

Limestone County Producer Outreach Meeting



In June 2013, the Limestone County Farm Service Agency (FSA) personnel held a producer outreach meeting at the County Extension Service meeting room. The meeting was a collaborative effort with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Alabama A&M University Small Farms Research Center. The purpose of the meeting was to reach new and beginning farmers and minority producers in Limestone County and to make them aware of the programs available for them in each office and each agency function.

Shane Seay, County Executive Director of the Limestone County FSA highlighted the election process and the fact that this year all local administrative areas would be electing a representative, due to the fact that urbanization caused areas of the county to be out of balance in regards to the number of farms and voters in each area. As he stated in the meeting, "This gives all of the producers in the county the ability to take part in the election process this year."



Loan Officer Terrick Boley presented the various loans available. He gave a brief overview of each of them, as well as outlined criteria and the processing times.



District I Director Roger Wilson was on hand to elaborate on both the election and loan processes. He also helped answer the numerous questions of the producers.

Joyce Lane, District Conservationist for the Limestone County NRCS) presented producers with a display of the various programs and practices that were currently being implemented in the county. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the



Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) were areas that were of most interest to the audience.



Alabama A&M University Small Farms Research Center program assistants JaMarkus Crowell and Denera Pride gave a slideshow presentation on the functions of the center. They encouraged the producers to take advantage of the services and programs. They emphasized help in the areas of bookkeeping and farm management training, as well as being a liaison linking USDA agencies and program participants. They mentioned a program that targeted Alabama Women in Agriculture.

This joint meeting proved to be a success. Each agency received fruits for their labor. FSA received a nomination to the county committee and two loan applications were given out. NRCS signed up a participant in EQIP, and the Small Farms Research Center received a participant in the Alabama Women in Agriculture program.

Invitations to this meeting were sent out to producers by email blasts, with an emphasis on new and beginning farmers, community and county groups, and AG teachers. A member of the Black National Growers Council and the Limestone County Commission Chairman and District 1 Commissioner (both program participants) attended and promised to take the information to their members and constituents.

