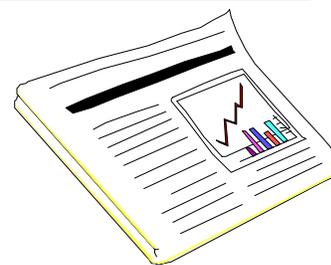


Farm Service Agency News Release



**Indiana Farm Service Agency
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USDA Facilitates Farm Bill Sign-Up

On January 31, 2003 USDA Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, announced that steps are being taken to help producers better complete the updating of their bases and yields for the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP). When yield data for a farm is unavailable, Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office Committees (COC) now have the authority to assign yield values that do not exceed the county average for that crop. Producers, who did not own the eligible land in prior years and/or did not farm a particular parcel, may not be able to obtain the needed production evidence. The FSA County Committee may now establish missing yield values based on similar farms in the local farming community, or use the LDP records on file for that specific farm. These measures are being implemented by Secretary Veneman to facilitate the DCP program sign-up now in progress.

The deadline for producers to make base and yield updates, will remain April 1, 2003. Producers who do not want to be stuck with the program's default base and yield values must complete data corrections at their local county FSA office before the April 1st deadline. With less than two months remaining, many county offices are running out of appointment times to work with producers. Inaction on the part of farm owners will result in default bases and yields being used to calculate program payments. Updating your bases and yields can dramatically increase the financial assistance that is offered by the current farm bill and any other programs that may develop in the future.

Producers with questions need to contact their local FSA Office. County office appointment books are filling up fast and producers need to call and schedule a visit as soon as possible.

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