

April 2017



Farm Service Agency

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- [Clearing New Land](#)
- [Direct Farm Loans](#)
- [FSA Offers Text Alerts](#)

Chatham County, NC FSA Updates

Chatham County FSA Office

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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: April 25, 2017
9:00 am

Clearing New Land

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.

Direct Farm Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating Loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements. The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/index> for more information on direct loans.

FSA Offers Text Alerts

Farmers and ranchers now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Producers can text NCChatham to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from Chatham County. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Please contact your local FSA office at 919-542-2244 ext. 2 if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the new text message option.

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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).