



**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**

**FARM SERVICE AGENCY
CHATHAM COUNTY
COMMITTEE**

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OFFICE HOURS

**Monday – Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm**



CHATHAM COUNTY

JULY 2013

**FSA NOMINATING PETITIONS BEING
ACCEPTED**

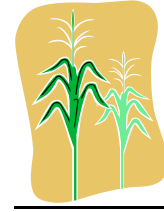
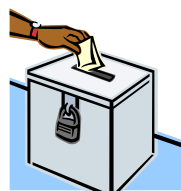
The Chatham County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee election will be held this year for Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2 on December 2, 2013. LAA 2 includes the townships of: Center, Gulf, Hadley, and Hickory Mountain.

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 2. Blank petitions (FSA-669A's) 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 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 and beginning farmers. Any interested person who would like more information on committee nominations or the committee election process should contact the county office.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES:

- Aug 1, 2013 Last day to file nomination form
- Nov 4, 2013 Ballots mailed to eligible voters
- Dec 2, 2013 Last day to return voted ballots
- Jan 1, 2014 Elected member takes office



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. **All spring or summer seeded crops (corn, soybeans, sorghum, grass, tobacco, cotton, CRP, and fruits or vegetables) must be reported by July 15.** However, if the crop is planted after July 15, producers have 15 days to report that crop. 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. Prevented planted acres must be reported timely while there is still evidence of the natural disaster and producers must be able to establish, to the satisfaction of the County Committee, that the crop was prevented from being planted because of a natural disaster and not because of a management decision. 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 because of a natural disaster.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

The Chatham County FSA Office will be closed, Monday, September 2 in observance of Labor Day.

The Chatham County FSA Office will be closed, Monday, October 14 in observance of Columbus Day



DIRECT & COUNTER CYCLICAL PROGRAM

The last day to sign up for the Direct & Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) is August 2, 2013.

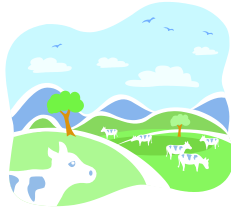
Please be reminded that you also must complete a crop report of your farm by July 15 in order to receive the DCP payment.

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**

REASONABLE 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 the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements



NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) will be available for the 2014 crop year to producers for individual crop losses. NAP provides financial assistance to producers for losses on crops that are not insurable and the **loss is caused by a natural disaster**. An eligible producer is a landowner, tenant, or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop. Eligible crops include commercial crops and other agricultural commodities produced for food (including livestock feed) or fiber for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is unavailable. To apply for NAP coverage you must file an application for coverage, CCC-471, and pay the service fee and these actions must be taken by the crop application closing date. The service fee is \$250 per crop not to exceed \$750 per producer per county.

Upcoming 2014 closing dates are:

September 3, 2013 for: Sage and **Strawberries**

October 1, 2013 for: Barley, Oats, Rye and

Wheat (intended use NOT for grain)

November 15, 2013 for: Alfalfa, Apples, Blackberries, Blueberries, Caneberries, Grapes, **GRASS (Grazing or Hay)**, Honey, Lespedeza, Peaches, Pecans, Plums, and Raspberries.

Please note that the closing date for pasture coverage has been moved to November 15 from November 20. Also please note that the new crop reporting date for pasture is November 15 of each year. This means that the coverage needs to be taken out AND the crop report must be completed by November 15.

MICROLOANS AVAILABLE

FSA developed the Microloan Program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche, and small family farm operations. FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producer. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA). Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities,

land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program. Individuals interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact Bill Rhodes at 704-788-2107 ext. 115.

SODBUSTING, SWAMPBUSTING

The term "sodbusting" is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone lands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands. 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 USDA programs such as DCP, loans, and crop insurance. Provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). 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 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 term "swampbuster" is used when a producer converts a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop. **This includes land that is being cleared for pasture.** To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that land that will be cleared have a wetland determination from NRCS **BEFORE** clearing. Producers clearing land for pasture especially need to have a wetland determination. If a producer inadvertently clears an area that is considered wetland, then that producer could be ineligible for all USDA benefits on any land they own or operate. Converting wetlands to cropland or pasture use is a violation of swampbuster provisions. Once the land is cleared in violation, it is too late to be in compliance.