The Chatham County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee election will be held this year for Local Administrative Area (LAA) 3 on December 7, 2009. LAA 3 includes the townships of: Baldwin, Cape Fear, New Hope, Williams, and Oakland-Haw River.

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 3. 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 and community 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. Any interested person who would like more information on committee nominations or the committee election process should contact the county office.

Aug 3, 2009 ........... Last day to file nomination form,
Nov 6, 2009 ........... Ballots mailed to eligible voters
Dec 7, 2009 ........... Last day to return voted ballots
Jan 1, 2010 ........... Elected member takes office

Ag Cost Share Program Accepting Applications

The Chatham County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is accepting applications for the North Carolina Ag Cost Share Program which helps farmers put water quality improving practices on their farm. If you have a water quality concern on your property please contact the SWCD office at 919-542-8240. They are located in the Agriculture Building downstairs from the Farm Service Agency.

SODBUSTING

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 woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985. 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 FSA 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 NRCS 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. The AD-1026 is the producer’s signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation, provisions will not be violated.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm
SPOUSAL SIGNATURES

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. Spouses may not sign FSA-211s on behalf of each other or sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Spouses must have a power of attorney on file or sign personally for claim of attorney on file or sign. Spouses must have a power of attorney on file or sign personally for claim of attorney on file or sign on behalf of the other spouse to review or other spouse does not entitle documents on behalf of the other spouse.

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

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) should have been reported by May 15. All spring or summer seeded crops (corn, soybeans, sorghum, grass, tobacco, cotton, CRP, and fruits or vegetables) must be reported by June 30. 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 natural disaster conditions.

FARM STORAGE LOANS AVAILABLE

Loans are available to producer of wheat, corn, soybeans 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, Friday, July 3 in observance of Independence Day.

YOUTH LOANS

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Live in a rural area or in a town of 50,000 people or fewer
- Be 10 years to 21 years of age
- Must obtain a written recommendation and consent from a parent or guardian if the applicant has not reached the age of majority under state law
- Comply with FSA’s general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor
- The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision. Please call Farm Loan Manager, Bill Rhodes, for more information or for assistance in completing the forms.

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.