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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Georgia State FSA Newsletter

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Georgia FSA Announces Changes to Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides financial assistance to producers of crops not insured by Federal Crop Insurance to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevented planting.

Changes to NAP authorized in Georgia for crop year 2019 are as follows:

- Non-irrigated fruits and vegetables are not approved for coverage for 2019 and subsequent years, with the exception of the following 11 northeast Georgia counties:

Dianne R. Westmoreland

Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer, Habersham, Lumpkin, Murray, Pickens, Rabun, Towns, Union, and White.

Farm Loan Chief:

Robert Tyson

- Direct seeded peppers are ineligible for coverage under NAP. Transplanting with 8-12 week transplants is required.

Farm Programs Chief:

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Public Affairs/Outreach

Neal Leonard

- Producers must abide by the crop rotation restrictions found on chemical labels in order to be eligible for NAP benefits.

To find contact information for your local office go to

www.fsa.usda.gov/ga

Eligible producers can apply for coverage using form CCC-471, "Application for Coverage". Producers must file the application and pay an administrative service fee prior to the application closing date for the crop being insured. Most spring-seeded crops have an application closing date of January 31 and permanent pasture has an application closing date of August 15 of the preceding year. The service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Producers may elect higher levels of coverage. Contact your local county office to discuss buy-up coverage and the premiums associated.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers may request a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction when the application for coverage is filed.

For more information on NAP, service fees, premiums and sales deadlines, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Farm Loan teams are already working on operating loans for spring 2018 so it is important that potential borrowers submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan teams can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. The Farm Loan staff can provide more details on farm operating and microloans and provide loan applications. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, or for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

Please call the local county office if you have questions about any of the loans available through FSA.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2017, through Sept. 30, 2018, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope.

Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certification fees, late fees and inspections necessary to address National Organic Program regulatory violations.

Producers and handlers may submit OCCSP applications to FSA county offices or they may apply through participating State Agencies, which will be listed at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index> as their agreements to administer the program are finalized.

The FSA OCCSP application form is available at [USDA's eForms site](#), by selecting "Browse forms" and entering "OCCSP" in the "title or keywords" field on the search page.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and Farm Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Georgia is April 1 through August 31. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely

impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

CRP Payment Limitation

Payments and benefits received under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are subject to the following:

- payment limitation by direct attribution
- foreign person rule
- average adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation

The 2014 Farm Bill continued the \$50,000 maximum CRP payment amount that can be received annually, directly or indirectly, by each person or legal entity. This payment limitation includes all annual rental payments and incentive payments (Sign-up Incentive Payments and Practice Incentive Payments). Annual rental payments are attributed (earned) in the fiscal year in which program performance occurs. Sign-up Incentive Payments (SIP) are attributed (earned) based on the fiscal year in which the contract is approved, not the fiscal year the contract is effective. Practice Incentive Payments (PIP) are attributed (earned) based on the fiscal year in which the cost-share documentation is completed and the producer or technical service provider certifies performance of practice completion to the county office. Such limitation on payments is controlled by direct attribution.

- Program payments made directly or indirectly to a person are combined with the pro rata interest held in any legal entity that received payment, unless the payments to the legal entity have been reduced by the pro rata share of the person.
- Program payments made directly to a legal entity are attributed to those persons that have a direct and indirect interest in the legal entity, unless the payments to the legal entity have been reduced by the pro rata share of the person.
- Payment attribution to a legal entity is tracked through four levels of ownership. If any part of the ownership interest at the fourth level is owned by another legal entity, a reduction in payment will be applied to the payment entity in the amount that represents the indirect interest of the fourth level entity in the payment entity.

Essentially, all payments will be “attributed” to a person’s Social Security Number. Given the current CRP annual rental rates in many areas, it is important producers are aware of how CRP offered acreages impact their \$50,000 annual payment limitation. Producers should contact their local FSA office for additional information. NOTE: The information in the above article only applies to contracts subject to 4-PL and 5-PL regulations. It does not apply to contacts subject to 1-PL regulations.

2018 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Name County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are as followed:

March 15, 2018	Pecans, Cabbage (Planted 10/1-2/20)
May 15, 2018	Sweet Corn (Planted 8/26-5/15), Tobacco, Tomatoes (Planted 8/16-4/5)
July 15, 2018	All other crops
August 15, 2018	Tomatoes (Planted 7/1-8/15)
September 15, 2018	Sweet Corn (Planted 7/15-8/25)
October 15, 2018	Cabbage (Planted 7/16-9/30)

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Name County FSA office at Phone.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts.

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful for borrowers who use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines>. Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a "filter" on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three month period, the preauthorized debt agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

For more information about PAD, contact your local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

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