



May 2008

## North County News

### 2008 COC Election Information

One of FSA's responsibilities is to conduct County Committee elections in an open manner that ensures accountability. County FSA Offices will provide local organizations representing socially disadvantaged groups with detailed information about the COC election process. FSA is reaching out to agricultural communities to get equitable representation on their county committees.

Groups representing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, will be actively solicited for COC election candidates, and encouraged to fill out a nomination form (FSA-669A). Under represented farmers and ranchers are encouraged to step up and participate in their county's COC election process. Producers will notice posters and announcements displayed in businesses, churches, and other public places. COC election fact sheets can be found online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under the News & Events tab on the FSA homepage.

### Reporting Crop Acreage

The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported in order to be eligible to receive benefits from many of the programs that we administer.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by July 15 except for small grains which must be reported by May 31.

#### Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

#### Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

**If you are a producer who does not raise a grain crop and only produce hay, you can report now and be in compliance. We encourage you to call the office at your earliest convenience and make an appointment to complete your acreage report. If you are a grain producer and you have completed all of your planting, then please call us (908) 852-2576 and schedule a time with John to report your acreage.**

### Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 1 which is the deadline as outlined in the handbook.

Warren, Morris, Sussex  
County FSA  
101 Bilby Road, Bldg. 1-H  
Hackettstown, NJ 07840  
908-852-2576 (phone)  
908-852-4666 (fax)  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/nj](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj)

#### Hours

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

#### County Committee

Nancy Bilyk  
H William Sytsema  
Carl Sigler  
Eugene Makarevich  
Scott Ashley

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

#### Staff

Ken Bingham, CED  
Ginny Brophy, Farm Loan  
Manager  
John Snearowski,  
Program Technician  
Diandra Rodriguez,  
Program Technician  
Debbie Crisman, Program  
Technician

**Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

**Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

**DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

**Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.



## ***Measurement Service***

Farmers who would like to verify their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

## ***Sodbuster Regulations***

Before you till that hay field and plant corn, soybeans or other crop, contact the FSA office or the local NRCS office and make sure that all

of the required determinations have been completed.

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985. Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in Farm Service Agency programs.

Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production. If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage, before bringing land into production.

In addition, producers and the producer’s affiliates have to file an AD-1026 with the staff in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer’s signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation, provisions will not be violated.

## ***Preventing Fraud***

The Farm Service Agency has joined with the Risk Management Agency to prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. In addition, FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to RMA.

Producers can report suspected cases to the county office staff, RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

## ***Continuous CRP***

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that gives participants the opportunity to enroll environmentally sensitive acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Continuous CRP program is a voluntary enrollment program. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive pay-

**Job Opportunity:** The FSA County Office is looking for individuals interested in completing field work. Tasks would include field measurements using GPS, grain bin measurements, compliance spot checks, and field visits for late filed acreage reports. Training will be provided. Requires some computer knowledge, the ability to climb ladders and walk extended distances. Call (908) 852-2576 and request an application. USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer



ments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments or local Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) availability, please contact our office.

### ***Maintaining CRP Cover***

CRP cover maintenance is the participant's responsibility and must be done according to the conservation plan. All CRP maintenance activity, such as mowing, burning and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting season for wildlife and in accordance with the conservation plan.

Spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting season if certain criteria are met. The ending date for the primary nesting season in New Jersey is July 15.

### ***GIS***

As part of a decade long program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. The Farm Service Agency manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment at more than 2,500 field service centers throughout the country.

Transitioning to the GIS environment has made good business sense for FSA for a variety of reasons. For one, CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of current ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). For years, FSA had been using hard copy maps that were 10 years old or more. During that time span, it was difficult to keep information accurate due to urban development and other land use changes. USDA Service Centers use NAIP in order to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude

of other farm programs.

Second, using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. In conjunction with yearly updated high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public.

Lastly, the GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples of outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

### ***Youth Loans***

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help an organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

#### **Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:**

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 21 years of age
- Live in the open country or in a town of less than 50,000 people
- Must obtain a written recommendation and consent from a parent or guardian if the applicant has not reached the age of majority under state law
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project supervisor. This project su-

**Return Service Requested**

pervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. The Farm Loan Manager, Ginny Brophy, can help you with questions you may have about a particular program.

<b>Selected Interest Rates for May 2008</b>	
90-Day Treasury Bill	1.5 %
Farm Operating - Direct	3.125 %
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.0 %
Limited Resource	5.0 %
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.0 %
Emergency	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility	3.0 %

<b>Dates to Remember May 2008</b>	
May 26	Office Closed – Memorial Day Holiday
May 31	Final Acreage Reporting Date for Small Grains
May 31	Final loan availability date for Corn, Dry peas, Grain sorghum, Lentils, Mustard seed, Rice, Safflower seed, Small chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower seeds.
July 15	Final Acreage Reporting Date for All Crops Except Small Grains
Continues	Crop Disaster Program Signup
Continues	Livestock Indemnity Program
Continues	Livestock Compensation Program
Continues	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Sign-up

Visit our Web site: <http://www.fsa.usda/nj>

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