



NEWSLETTER



June 2012

Union County
FSA Office

County Committee
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Hours
Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m-4:30 p.m.

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County Committee Nominations

County committee nominations are open from June 15, 2012 through August 1, 2012. The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers. Every eligible producer should participate in these elections to strengthen the link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component in the delivery of FSA services and programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with key decisions on programs in their counties and work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

Operating within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws, FSA county committees apply their local knowledge to make key program administration decisions.

For more information just contact your local FSA office.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to start, continue and expand agriculture production. Loans are available for operational needs or to help purchase or improve farms and ranches.

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

A socially disadvantaged applicant is an individual who has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as a member of one of the groups described.

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

Payment Limitations

Producers planning to participate in 2012 programs are required to complete and submit the CCC-931 form. If changes have been made in farming operations from the prior year, the following forms may also need to be filed for payment eligibility and payment limitation purposes: CCC-901 and CCC-902.

Contributions

All partners, stockholders or members with an ownership interest in the legal entity must make a contribution*, whether compensated or not compensated, for active--

- personal labor,
- personal management,
- or a combination of active personal labor and active personal management to the farming operation;

*NOTE: There are exceptions for spouses.

Additional information on payment limitation is available at FSA county offices or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov

Crop Reporting - Reminders

Producers that participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Non-insured Crop Program (NAP), and Price Support programs are required to file a crop acreage report. 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 to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Load Deficiency Payments programs.

The certification form **FSA-578, Report of Acreage**, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. **The acreage reporting deadline for Union County is July 15th.**

NOTICE TO HISPANIC AND/OR WOMEN FARMERS OR RANCHERS

COMPENSATION FOR CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

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.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: www.farmerclaims.gov

The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.



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CRP & NAP Certification

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

Prevented Planting

Prevented planting is to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date. Failure to report prevented planting acreage could result in loss of benefits for the SURE program or possibly other disaster assistance programs.

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.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFLP is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin. For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, contact the local FSA office.

Beginning and Limited Resource Loans

FSA has a program to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for less than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed.

Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at the local USDA Service Center or visit www.fsa.usda.gov and www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Special 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.

GovDelivery – Free Reminders

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving into paperless operation to save your tax payer dollars. Producers can now enroll in the new **GovDelivery** system to receive instant electronic deadline reminders, bulletins and newsletters direct to your email address. Now you don't have to wait for a printed newsletter only occasionally sent through the mail.

Producers can subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by visiting this free enrollment website: www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe. You can also call your local Farm Service Agency office. Give it a try right now. All you need is an email address for yourself or a family member where you can receive the useful email updates.

Sodbusting

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 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.

Controlled Substances

Individuals convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for program payments and benefits.

If convicted of one of these offenses, a current program participant shall be ineligible during that crop year and the four succeeding crop years for Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the *distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance* shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible for any or all program payments and benefits:

- For up to 5 years after the first conviction
- For up to 10 years after the second conviction
- Permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants with a federal or state conviction for the *possession of a controlled substance* shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits as follows:

- up to one year upon the first conviction
- up to five years after a second or subsequent conviction.

Important Dates to Remember

June 15	Nominations open for COC elections
July 4	Independence Day- Office closed
July 15	Acreage Reporting Deadline
Aug. 1	Deadline to submit nominating petitions for the COC

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