



# NEWSLETTER



November 2011

## County Committee Voting Begins

**Lake County  
Farm Service Agency  
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### Hours

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

### County Committee

**Alice Dinsdale  
Martin Murphy  
Jim McNeley**

### Office Staff

**Marti Hamilton  
Maryanne Webster**

Ballots for this year's county committee election will be mailed to eligible voters on November 4, 2011. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency county office by the close of business on December 5, 2011. If mailed, ballots must be postmarked by midnight December 5, 2011.

Eligible voters in Local Administrative Area #2 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, are eligible to vote:

**1.** Legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as any of the following: an individual, an authorized representative of an entity, spouses when property is owned jointly or in community property states.

**2.** Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm.

**3.** Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law.

**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.

## Move with FSA to Instant Electronic Information

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation. Producers can now enroll in the new GovDelivery system for notices, newsletters and electronic reminders and discontinue their slow and costly paper copies received through the mail. FSA, like many other organizations, is working smarter and more efficiently. Conversion to electronic notifications via email helps conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

Subscribe now to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe> or use the box "Sign up for updates" on the FSA homepage.

## 2012 DCP/ACRE Signup

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment begins January 23, 2012 and ends June 1, 2012.

Here are IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1<sup>st</sup> in DCP/ACRE must be reported to your local FSA office such as:
  - Ownership changes
  - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
  - Change in crop shares arrangements
- 3) Changes cannot be made after September 30, 2012.

## **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)**

The sign-up for 2010 losses begins November 14, 2011 and will end June 1, 2012.

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that occurred 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 at least a 10% crop production or quality loss, or both. All economically significant crops grown by a producer are eligible, **except** grazed crops.
- Any farm in which disaster-related conditions reduced the actual crop year production on the farm to 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

### **Adjusted Gross Income Report to IRS – Act Now**

Producers are reminded they must submit an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification consent form (CCC-931) to the IRS to maintain eligibility for 2010 and 2011 program benefits. Individuals and entities now are using one form: CCC-931 Certification and Consent.

The consent form authorizes IRS to verify that a producer's AGI is within the requirements for FSA program eligibility. Producers who failed to file these forms before September 2011 will receive a notice from the National Office. This notice will give the producer a final opportunity to submit the CCC-931 prior to becoming ineligible for all program payments (with the exception of some earlier multi-year CRP contracts). The letter will provide instruction on where the completed form must be sent.

IRS requires written consent from all individuals or legal entities before verification of AGI eligibility can be provided to USDA. For more information contact the county office.

## **Hispanic and Women Farmers**

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been 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 Farmer Claims Process:**

[www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov) or call 1-888-508-4429

#### **•Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:**

[www.blackfarmercase.com](http://www.blackfarmercase.com) or call 1-866-950-5547

#### **•Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:**

[www.IndianFarmClass.com](http://www.IndianFarmClass.com) or call 1-888-233-5506

## **Online Services**

Producers with Internet access can fill out a variety of FSA forms online. Producers can also register for secure electronic access that will allow them to electronically sign and transmit some forms directly to the county office staff. If you are new to the website, first you will want to obtain a Level 2 USDA Service Center Customer ID and password at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and then click on "Create an Account Page" link.

If you already have a Customer ID and password, then click on the following eForms website at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efor.ms/mainervlet> and then click on the "Sign In" button. A disclaimer window will open and after you read the "Warning message" click on the "Continue" button.

Then the USDA Web services page will open to the eAuthentication login page. Enter your login User ID and password and then click on the "Login" button. To sign and transmit forms electronically, you must sign-up and get a User ID and password.

## **Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged**

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Funds are available for operating loans and to purchase or improve farms or ranches (ownership loans).

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged groups. A socially disadvantaged applicant is someone who has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as a member of a group, without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

## **Disaster Assistance Programs**

The array of FSA disaster assistance programs include:

- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program

To be eligible for SURE, TAP, and ELAP, producers must purchase catastrophic risk protection insurance for all insurable crops, and coverage for non-insurable crops. For LFP, grazed land must be covered.

Farm-Raised Fish means all fish being produced for sale by an eligible producer. In the case of honey, the term "farm" means all bees and beehives in all counties that are intended to be harvested for a honey crop by the eligible producer.

Producers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource Producer or Beginning Farmer or Rancher do not have to meet this risk management purchase requirement.

## Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using direct deposit. To maintain efficient payment processing, it is critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make with your financial institutions. If you have made changes to accounts or have changed banking institutions, these changes might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments. When changes like these are made, be sure to contact the FSA county office so we can update our records to ensure efficient and uninterrupted service.

<b>Selected Interest Rates for November 2011</b>	
<b>90-Day Treasury Bill</b>	<b>0.125%</b>
<b>Farm Operating - Direct</b>	<b>1.375%</b>
<b>Farm Ownership - Direct</b>	<b>3.750%</b>
<b>Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher</b>	<b>1.500%</b>
<b>Emergency</b>	<b>3.750%</b>
<b>Farm Storage Facility—7 year</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Farm Storage Facility—10 year</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Farm Storage Facility—12 year</b>	<b>2.25%</b>

<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
Nov. 4	COC Ballots mailed
Nov. 14	SURE Sign-up begins
Nov. 24	Office closed for Thanksgiving holiday
Nov. 30	NAP Signup Ends
Dec. 5	COC Ballots due back in county office by COB
Dec. 26	Office closed for Christmas holiday
Jan. 23	2012 DCP Enrollment begins