

June 2009



Wisconsin State News

Wisconsin
State FSA Office

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County Committee Elections

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Since the committee members are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), producer participation in these elections is important.

The committee members help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level and help in decision making that is necessary to administer the programs in their counties.

Counties are divided into local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA selects one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee.

Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election and in combined counties, in some years, two seats may be up for election.

Eligibility to Hold Office

To hold office, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

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

A person must 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 additional clarification about county committees and elections, contact your local county office staff or visit: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Nomination Period June 15 - August 3, 2009

Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee election will be accepted June 15 through August 1, 2009. Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates.

The nomination form, FSA-669A, is included in this newsletter and is also available at the county office or may be downloaded from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected. The completed nomination form must be postmarked or received in the county office by close of business on August 3, 2009.



Open House

FSA County Offices will host an “open house” on July 7, 2009. Contact your local FSA County office for hours.

Please join us to learn more about FSA County Committees and the role they play in delivering FSA programs in local communities.



Who Can Vote

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning November 6, and must be postmarked or returned to the county office by the close of business on December 7, 2009.

Producers of legal voting age can 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 on an entire farm can also vote.

No one can be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

Role of Advisors

In addition to elected members, FSA county committees may also include advisors. Advisors are appointed to county committees in counties or multi-county jurisdictions that have significant numbers of minority or women producers and lack such members on FSA county committees.

Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interests of minorities and women in decisions made by the county committees. FSA state committees officially appoint advisors who are recommended by county committees or community based organizations.

Don't Miss Out on Voting

Ballots will be mailed to voters by November 6, 2009 and must be postmarked or returned to the FSA county office by December 7, 2009.

If you do not receive a ballot, eligible voters may contact their local FSA county office before the final date to return ballots.

Uniform Guidelines

USDA issued uniform guidelines for county committee elections to ensure that FSA county committees fairly represent the agricultural producers of a county or multi-county jurisdiction.

The following are just some of the specifics of the guidelines that are now in effect:

- If no valid nominations are filed, the secretary of agriculture may nominate up to two individuals to be placed on the ballot
- County committees must annually review local administrative area boundaries to ensure the fair representation of minority and women producers in their county or multi-county jurisdictions
- FSA county offices shall actively locate and recruit eligible candidates identified as minority and women farmers and ranchers as potential nominees for the county committee elections through outreach and publicity

To read the guidelines in their entirety, visit the County Committee Elections web page.

For More Information

For more information about FSA County Committees, visit a local FSA or USDA Service Center or the Web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

FSA-669A (02-25-08)	U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency
<h2 style="margin: 0;">NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION</h2>	

1. NAME OF NOMINEE <i>(Type or print Nominee's Full Name)</i>	TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY FSA OFFICE
2. ADDRESS OF NOMINEE	
3. NOMINEE'S CERTIFICATION <i>I hereby agree to have my name placed on the ballot, that I will serve if elected, and if there is a conflict of interest, I will resign such position.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I DO want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I DO NOT want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.</i>	5. INITIALS OF EMPLOYEE RECEIVING FORM AND DATE <i>(MM-DD-YYYY)</i> 6A. COUNTY 6B. LAA NO. 7. STATE
4A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE	4B. DATE <i>(MM-DD-YYYY)</i>
DATE OF ELECTION IS 1st MONDAY OF DECEMBER OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR	

8. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

VOLUNTARY INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PURPOSES: The following information is requested by the Federal Government in order to monitor FSA's compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination against program participants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, handicapped condition, or age. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your nomination or to discriminate against you in any way.

ETHNICITY <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino	RACE (Choose as many boxes as applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> America Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White	GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

- Complete the form as follows:
- ITEM 1** Type or Print the nominee's full name. The nominee must be:
 - A. Eligible to vote in the designated County FSA Committee election.
 - B. Eligible to hold the office of County FSA Committee member.
 - C. Willing to serve if elected.
 - ITEM 2** Enter the nominee's current address.
 - ITEM 3** The nominee must check one of the boxes to indicate a preference regarding the settling of tied votes.
 - ITEM 4** The nominee must sign and date.
 - ITEM 8** Completing this item is voluntary.

