



June 2008

Carroll County News



**Carroll County
USDA Service Center**

Carroll County FSA
Carroll County Commerce
Center
698K Corporate Court,
Westminster, MD 21157
410-848-2780 ext. 2
410-848-8258 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/md

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

County Committee
Charles Schaefer II
James Stonesifer
G. Nelson Barnes
Nona Swartzbeck, Advisor

County Committee meets
the fourth Thursday of
each month at 8:30 am
except Nov. and Dec.
**Meetings are open to the
public.**

Staff
Mark Martin, CED
Susan Hardinger, PT
Patsy Wiles, PT
Carole Hill, PT
Nancy Uhlig, Temp PT

Eligible CRP Acres Allowed to Hay and Graze

USDA has authorized certain acreage enrolled under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to be available for hay and forage after the primary nesting season ends for grass-nesting birds (August 15). Some of the eligible land or forage of the land must be reserved for wildlife and any land that is used under this authority must have a modified conservation plan. The most environmentally-sensitive land enrolled in CRP will not be eligible. The land will be subject to sight inspection to ensure compliance with the conservation plan. **No rental payment reduction will be assessed on contracts being utilized for this critical use. However, a \$75 fee will be charged to process the required contract modification. Sign-up began June 2, 2008. This modification for critical feed use is only for 2008. All forage use must be completed no later than November 10, 2008. Forage may be used on the farm or sold.**

For more information and to sign-up contact our office at (410)-848-2780, ext.2.

Disaster Signup Continues

Eligible farmers and ranchers who suffered livestock losses, feed losses, or crop loss damage before Dec. 31, 2007, can still apply to receive disaster assistance.

FSA continues to accept applications and make payments for quantity losses under the Crop Disaster Program (CDP), for losses that occurred before the end of the 2007 calendar year. No ending date has yet been announced for CDP. Later this summer FSA will begin making payments to producers for quality losses under CDP.

In designated disaster counties, producers can

still receive assistance under the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). The deadline for 2007 LCP/LIP applications is **July 18, 2008**. For more disaster program information go online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>

Crop Reporting

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 Small Grains is June 15, 2008 and for all other crops is July 15, 2008.**

CRP & NAP Certification

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, 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.

Controlled Substances

Program participants convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for program payments and benefits.

If convicted of one of these offenses, the program participant shall be ineligible during that crop year and the four succeeding crop years for direct and counter-cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible for any or all program payments and benefits:

- for up to 5 years after the first conviction
- for up to 10 years after the second conviction
- permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

2008 Compliance

Compliance and spot checks will once again be utilized during the 2008 crop year. Instead of selecting local farms, contracts, deficiency loans, etc. for spot check and review, a nationwide selection of producers is used to achieve a statistical sampling of participating producers. Spot check selections are to be conducted based on a producer's participation in Conservation Reserve Program, Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, Loan Deficiency Program, etc.

State and County Offices shall view and print their producer spot check lists as posted on the designated web site. If an entity is selected from the national database that is no longer farming or participating in the 2008 crop year, a notation shall be made on the spot check list. For more information about the new spot check selection procedure, feel free to contact your local Farm Service Agency office for additional clarification.

County Committee Elections "FSA Counts on You"

Since COC elections happen only once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into *local administrative areas*, or LAAs. 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.

LAA 3 will hold an election this year in Carroll County. This area includes Taneytown, New Windsor and Union Bridge.

Nominations

Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee election will be accepted **June 15 through Aug. 1, 2008.**

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 repre-

senting socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates.

The nomination form, FSA-669A, is available at the county office or may be downloaded from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>.

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 returned to the county office by the close of business on Aug. 1, or postmarked by midnight Aug. 1, 2008.

Voting

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 3, and must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Dec. 1, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 1, 2008.

Agricultural 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.

Candidate Eligibility

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:
 1. Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
 2. Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
 3. Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

Controlled Substances Cont'd

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible for any or all program payments and benefits:

- for up to 5 years after the first conviction
- for up to 10 years after the second conviction
- permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants convicted of federal or state offense for the possession of a controlled substance shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits, as follows:

- up to 1 year upon the first conviction
- up to 5 years after a second or subsequent conviction.

For additional clarification about county committee elections, contact your local county office staff.

Continuous CRP

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll environmentally sensitive acres in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Continuous CRP program is a voluntary enrollment program. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments or local Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) availability, please contact your local FSA office.

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.

Online Services

Producers, if you have Internet access you can electronically log on, fill out and print a variety of FSA paper forms in the comfort of your home as your schedule allows. You can also register for secure electronic access that will allow you to electronically sign and transmit some forms directly to the county office staff. If you are new to the website, first you will want to obtain a Level 2 USDA Service Center Customer ID and password at

<http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and then click on "Create an Account Page" link.

USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. This includes things such as submitting forms electronically, completing surveys online, and checking the status of your USDA accounts.

If you already have a Customer ID and password, then click on the following eForms website at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet> and then click on the "Sign In" button. A disclaimer window will open and after you read the "Warning message" click on the "Continue" button.

Then the USDA Web services page will open to the eAuthentication login page. Enter your login User ID and password and then click on the "Login" button. To sign and transmit forms electronically, you must sign-up and get a User ID and password.

Submitting an e-Form is convenient. You can access information anytime day or night seven days a week. It's faster and forms and applications can be submitted and received in the county office in a matter of minutes, not days or weeks.

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 one of our events, please call (410)-848-2780 ext. 2. and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

TV Change in February 2009

On February 18, 2009 all TV broadcasts will go from analog to digital. Most analog TV's are in rural areas. The government and the Commerce Department will give those who apply two coupons worth \$40 each to buy an analog-to-digital converter box,

[Name] County FSA Office
Address Line 2
Address Line 3



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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CITY, STATE
PERMIT #XXX

which can be attached to old analog televisions. Coupon applications and more information are available online at <http://dtvanswers.com/>. We also have a few coupon applications here at the office.



Selected Interest Rates for June 2008	
Farm Operating - Direct	3.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.875%
Limited Resource - Farm Operating	5.00%
Limited Resource - Farm Ownership	5.00%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.00%
Emergency	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility	3.375%

Dates to Remember	
June 15	Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee begin
June 15	Small Grain acreage reports due
Continuous	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
July 15	Spring-seeded crops, hay, and CRP/CREP ,etc. acreage reports due
July 18	LCP Sign-up deadline
August 1	Last day to accept COC nomination forms

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



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