



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

FARM SERVICE AGENCY
CHATHAM COUNTY
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OFFICE HOURS

**Monday – Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm**

Farm Service Agency

**Chatham County Farm Service Agency
Newsletter**

MAY 2010



**FARM SERVICE AGENCY
NOMINATING PETITIONS BEING
ACCEPTED**

The Chatham County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee election will be held this year for Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2 on December 6, 2010. LAA 2 includes the townships of: Center, Gulf, Hadley, and Hickory Mountain.

Form FSA 669A will be used to nominate eligible nominees. Any eligible voter may nominate themselves or other eligible candidates. However nominees **MUST** be eligible voters located in LAA 2. **Blank petitions (FSA-669A's) will be mailed to all known eligible voters and are included in this mailing or these petitions may be obtained from the county office.**

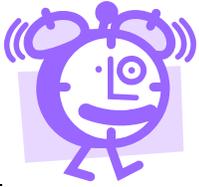
Persons nominated should actively participate in the operation of a farm or ranch and be well qualified for committee work. A producer is eligible to be a County or Community FSA committee member if the producer resides in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) in which the election is to be held and is eligible to vote. To ensure diversity on county FSA committees, the Chatham County FSA encourages nominations from groups representing producers who are fairly representative of agricultural producers in each LAA and the committee encourages nominations from socially disadvantaged groups and beginning farmers. Any interested person who would like more information on committee nominations or the committee election process should contact the county office.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES:

- Aug 2, 2010 Last day to file nomination form,
- Nov 5, 2010 Ballots mailed to eligible voters
- Dec 6, 2010 Last day to return voted ballots
- Jan 1, 2011 Elected member takes office

SODBUSTING, SWAMPBUSTING

The term "sodbusting" is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands. Farmers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in USDA programs such as DCP, loans, and crop insurance. Provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). 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 NRCS 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. The term "swampbuster" is used when a producer converts a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that land that will be cleared have a wetland determination from NRCS **BEFORE** clearing. Producers clearing land for pasture especially need to have a wetland determination. If a producer inadvertently clears an area that is considered wetland, then that producer could be ineligible for all USDA benefits on any land they own or operate. Converting wetlands to cropland or pasture use is a violation of swampbuster provisions. Once the land is cleared in violation or a crop is planted in violation, it is too late to be in compliance.



DIRECT & COUNTER CYCLICAL PROGRAM

The last day to sign up for the Direct & Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) is June 1, 2010. There are NO late file provisions for DCP. Please be reminded that you also must complete a crop report of your farm in order to receive the DCP payment. Also please be advised that the 2008 Farm Bill provides that producers on farms with DCP base acres of 10.0 acres or less will not receive a DCP payment.

GENERAL REMINDERS

- Report losses on NAP crops or any other crops within 15 days of loss
- Report changes in farm operation or farm ownership timely
- Report any banking changes affecting direct deposit

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

CROP REPORTS

Producers are reminded to report their planted acreage to FSA. Crop reports are required to earn payments in many programs. Crop reports must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. **Small grains (wheat, barley, oats, rye) must be reported by May 17. All spring or summer seeded crops (corn, soybeans, sorghum, grass, tobacco, cotton, CRP, and fruits or vegetables) must be reported by June 30. If these crops are not reported timely, producers will be charged a \$46 late file fee.** Prevented planting and failed acreage should also be reported. Prevented planting occurs when a crop cannot be planted during the established planting period because of a natural disaster. Failed acreage is timely planted acreage with the intent to harvest, but because of disaster related conditions, the crop failed before it could be harvested. Acreage reports for 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 or was prevented from planting because of a natural disaster.

FARM STORAGE LOANS AVAILABLE

Loans are available to producers of wheat, corn, soybeans, hay and other commodities for the construction or upgrade of farm storage and handling facilities. Loans may be made only for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed handling equipment or the remodeling of existing facilities. The maximum term of the loan is 7 years and all loans must be secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum principal amount of any farm storage facility loan is 85 percent of the net cost of the applicant's needed storage or handling equipment. A minimum down payment representing the difference between the net cost of the storage facility and the amount of the loan shall be made by the loan applicant to the supplier or contractor before the loan is disbursed. The interest rate will be the equivalent to that charged on U.S. Treasury securities of comparable maturity on the date the loan is approved. The interest rate for each loan will remain in effect for the term of the loan.



OFFICE CLOSING

The Chatham County FSA Office will be closed, Monday, May 31 in observance of Memorial Day.

FARM LOANS AVAILABLE

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available. Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan. Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,112,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner. FSA employees will help you complete the necessary forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact Bill Rhodes, Farm Loan Manager at 704-788-2107 ext 115.

COMMODITY LOANS

Marketing assistance loans can be critical to the success of your operation. With that in mind, it's important to comply with the rules. To be eligible, you must 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 Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards. 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 a loan. Loan eligible commodities have been produced by an eligible producer, are in existence and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC.

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. A reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Farms eligible for DCP must request a reconstitution by June 1, 2010. All other farms may request a recon by August 2, 2010.