

January 2010



Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County News

USDA Service Center

Atlantic/ Cape May/ Cumberland County FSA

1317 S. Main Rd. Bldg. 3
Vineland, NJ 08360
856-205-1225 (phone)
856-205-0691 (fax)

Hours

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

County Committee

Anthony Melora
Florence Ale
Sue Wheeler
David Sheppard Jr.
Charles Muzzarelli Sr.

County Committee meets
2nd Wednesday of month

Staff

Angela Andreoli, CED
Robert Maxwell, FLM
Toni Brooks FLO
Ellen Schmidt, FLO
Lori Tobin PT
Lorna Hofstetter, PT
Dawn Freeman, PT
Ashlea Visconti- FLOT



January 7, 2010

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Florence Ale and Charles Muzzarelli Sr.! Florence was re-elected to represent farmers from Stow Creek, Greenwich, Hopewell, Upper Deerfield, Bridgeton and Shiloh Boro (LAA 1) and Charles was elected to represent farmers from Vineland, Buena and Buena Vista Twp. (LAA 2) on the County Committee (COC).

The election results for Local Administrative Area 1 are:

Florence Ale- Elected as regular member with 83 votes

John Likanchuk -1st alternate with 27 votes

Jean Richie- 2nd alternate with 21 votes

The election results for Local Administrative Area 3 are:

Charles Muzzarelli Sr. -Elected as regular member with 129 votes. There are no alternates for this LAA

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

SURE Signup

Signup for the 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments program (SURE) began on January 4, 2010. SURE 2008 is for those who suffered crop production losses during crop year 2008.

SURE provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or crop quality losses. The program takes into consideration crop losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to 60 percent of the difference between the SURE farm guarantee and total farm revenue. The farm guarantee is based on the amount of crop insurance and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage

on the farm. Total farm revenue takes into account the actual value of production on the farm as well as insurance indemnities and certain farm program payments.

Producers with a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. Producers must meet the risk management purchase requirement by either obtaining a policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, for all economically significant crops. For 2008 crops, producers had the opportunity to obtain a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement through a buy-in provision. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

If there is no Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may also be eligible for SURE if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. For SURE, a farm is defined as all crops in which a producer had an interest nationwide.

For more information on the new SURE program, please visit the county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Fail-



ure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to starting thinking about filing taxes. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement.

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) can make and guarantee loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family size farms and ranches. Funds specifically for these loans are reserved each year. A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asians and Pacific Islanders. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager or Officer for more details and assistance in applying.

Applications for FSA Loans

Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA farm loan manager or officer for more details and assistance in applying.

Youth Loans

Remember FSA makes operating loans to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H



Clubs, FFA, or a similar organization or with a vocational teacher or county extension agent. The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. Contact your local FSA office for more details

NAP Coverage Continues

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage rolls over from one year to the next as long as you pay the service fee by the subsequent year's closing date. NAP costs \$250/crop, not to exceed \$750/county and \$1875 for multi-county producers. For the 2010 crop year, producers interested in adding or deleting NAP crops or changing producer shares on a NAP contract need to act before the crop's application closing date.

The next closing date is March 15, 2010. The crops that are covered in the next closing are as follows: Beans, Brussel Sprouts, Cantaloupe, Celery, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Honeydew, Oats, Okra, Peppers, Pumpkins, Sorghum, Sorghum forage, Soybeans, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Watermelon, and Yams.

Some of these crops may actually be covered by independent crop insurance agents and this will vary by county. Contact your local FSA office to see which crops are covered by NAP.

Reminder: Production from all sources is required to be submitted each year for NAP. This information is used to calculate your yield. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

***IMPORTANT* Future Disaster programs require NAP coverage and/or Crop Insurance coverage on economically significant crops grown by your operation.**

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, 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. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire

about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

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 persons. 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.

2010 DCP Signup Continues

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through June 1, 2010. USDA urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2010 DCP contract.

ACRE

The Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and



the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For 2010, the 2-year price average will be based on the 2008 and 2009 crop years. The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

The June 1, 2010, deadline is mandatory for all participants. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.

Assistance Available for Organic Farmers

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices in New Jersey will conduct a special Organic Initiative sign-up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) through **February 5, 2010**.

Persons who are engaged in organic livestock and/or organic crop production can apply for financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land. National Organic Program (NOP) certified organic producers, as well as producers in the process of transitioning to organic production, are eligible to apply.

More info can be found at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/organic.html and at your local USDA Service Center (<http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/index.html>).

Dates to Remember	
Feb 15	Office Closed- Washington's Birthday
March 15	NAP deadline for the following crops: Beans, Brussel Sprouts, Cantaloupe, Celery, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Honeydew, Oats, Okra, Peppers, Pumpkins, Sorghum, Sorghum forage, Soybeans, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Watermelon, and Yams.
May 31	Reporting deadline for Small grains
July 15	Reporting deadline for all crops except small grains
Continuing	Sign up under Continuous Sign Up (CRP) programs

****Reminder small grain reporting is going on now. Deadline is May 31, 2010****

Visit our Web site at
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj>

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