

**Notes from Saint Simons Island.**

**03/28/2008**

**Bonnie Heinzman, NASCOE President, PT from West Virginia.**

**Maintain support for the COC system in any reorganization of FSA.  
Support FSA having Conservation Administration. Encouraged Cap Wiz  
from home computers.  
Reclassifications are being worked on.**

**Jack Kingston, Georgia Congressman**

**Farm bill has PL as a hold up issue from administration and some members  
of congress. Office Closures on hold. Ear marks are a big issue but a good  
tool to tweak the budget if used properly. Oil is a big big issue, strange that  
Cuba and China are going to drill off the coast of Florida but we can't.  
Should be able to get the oil in ANWAR in Alaska and drill off Florida Coast  
to help meet our energy needs. Immigration, we need a viable H2A program  
to have migrants do the jobs American citizens will not do.**

**Allan Boyd, Florida Congressman,**

**Peanut farmer from Monticello, Fla. and a long term customer of the agency.  
President's farm bill was 19 billion over budget and congress is now 10 billion  
over budget and the President threatens veto over the 10 billion. We use 3  
billion a day in Iraq that we must borrow but can't have 10 billion over the  
life of the farm bill.**

**TASCOE, Tennessee Association**

**8-12/16-2009 Gatlinburg, Room Rates \$104.00 2009 Rally**

**Don Kohler, Ga Pnt Commission**

**Supports FSA.**

**NAFEC, National Association of Farmer Elected Committeepersons, Morris  
O'Quinn**

**Encourage COC and FSA employees to join NAFEC. Big voice with  
Congress.**

**RASCOE, Retired Employees Association, June Faulk**

**Encouraged joining as the association helps with retire and future retirees benefits. Working to get retiree health benefits to be pretax like current employees.**

**Jim Mace, J & M Marketing**

**Long term care, get some because the odds are that you will need it!  
J & M has policies for sale.**

**Teresa Lasseter, FSA Administrator**

**Computers- Still working on computer fix.**

**IPEA Last reviews are much better. 11.2% in 2005 now 2% for 2006. This was done by hard work of the employees.**

**MIDA, Modernize and Innovate Delivery System to streamline and modernize the 200 programs FSA Administrators.**

**DD national training in Texas, seven years since last DD training.**

**We have to deliver the programs in the most efficient manner. FSA is the same structure as in the 1930's. We need to change for a more efficient manner of doing business. Offices must be located where they should be with an adequate staff, trained with the resources as needed. We must close offices to do a more efficient way of doing business. Congress stopped closures of offices in Dec. 07, 93 offices closed. 253 offices were scheduled to be closed. We are waiting on the farm bill. We will be able to close offices within 20 miles of another office. Administration will follow the farm bill. Staffing comes after rent and IT. Fewer locations fully staffed. WDC and STO's will be looked at by an outside firm which will study and make a recommendation by 4-21-2008.**

**Farm Bill      Funding above the base line will have cuts somewhere. FSA Staff is ready to help congress with any information needed with the farm bill.**

**Budget          Flat line with no increase. 1 Billion for salary and expenses. Last 5 years FSA has not received the Presidents budget request.  
No reductions in staff so far. County numbers are as low as they can go.**

**Training        Concerned. Expect the STO's to do their part in training COF's.**

**We must use new ways to train not just group meeting, but use new ways for budget reasons.**

**Concerns** Any concerns of employees may be addressed to Teresa. Call if needed. Keep info going up to her office.

**Our jobs are important to farmers and national defense!**

**Barbara Boyd, HRD, Classification Specialist**

**EOPF, Electronic official personnel folders required by new law.  
Contractor hired to scan and go through quality check to verify info is in the EOPF that is in the paper OPF and in the proper place in the EOPF.  
Employee will have electronic access to EOPF.**

**Empower Program for NPC and NFC programs.**

**Performance MGT changed from pass fail to 5 tier system for meaningful performance and goals tied to job standards and performance.**

**Awards 75 % to outstanding and superior, 25% for superior accomplishment awards and spot awards.**

**CED Classification almost completed. Will be ready by summer 08.**

		<b>For Grade 12 (2 of 3 for 12)</b>
<b>Three areas</b>	<b>Number of employees.</b>	<b>3 or more.</b>
	<b>Major program activity.</b>	<b>3 or more major areas.</b>
	<b>Participation in programs</b>	<b>340 or more 1099's.</b>

**PT Reclassification will be completed after CED Reclassification is finalized.**

**John Johnson, WDC**

**Farm Bill** May extend current bill for 1 to 2 years. 50/50 chance.

**Direct Attribution, three entity rule will be out. Problem to implement for 2008 due to timing and making change.**

**Permanent Disaster Program Funding is the big problem. WDC wants to make it as simple as possible.**

**Wetland mapping** Only 6 states 100% mapped. Really important for producer to have accurate data.

**NRCS and FSA are on the same page with mapping. Questions about certified and inventoried determinations send up line for answers.**

