



November 2011

Maine State
FSA Office

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Hours
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee Voting Begins

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

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 any of the following:
 - An individual
 - The authorized representative of an entity
 - Both spouses when property is owned jointly
 - Spouses in community property states.
- 2.** Is 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.

FSA Moving to Electronic Information

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation.

Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will provide notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail.

FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars.

County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

Producers can now subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>.

2012 DCP/ACRE Signup

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment will begin Jan. 23, 2012 and will end June 1, 2012. Here are some IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- 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.
- Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1st 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
- Note:** Changes cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

The sign-up for 2010 losses begins **Nov. 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 incurred 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 crop production or quality losses, or both, and includes all crops grown by a producer nationwide, **except** grazed crops.

- Any farm in which, for the crop year, the actual production on the farm because of disaster-related conditions is 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

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 or call 1-888-508-4429

- **Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:**

www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547

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

www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506

Marketing Assistance Loans

Marketing Assistance loans are commodity loans available to producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires you comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, report how you use cropland acreage on the farm and ensure that the commodity meets CCC minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producers name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

Disaster Assistance Programs

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)
- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

To be eligible for these programs, producers must purchase catastrophic risk protection insurance for all insurable crops, and coverage for non-insurable crops under SURE, TAP, and ELAP.

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.

Adjusted Gross Income Report to IRS

Producers are reminded they must submit an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification consent form (CCC-927 or CCC-928) to the IRS in order to maintain eligibility for 2010 and 2011 program benefits.

The consent form authorizes IRS to verify whether a payment recipient's AGI meets the eligibility requirements for FSA programs.

Producers who failed to file these forms before Sept. 2011 will receive a notice from the National Office stating that the producer is ineligible for 2010 and/or 2011 payments.

IRS requires written consent from all individuals or legal entities before verification of the average AGI can be provided to USDA. Individuals must submit form CCC-927 and legal entities

must submit form CCC-928. Without these forms on file, eligible producers will not receive USDA program payments. For more information contact your local FSA office.

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/eforms/main/servlet> 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. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the 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.



PRESORTED STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 CITY, STATE
 PERMIT #XXX

Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit.

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.

Selected Interest Rates for November 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	%
Farm Operating - Direct	%
Farm Ownership - Direct	%
Limited Resource	%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	%
Emergency	%
Farm Storage Facility	%
Sugar Storage Facility	%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	%

Dates to Remember	
Nov. 4	COC Ballots mailed
Nov. 14	SURE Sign-up begins
Dec. 5	COC Ballots due back in County Office by COB
Jan. 23	2012 DCP Enrollment begins

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.