



June 2010

Edgecombe County News

Edgecombe County USDA Service Center

Edgecombe County FSA
201 St Andrew Street
Tarboro, NC 27886
252-823-8187, ext 2 (phone)
252-823-1017 (fax)

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

County Committee
Vernon Rhodes, Chairman
Renee Long, Vice Chairman
B. R. Whitehurst, Reg. Mem.
William Dickens, Advisor

Office Staff
Kenny Johnson, CED
Holly Willis
Alton Skinner
Art Whitehurst
Shannon West

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2010 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and to represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Renee Anderson Long is currently representing LAA 1 (Townships 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6) which is up for re-election.

Election Period

June 15, 2010 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa0669a_committeeelectform.pdf

- Aug. 2, 2010 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center
- Nov. 5, 2010 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters
- Dec. 6, 2010 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center
- Jan. 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of 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
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

For more information about county committee elections, contact the county office staff.

Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at:

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa0669a_committeeelectform.pdf

Nomination forms for the 2010 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 2, 2010.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

Crop Reporting – June 30th. Deadline - The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. 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 Loan Deficiency Payments.

The certification form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. The producer certification deadline for all crops is Wednesday June 30. The Acreage reporting deadline for small grains was May 15. Any crops reported after these dates will be charged a minimum of \$46.00 per farm.

We mailed certification packets (Your farm maps & an appointment letter.) around May 12th. to the producers of the farm as of 2009. If you did not get your maps of the farms you are farming in 2010, please contact this office to request your packet.

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 also be reported.

Prevented Planting - Prevented planting is to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

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.

NAP Production (Vegetable Production) – June 30th. Deadline – This is the last day to bring in your previous years production for vegetable crops if you want it to be calculated toward this year’s yield. If you plant a crop and do not report your production to this office you will receive a **ZERO yield** for that year’s production.

Adjusted Gross Income - USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15 to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices.

Farm Loan Programs - 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 application and other 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 the county office staff.

Sodbuster Regulations - 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 that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985.

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 on a CPA-026 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.

In addition, producers and the producer’s affiliates have to file an AD-1026 in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer’s signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation, provisions will not be violated.