on corners in CRP; 2) mowing hunting lanes; 3) any mowing for cosmetic purposes; 4) annual mowing for CRP weed control; 5) mowing of CRP to park machinery/equipment. Always contact your local FSA office before mowing any CRP to ensure you will stay within the maintenance requirements for your contract.

A policy change that became effective last year prohibits **tree infestations**. Participants should ensure volunteer trees are not becoming a maintenance problem. If you are unsure whether tree and brush cover is a potential problem on your CRP please notify your county office.

Other requirements to be aware of: \*to control insects, rodents and other pests that pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other owners in the area; \*do not disturb CRP cover without prior approval from the FSA County Committee; \*roads, trails, parking or storing equipment, storing livestock feed, etc. are all prohibited on CRP; \*CRP may not be hayed or grazed or harvested for seed unless you have been approved for the management practices of haying or grazing.

**\*\* If you believe you received this newsletter in error, or you wish to be removed from future mailings, please contact your current or former FSA county office. \*\***

## Farm Storage Facility Loans

Seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) are available to purchase and install eligible storage facilities, to permanently affix drying or handling equipment, safety equipment or to remodel existing facilities. Real estate liens are required for loans that exceed \$50,000. Loans are secured with a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85% of the net cost, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A 15% down payment is also required. For more information on eligibility and other issues contact your local FSA county office.

### REPORT FARM CHANGES

Changes in your farming operation should be reported to the office within 30 days of the date of change. Examples are: new owners, death of an owner or operator, changes in leases from crop share to cash lease, creation of a trust or partnership, or any other change that affects eligibility for payments. The last day to request changes in the makeup of the farm (reconstitution) for the 2007 crop year is **August 1, 2007**. Reconstitutions requested after August 1 will be effective for the 2008 crop year.

### SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to visit the county office or attend any meeting or event sponsored by the FSA should contact the county executive director of your local county office. The appropriate arrangements will be provided.



### Crop Disaster Program (CDP) Coming Soon

A Crop Disaster Program (CDP) was recently approved. The law will provide approximately \$3 billion in ag disaster aid. This program will include a Livestock Compensation Program and a Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Conservation Program; Dairy Disaster Assistance; extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract Program. For the CDP, only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under NAP for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits. We'll have more on the new disaster program as details become available.