ALL FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY OFFICE OR POSTMARKED BY AUGUST 1.

NOTE: *The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a) and the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, as amended. The authority for requesting the following information is 7 CFR Part 7. The information will be used to obtain nominees for County FSA Committee.*

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0229. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.

2009 COC Election Townships (cont')

<u>Trempealeau</u> Ettrick Gale Pigeon Preston	<u>Vilas</u> All Townships	<u>Washburn/Burnett</u> Daniels LaFollette Lincoln Meenon Oakland Siren Swiss Union Bass Lake Brooklyn Casey Chicog Crystal Evergreen Frog Creek Gull Lake Minong Spooner Springbrook Stinnett Trego	<u>Washington</u> Barton Jackson Trenton West Bend	<u>Waupaca</u> Dayton Farmington Iola Lind Scandinavia Waupaca	<u>Winnebago</u> Clayton Menasha Neenah Winchester Wolf River
<u>Vernon</u> Bergen Franklin Genoa Hamburg Harmony Sterling Wheatland	<u>Walworth</u> East Troy Lafayette LaGrange Spring Prairie Troy Whitewater		<u>Ozaukee</u> Belguim Fredonia Saukville	<u>Waushara</u> Aurora Bloomfield Dakota Leon Marion Mount Morris Poy Sippi Rose Saxeville Springwater Warren Wautoma	<u>Wood</u> Cranmoor Dexter GrandRapids Hiles Port Edwards Remington Saratoga Seneca

Report Crop Acreage by July 15th

To maintain program eligibility for most FSA programs, producers need to report crop acreage at their local FSA office by July 15, 2009.

Acreage reports are required to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE), Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), and to receive loan deficiency payments (LDPs) or Marketing Assistance Loans. Acreage reporting may also be useful for documenting cropping history for future FSA program enrollment.

Pasture and grazed acreage must be reported for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), the Livestock Forage Program (LFP), and acreage covered by a Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) grazing policy.

After the July 15th reporting deadline, producers will be charged a minimum late-filing fee of \$46 per farm. Acreage reports may be revised at any time without a late-filing charge as long as the crop may be verified in the field.

To avoid late-filing charges, please contact your local FSA today to make an appointment or to receive additional information. Producers may also find information at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Report Prevented, Failed Acreage and NAP Crop Losses to FSA

FSA reminds producers to timely report any prevented or failed acreage to their local office to ensure compliance with current farm programs and possible eligibility for future disaster programs.

Prevented planting acreage, or acreage that could not be planted because of wet field conditions or other natural disasters, should be reported to FSA within 15 days of the final planting date of the crop. This includes crops covered by crop insurance or the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) and crops without insurance coverage. Producers should contact their local FSA office or crop insurance agent to verify final planting dates for all crops because they vary among counties and crop types.

For crop losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), producers must contact their local FSA office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent to file a Notice of Loss. Producers with crop insurance should contact their local agent when losses occur and before destroying the crop.

Failed acreage not covered by crop insurance should be reported to FSA before plowing up the failed crop and replanting. Producers with crop insurance may report failed acreage by the July 15 crop reporting deadline by providing crop insurance documentation such as a loss claim to their local FSA office. If a producer misses the reporting deadline for prevented planting, they may still report

prevented planting acreage as long as the disaster condition is verified by a field visit. To report prevented or failed acreage, producers must complete Form CCC-576, Notice of Loss for interested crops. For crop losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), producers must contact their local FSA office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers with crop insurance should contact their local agent when losses occur and before destroying the crop.



Producers may contact their local county FSA office if they have any questions about prevented and failed crop reporting or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

EZ Form Required for LDP Requests

The CCC-633 EZ is a two-part loan deficiency payment request that allows producers to (1) indicate their intentions to receive LDP benefits before losing beneficial interest in the eligible commodity, and (2) submit a request for an LDP at any time during the loan/LDP availability period before or after losing beneficial interest.

