

October 2016



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## Chatham County, NC FSA Updates

### Chatham County FSA Office

65 E Chatham Physical  
PO Box 49 Mailing  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
Phone: 919-542-2244 ext.  
2  
Fax: 844-325-6879

**County Executive  
Director:**  
Claudia A Austin

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Mike Brown

**Program Technicians:**  
Vonetta S French  
Lori E Andrews

**County Committee:**  
Clarence Durham - Chair  
Billy Fitts - Vice Chair  
Johnny Glosson-Member  
Barbara Pugh - Advisor

**Next County Committee  
Meeting:** December 7  
10:00 am

### Emergency Loans

On October 12, 2016, President Obama declared a major disaster in the State of North Carolina based on losses caused by Hurricane Matthew that occurred October 4, 2016 and continuing. As a result of this major disaster, 3 North Carolina counties were declared eligible for Federal disaster assistance, including Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency (EM) loans for eligible family farmers. Those primary disaster counties are:

Greene	Harnett	Sampson
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In addition to those 3 primary disaster counties, 13 additional North Carolina counties are named as contiguous counties where eligible family farmers may qualify for FSA EM loan assistance, in accordance with Section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. Those counties are:

Bladen	<b>CHATHAM</b>	Cumberland	Duplin	
Johnston	Lee	Lenoir	Moore	
Pender	Pitt	Wake	Wayne	Wilson

Effective October 12, 2016, farmers in Chatham County may apply for EM loans for physical and production losses. June 12, 2017 is the deadline for filing an application. The Chatham County FSA office is located at 65 E Chatham St, Pittsboro. Affected farmers are encouraged to call and make an appointment to discuss emergency loans. Any farmer who suffered a physical and production loss can also contact the county office for additional information on disaster assistance.

# Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. 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 ARC/PLC, 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.

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## Reminders

### 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.

### Dates to Remember

\* The last day to report acreage devoted grazing or hay acres is **November 15, 2016**.

\* The last day to apply for NAP coverage on grazing or hay acres is **November 21, 2016**. This coverage works like insurance. If there is a qualifying drought, it will generate a payment on pasture acres. The service fee is \$250 per crop. Please call the county office if you would like more information.

\* If you have damage to crops from adverse weather, it must be reported within 15 days of the date of the damage. If you have lost livestock from adverse weather, it must be reported within 30 days of the date of the loss. Please take pictures of the crop damage or the livestock lost as soon as possible

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in a meeting should contact Claudia A Austin at 919-542-2244 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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