



January 2013

**USDA  
Alabama FSA**

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**State Executive Director**

**Please Note:**

**Alabama has 45 local FSA offices that service producers throughout the State.**

**For questions or inquiries regarding information contained in this newsletter or regarding other FSA programs, please contact your local USDA–Farm Service Agency Office.**

You may also visit the FSA website at:  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

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## County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to all farmers recently elected to serve on Alabama FSA county committees. Your service is appreciated.

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

County committees (COC) play a crucial role in helping the FSA implement the Farm Bill. FSA county committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms.

Most FSA committees will hold organizational meetings in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairperson and vice-chairperson.

## Foreign Owners Must Report Holdings

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.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) 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.

## NAP Provisions — Are Your Crops Covered?

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) application deadline dates vary according to the crop being insured. Producers should apply for NAP coverage using form CCC-471 (Application for Coverage) prior to the application closing date for the crop being insured. Most spring-seeded crops have an application closing date of February 28. Related service fees are due when the application is filed. Contact your local FSA office for the application closing dates for your crops.



All FSA Offices will be **closed** on the following dates in **observance** of the respective listed **Federal holiday**.

- **January 21 — Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**
- **February 18— Washington's Birthday**



## FSA Annual Reminders

--*Controlled Substance*-- Any person 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*— 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 our programs or activities, you should contact your local FSA office or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

--*Power of Attorney*-- For those who find it difficult to visit the county office because of work schedules, distance, health, etc..., FSA has a power of attorney form available that allows producers to designate another person to conduct business at the office. If interested, contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office for more information.

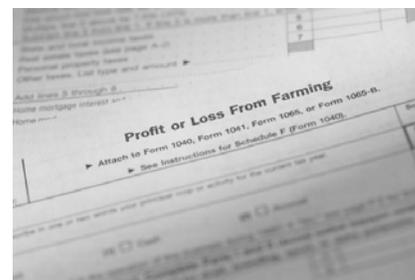
--*Bank Account Changes*-- Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and routing numbers.

--*Appeal Process*-- After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued. 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.

--*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, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

## IRS 1099-G Changes

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. For calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who received payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties was \$600 or more. The same changes will apply to those who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.



**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

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