



June 2007

# Ohio FSA State Newsletter

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## FSA Committee Seeks Nominations

The Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting nomination forms for eligible candidates to serve on the local FSA County Committees. The nomination period ends August 1, 2007.

“I encourage producers to become a member of their local FSA County Committee and make a difference,” said John Stevenson, State Executive Director for the Ohio FSA. “FSA County Committees have an important role in the decision making process for commodity price support loans and payments, conservation and disaster programs and other important agricultural issues in their farming community.”



Almost anyone participating or cooperating in a local FSA program—and of legal voting age—may be a candidate. Individuals may nominate themselves or others. All nomination forms must be received in the County FSA Office or post-marked by August 1. Voting takes place between November 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007.

To hold office as an FSA County Committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility requirements described below:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA;
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election;
- Reside in the Local Administrative Areas (LAA) in which the person is a candidate. (In some cases, this requirement may be waived. Check with the local county office).

A person must not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of FSA County Committee member, alternate, or employee;
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement, or any other felony; or
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

People uncertain about their eligibility to vote in the FSA County Committee election should contact the local FSA office. Affirmation of eligibility to vote must be determined in order for a vote to count in an election.

More information on the COC elections, including the nomination form, is available at local FSA county offices or on the FSA's Website at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>.

## Acres Reporting

Producers are reminded of the acreage reporting requirements that must be met prior to receiving program benefits. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Producers are required to file an FSA-578, *Report of Acreage*, certification for the farm by the **June 30 deadline for small grains** and by **July 15 for all other crops except small grains**. Acreage reports on crops are due in the county office by the earlier of June 30 for small grains and July 15 for all other crops.

It is also very important that producers report crop losses, including those insured under Federal Crop Insurance (FCIC) and Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) within 15 days of the date damage occurred or 15 days from the date damage is apparent. Losses and or damages to crops must be reported after each disaster occurrence and in a timely manner to insure continued eligibility for benefits.

Producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA county office to file the required FSA-578 certification report before the deadline dates expire.

## Maintaining Stored Grain Quality

Due to the recent high temperatures producers are reminded to keep an eye on the condition and quality of the stored grain. Remember to contact your local FSA office if you notice changes in the condition and quality of the stored grain.



## Mid-Contract CRP Cover Management

The Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) has begun to develop a State Management team. This team will include the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS), Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and Pheasants Forever (PF). The State Management team will complete site evaluations of each CRP grass and wetland practice and determine the appropriate Mid-Contract Management activity based on the existing cover.

So how will this State Management team have an effect on CRP participants? Well, all CRP participants with contracts effective beginning with sign-up 26 are required to perform management activities as part of their approved conservation plan. All CRP participants with contracts before sign-up 26 can perform management activities, voluntarily. If participants voluntarily request to revise the conservation plan, the management activities will be the same terms and conditions established for the required management activities.

Required activities shall be designed to ensure plant diversity and wildlife benefits, while ensuring protection of the soil and water resources. Management activities are designed to be site specific and used to enhance the wildlife benefits for the site. Cost-sharing, up to 50 percent is available for most management practices.

Management activities must not be performed during the primary nesting period or brood rearing season, which in Ohio is **March 1-July 15**. Failure to perform planned management activities can result in contract violation.

For CRP sign-up 26 and 27 participants, the local FSA office will be contacting you later this summer to schedule a time to review the management teams' recommendations for mid-contract management on your practice acres.

Contact your local FSA County office for details concerning your mid-contract CRP cover management activities.

## Beginning Farmers

If you are a farmer who has participated in a farming operation for at least three but no more than 10 years, you may qualify for beginning farmer targeted loan funds with Farm Service Agency.

The program is designed to assist these farmers by providing direct and guaranteed loans when they are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact your local FSA county office.

## Farm Storage Facility Loans

Low interest rate loans for storage facilities are available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, soybeans and corn.

The seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Eligible facilities include new conventional-type cribs or bins and new and remanufactured oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures.

All Farm Storage Facility Loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85 percent of the net cost of the storage or handling equipment, up to \$100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment is also required. For details, contact the county office staff.

## State Rental Rates

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices are currently reviewing soil rental rates to determine the maximum payment rate for CRP annual payments. This is to guarantee the CRP rental rates are set at market levels to ensure program operations do not distort local rental markets, program costs are minimized, and program benefits are achieved.

As a result a large majority of State Rental Rates may be adjusted up as a result of this review process. Producers should consider these soil rental rate changes before agreeing to terms of new contracts.



## Seeding Deadline Extended for Warm Season Grasses

CRP participants will have more time this year to plant warm season grasses. The 2007 seeding deadline has been extended until June 15 for warm season grasses.



## Haying or Grazing CRP Acres

Haying or grazing Conservation Reserve Program acres may be permitted, but you need prior approval from the county committee, and you must have an approved plan. Acres may be hayed or grazed once every three years, and a 25 percent payment reduction is assessed for every approved acre hayed or grazed.

Haying and grazing is not authorized under managed or emergency provisions during the primary nesting and brood-rearing season, which for Ohio is **March 1-July 15**.

Detailed information is available from FSA county office staff.

## Mowing of CRP Acres

CRP participants are reminded of restrictions on mowing acres enrolled in CRP practices. Mowing activities, other than to control noxious weeds or undesirable woody vegetation must be included in each participant's Conservation plan.

Mowing, at anytime to help control weeds during cover establishment is generally acceptable.

After the practice is established, no mowing shall be conducted on CRP acres except to control noxious weeds and undesirable woody vegetation. This applies to all practices including filter strips. Only the affected areas shall be treated.

Spot mowing or spraying to control noxious weeds during the nesting and brood season (March 1-July 15) requires prior FSA County Committee approval.

Contact your local FSA County office for more on maintaining your CRP cover.



## Removing CCC Loan Collateral

Producers are reminded, if you have grain under Commodity Credit Corporation loan it cannot be removed or disposed of without prior county office staff authorization or repayment. The county office staff may issue release authorizations based on a telephone or in person request when you are ready to move the grain. A loan violation is subject to monetary and administrative penalties, such as repaying the loan at principal plus interest, liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans and loan deficiency payments.

All commodity loans are subject to spot check. Locking in a market loan repayment rate is not a marketing authorization. If you are planning to move CCC loan grain, call the county office staff, before you HAUL!

### Selected Interest Rates for June 2007

90-Day Treasury Bill	5.000%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	5.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.375%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.00%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	4.625%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	4.875%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	5.875%

## Signing for Entities

To sign FSA forms for trusts, limited liability companies, cooperatives, partnerships or corporations, producers need a document on file at the county office saying you're authorized to sign for the entity. It could be a copy of the articles of partnership or articles of corporation or a valid power of attorney.

You also have to know how you're supposed to sign. In almost all instances, when you are signing for an entity, your signature has to include "by" or "for," indicating you're signing in a representative capacity.

Remember, if you've established an entity for your operation, you can no longer sign forms and contracts as yourself. When you have signing authority for an entity, you have to sign forms on behalf of the entity.

If you have questions about the proper way to sign forms and contracts for your entity, contact the county office staff. We can review the records and help determine the acceptable signature for your situation.

## Preventing Fraud & Waste

The Farm Service Agency and Risk Management Agency are partners in preventing 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 FSA or RMA.

Dates to Remember	
June 15	County Committee Nomination period begins.
June 30	Final Acreage Reporting date for small grains.
July 4	Independence Day Holiday. <b>FSA Offices Closed.</b>
July 15	Final Acreage Reporting date for all crops except small grains.
August 1	Last day to file County Committee nomination forms.
August 3	Sign-up ends for 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans.
Continues	Grasslands Reserve Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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