**Make the best effort to complete but deadlines flexible.**

**TTPP Deadline for signing up coming in regs. June 2008.**

**Disaster Declarations affects EM Loan eligibility and some livestock programs.**

**Trying to make some changes to make less political, put back to the STO for more realistic and credible designations.**

**Conservation No early release of CRP for 2008.**

**Continuous CRP for buffers to cover HEL land adjacent to HEL.**

**WL to help lessen the removal of land from CRP.**

**Letters to producers about assistance from conservation orgs. NWTF etc.**

**Encouraging field trips for FSA and NRCS employees to see and help understand practices.**

**ECP has back log of pending funding requests.**

**Bob Redding, NASCOE Legislative Consultant.**

**Farm Bill 1 to 3% cut in payments**

**Conservation could be reduced.**

**Office closures will be addressed in bill?**

**IT and Communications not specifically covered.**

**Conservation Administration in question, reorg after farm bill. Peterson, Chairman of House Ag Committee stated he wants to Address reorganization of USDA after farm bill.**

**All commodity groups, producers and non producers will compete for smaller ag budget.**

## **Q and A**

**CED Reclassification, will it use a 2 year average of three areas?**

**Answer** Yes, 2007 will be an average of 2005 and 2006. **Boyd**

**Leasing authority, will it return to CED?**

**Answer** No. **Teresa**

**Shared MGT, will it be considered in reclassification?**

**Answer** No. **Boyd**

**Any proposed Buyout of FSA employees in the future?**

**Answer** No. **Teresa**

**Grade retention for down graded offices?**

**Answer** Yes, until CED is replaced, then next CED will be lower grade. **Boyd**

**What if COF is understaffed to 2 PT's**

**Answer** Use 2 of 3 to meet grade 12 requirements. **Boyd**

**Any relief on record retention and expense of sending to nation records center?**

**Answer** Court order to retain records. Must keep, no relief. Cost covered under state budgets. **Teresa**

**What are the rules for the STC and STO notifying a COC of an overturned COC Decision?**

**Answer** All STC determinations should be well documented and COC should be Notified. **Teresa**

**If farm bill is extended, what will happen with office closures?**

**Answer** We will wait until congress passes the law. Stopping the closures is unfair to offices closed and is a waste of resources and tax dollars. **Teresa**

**In the farm bill under misc., each person is to receive a receipt for services requested and received.**

**Answer** Person would be provided a receipt if requested. **Teresa**

**Chief PT's do not retain their grade if down graded but CED's will?**

**Answer** Downgrades have grade retention for 2 years then pay retention. CED's have this due to volatility of workload. **Boyd**

**For deceased producers, shouldn't we be notified by system when this happens?**

**Answer** Future software should take care of this. **John**

**We currently pay livestock disaster to deceased persons, so what's the difference?**

**Answer**      **These participants although deceased were alive in the year signing Up and died later. This is OK.**      **John**

**After office consolidation it is taking 2 months for access to programs. Why?**

**Answer**      **Should not take that long.**      **Teresa**

**How long before we can begin sign up when farm bill passes?**

**Answer**      **I no major changes between old and new bill then, short time for regs to be published and software changes.**      **John**

**Do farmers have to apply for quality loss the same year as quantity loss?**

**Answer**      **Same year. The quality loss should come in June.**      **John**

**Can STO personnel in future have alternate work sites like a PT hired in STO?**

**Answer**      **No plans yet but has been done in past. Limited numbers if allowed.**      **Teresa**

**Classification of PT question?**

**Answer**      **The classification is not to address individual needs like a PT in a grade 7 Step 10. It is the evaluation of a job, the jobs level of authority, it's Scope of impact. Classification does not look at individuals**      **Boyd**

**If farm bill extended will advance direct payments be 22%?**

**Answer**      **They will be 22%**      **John**

**The proposed legislation giving compensation to FERS sick leave, why not make it equal to CSRS?**

**Answer**      **This is a beginning and NASCOE will continue to work for more.**      **Bonnie**

**PII, The COF has hundreds of files in unlocked cabinets containing PII info.**

**Would we be held accountable when no locks are on the cabinets?**

**Answer**      **We are exposed and we are working to better this but it will take a long Time. No one will be accountable for uncontrollable circumstances.**

**Teresa**

**What is the time farm of office combinations?**

**Answer**      **We would like to complete the plan but the plan can not proceed until Allowed by congress.**      **Teresa**

**If current bill is extended would the 2008 sign up deadline be extended?**

**Answer**      **Yes but depends on legislation.**      **John**

