



November 2006

Ohio FSA State Newsletter

Visit our website at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/OH

Voting for County Committee Begins

Ballots for this year's county committee election were mailed to eligible voters by November 3, 2006. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency county office by the close of business on December 4, 2006. If mailed, ballots must be postmarked by midnight December 4.

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 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.

Wetlands Initiative

Landowners, as you harvest crops this fall, have you noticed any drowned out areas that seems like you never can get a crop to grow in that spot. If you're tired of replanting crops just to lose money and time, then there maybe a way to make that drowned out spot useful and profitable again.

Through the USDA Wetlands Restoration Initiative, landowners can provide vital habitats for many wildlife species, including upland ducks

and sand-hill cranes. Wetlands also filter runoff; recharges the groundwater supplies, protects drinking water; reduces downstream flooding and provides recreational opportunities, like bird watching and hunting.

Wetland Restorations is a high priority with the USDA Conservation agencies and groups. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has 5 different priorities in the CRP that offer wetland restoration incentives and pay annual rental payments for up to 15 years.

The Lake Erie CREP offers state bonuses of up to \$1000 per acre plus annual rental rate bonuses and cost sharing on certain eligible acreage. NRCS administers the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) which offers sizeable cash payments for permanent easements even on wet woods. The Ohio Division of Wildlife together with Ducks Unlimited (DU) offers up to \$500 an acre cash bonus to restore wetlands in return for 15, 20 or 30 year contracts which can run concurrent with other USDA programs.

Sign-up is going on now. To determine individual eligibility for the wetland initiatives, landowners should check with their USDA Service center, Soil and Water Conservation District or Division of Wildlife office.

For more information on the USDA Wetlands Restoration Initiative, visit your local FSA office or go on-line to FSA's website at:
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

FSA MEASUREMENT SERVICE RATES CHANGE

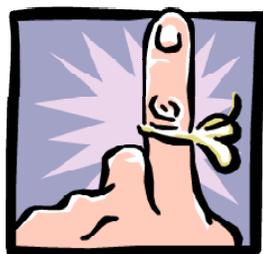
The National Farm Service Agency (FSA) office has updated a major amendment to the Measurement Service Rate recently. This mandatory statewide measurement service rate increase was set by the National office to recover the County office cost to perform the service.

The statewide measurement service rate increase was effective on Oct. 11, 2006. The following table is a summary of the new mandatory measurement rates.



Basic Farm Fee	\$30.00
Plus Hourly Rate (Minimum of 1 hour).	\$16.00
Minimum total	\$46.00
Every 30 minutes after the first hour.	\$8.00

Note: The mileage is included in the basic farm rate. There is no charge for mileage. The hourly rate charges begin when the employee leaves the county office or duty station and ends when the employee returns. The hourly rate is rounded to the nearest 30 minute increment after the first hour when computing costs.



*Program
Reminders*

The measurement service rates will apply to, but not limited to the following services: measuring crops after planting; staking and referencing acreages to be planted; measuring acreage that has been adjusted; verifying crops, disaster acreage and late-filed fees; re-measuring any acreage that had been measured previously; measuring or sampling farm-stored commodities. Also, Price Support loans and LDP's will be charged on a per farm basis.

For more information on the statewide measurement service rate change, contact your local FSA county office.

Unauthorized Disposition of Loaned 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 producers could face criminal prosecution. Always call the office before any loan grain is fed or sold.



Selected Interest Rates for November 2006	
90-Day Treasury Bill	5.000%
Farm Operating - Direct	5.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.500%
Limited Resource	5.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.000%
Emergency	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility	4.625%
Sugar Storage Facility	4.875%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	6.000%

Selling Land

If you're planning to sell farmland, there may be some program consequences you should be aware of. For example, if you're planning to sell land that's enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, the buyer must agree to continue the enrollment. If the buyer doesn't want to continue the CRP contract, you might have to refund all of the payments you've received to date.

Review program implications with your local Farm Service Agency staff before completing a sale of farmland is always a prudent precaution.

Changing Financial Institutions

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This method has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. It has been determined that the chance of 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.

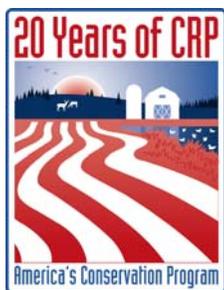
Continuous CRP

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll acreages in conservation practices to enhance their income while reducing soil erosion, improving water and soil quality and providing wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Continuous CRP program provides landowners another income for highly environmentally sensitive cropland and marginal pastureland. CCRP 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 payments for certain activities and cost share for establishment.

Popular CCRP practices are sod water ways, stream side filter strips, field breaks and practices like habitat buffers for upland birds and wetland restorations.

To be eligible for enrollment in the 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 enrollment availability, please contact your local FSA office or go online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crpcont03.htm>.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

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 Aug. 1 for farms enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

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 per-

sons. 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.

If DCP direct payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are re-funded.

Outreach Program

The Farm Service Agency makes direct and guaranteed loans to socially disadvantaged applicants, enabling them to buy and operate family-size farms. Funds are reserved each year specifically for these loans, but regular loan funds can also be used.

Direct loans may be made to qualified applicants by FSA for both farm operating and farm ownership purposes. Guaranteed farm loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes, and may be made by any lending institution subject to Federal or state supervision (banks, savings and loans, and units of the Farm Credit System) and guaranteed by FSA. Some state governments also operate farm loan programs that are eligible for FSA guarantees. FSA typically guarantees up to 90 of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails.

Persons who are primarily and directly engaged in farming on family-size operations may apply. A family-size farm is one that a family can operate and manage itself.

Socially disadvantaged loan applicants do not receive automatic approval. In addition to being members of a socially disadvantaged group, individual applicants under this program must meet all requirements for FSA's regular farm loan program assistance, including:

- Have a satisfactory history of meeting credit obligations.
- Be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms to meet actual needs; and
- Possess legal capacity to incur loan obligations.



- Have sufficient education; training, or at least one-year’s experience in managing or operating a farm within the last five years for a direct operating loan, or, for a direct farm ownership loan, have participated in the business operation of a farm for three years;
- Be a citizen of the United States (or a legal resident alien), including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and certain former Pacific Island Trust Territories;

A socially disadvantaged person 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.

Contact the county office staff for details about this program.

Dates to Remember	
Nov. 3	County committee election ballots mailed.
Nov. 10	Veteran's Day Holiday. FSA offices closed.
Nov. 20	Last day to apply for NAP coverage for apples, asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, chestnuts, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, honey and maple sap.
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Holiday. FSA offices closed.
Dec. 4	Last day to return voted ballots in county committee election.
Dec. 25	Christmas Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Continues	Continuous CRP.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans.
Continues	2007 DCP Enrollment will continue to June 1, 2007.

Visit our website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

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