The EZ form was developed to cover field direct LDPs and farm stored LDPs, as well as LDPs for wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts. By signing the first page of the EZ form, the producer indicates his or her intentions to receive LDP benefits. This one page covers all counties and all eligible harvested commodities for the entire crop year for the individual, joint operation, or entity identified on the form.

Once the first page of the form has been signed and submitted, the producer can submit an LDP request by completing page two for all harvested commodities or page four for wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts. The LDP request can be submitted at any time during the loan availability period, before or after losing beneficial interest.

Page one of the EZ form must be signed by the producer before beneficial interest in the commodity is lost. Once beneficial interest is lost, the commodity is ineligible for an LDP,

even if beneficial interest is regained.

FSA Asking for Help in Keeping Records Updated

FSA county offices stress the importance of keeping your local office informed of any changes to farming operations. Changes to the farming operation, such as adding or removing land, changing members within the operation, or members passing away can affect payment limit determinations. If you are unsure if a change will affect any FSA programs the operation participates in, please contact your local county office for more information and clarification.

Marketing Assistance Loans Available

Producers may receive a nine-month marketing assistance loan (MAL) on all or part of their eligible 2009 grains. MALs provide interim financing to producers at harvest time to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A marketing assistance loan on commodity crops can provide short-term operating funds at a comparably low interest rate. A MAL may be a good alternative for short-term financing while waiting for prices to rebound or help spread out marketing.

MALs provide the advantage of low interest rates and repayment options. Repayment of commodity loans is usually made at the loan rate plus interest. However, if daily prices drop at anytime below the loan rate, plus interest throughout the nine month loan period, the repayments for that day can be made at the lower Posted County Price (PCP) without interest being charged.

The crop must be harvested and stored in an acceptable structure in order to be eligible for the loan.

Producers should contact their local FSA office to apply for a MAL, LDP or for additional information before the March 31, 2010 deadline. Additional information is also available online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

CRP Primary Nesting Season

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are reminded that all CRP maintenance and management activities must be completed outside of the primary nesting season listed in your conservation plan. If you have a maintenance issue that needs attention prior to the end of the nesting season, you must contact your county FSA office for permission BEFORE doing any spot spraying or spot mowing of your CRP.



DCP and ACRE Sign-up Extended

Sign-up for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) have been extended until August 14, 2009. There are no provisions to accept any late-filed applications.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm and make direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, direct payments may be requested in advance based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each of the farm's commodities. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary with market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The ACRE program provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

Producers can also use the electronic (eDCP) and (eACRE) services, which will save time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to eligible DCP and ACRE participants. To access these online services, an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account is necessary, which requires filling out an online registration form at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

Producers completing these steps and have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account can access the eDCP and eACRE services online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp> and then click on the link "Access eDCP/eACRE Online Services" which is located under the "I Want to..." section. Lastly, click on the "Access eDCP/ACRE Service" link.

Average Crop Revenue Election Program

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. ACRE program sign-up began April 27, 2009, and runs through August 14, 2009. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price. ACRE payments are made when state and farm-level triggers are met.

Producers electing ACRE for a farm agree to:

- forgo counter-cyclical payments
- accept a 20-percent reduction of the direct payments
- accept a 30-percent reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, but cannot enroll in DCP and ACRE on the same farm.

To elect ACRE for a farm, producers must complete Form CCC-509 ACRE, which irrevocably elects ACRE for the farm through crop year 2012. Form CCC-509, the contract to participate in ACRE, must then be completed each year the producer intends to participate and receive benefits.

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Dates to Remember	
July 3	Offices will be closed for Independence Day
July 15	Deadline for NAP producers to certify 2008 crop production
July 15	Deadline to report 2009 crop acreages on spring seeded crops, forages, small grains, winter wheat & some perennial crops
August 1	Final date to request 2009 farm divisions or combinations
August 3	Last day to file nominations forms for COC Elections
August 14	Deadline for DCP & ACRE enrollment
Continuous	-Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous sign-up -CREP sign-up -SAFE sign-up -Farm Storage Facility Loans -MILC sign-up

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