



Georgia Farm Service Agency Newsletter - November 2021

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A Note from Georgia State Executive Director Arthur L. Tripp, Jr.

Greetings! My name is Arthur L. Tripp, Jr., Georgia Farm Service Agency State Executive Director (SED). I am excited and honored to have the opportunity to serve in this role and to support Georgia's farmers and ranchers. I, along with our Georgia FSA employees, will continue to work diligently to ensure equitable access to FSA programs. As I am certain you are aware, FSA programs play such a crucial role in supporting economic stability and prosperity of Georgia agricultural producers and rural communities.

I am a native Georgian who was born in Warner Robins and I am a graduate of the University of Georgia (Go Dawgs!). In addition, I previously served as the Senior Policy Advisor to U.S. Congressman David Scott, who is the current Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture, so my agricultural background in and for Georgia is extensive.

I encourage you to review the information that is provided below regarding important programs and deadlines. Please feel free to contact your local FSA office to learn about our many programs and how they may assist you in achieving your farming goals. Georgia FSA is working extremely hard to ensure that each and every customer is receiving excellent customer service.

Finally, as we enter the Thanksgiving season, this is an opportunity to be mindful of the many blessings we enjoy every day. I would like to say "Thank You" for your service and hard work in supporting Georgia Agriculture.



Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has several loan programs to help you start or continue an agriculture production. Farm ownership and operating loans are available.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

For more information, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Service Center.

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2021 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on Nov. 1, 2021, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 6, 2021.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2022.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2021 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

Applying for FSA Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain, or strengthen their farm or ranch. Direct loans are processed, approved and serviced by FSA loan officers.

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 direct farm ownership loans is \$600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is \$400,000 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 contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Under WHIP+ and/or QLA

If you received a payment under the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLA) for crop production and/or quality losses occurring in 2018, 2019, or 2020 crop years, you are required to meet linkage requirements by obtaining federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level, or higher, for both the 2022 and 2023 crop years.

When applying for WHIP+ or QLA, form FSA-895 (Crop Insurance and/or NAP Coverage Agreement) was submitted acknowledging the requirement to obtain federal crop insurance, if available, or NAP coverage if federal crop insurance is not available. The coverage requirement is applicable to the physical location county of the crop that received WHIP+ and/or QLA benefits.

Producers should not delay contacting their federal crop insurance agent or local county FSA Office to inquire about coverage options, as **failure to obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will result in the required refund of WHIP+ benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest.** You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by [visiting the RMA website](#).

For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19

Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on farmers.gov/coronavirus.

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the farmers.gov portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at farmers.gov/sign-in.

USDA Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers to complete [crop acreage reports](#) by the final acreage reporting date.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Georgia:

November 15, 2021	Onions (planted 9/20-10/20)
January 2, 2022	Apiculture
January 15, 2022 Seeded Small Grains	Apples, Blueberries, Canola, Peaches, Rye, Fall-
February, 15, 2022	Onions (planted 10/21-2/1)

To complete your acreage report, please call your local County FSA office to schedule an appointment. FSA can work with producers to file timely acreage reports by phone, email, online tools and virtual meetings as well as by appointment in person.

The following exception applies to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- **Fruit and Vegetable Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered**

crops is 15 days after the designated final planting date for the specific zone.

- **Perennial Forage Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for perennial forage is 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop being reported.**

For questions, please call your local County FSA office.

Double-Cropping

Each year, state committees review and approve or disapprove county committee recommended changes or additions to specific combinations of crops.

Double-cropping is approved when two specific crops have the capability to be planted and carried to maturity for the intended use, as reported by the producer, on the same acreage within a crop year under normal growing conditions. The specific combination of crops recommended by the county committee must be approved by the state committee.

Double-cropping is approved in Georgia on a county-by-county basis. Contact your local FSA Office for a list of approved double-cropping combinations for your county.

A crop following a cover crop terminated according to termination guidelines is approved double cropping and these combinations do not have to be approved by the state committee.

Sale of Land Under CRP Contract

This is a reminder for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants that land sold while under a CRP contract requires that money be refunded, unless there is a successor-in-interest to the contract. Failure to get the buyer to assume a contract will result in the participant being required to refund all CRP rental payments, cost share payments, incentive payments, interest, and liquidated damages. Some CRP participants who sell their CRP land include a requirement in the sales contract that the new owner assume the CRP contract. Thus, eliminating any violation.

Local FSA County Committees are required by regulations to terminate a CRP contract when the CRP participant loses control of the land and there is no successor-in-interest to the contract. Please contact your local FSA County Office before you sell land that is currently in a CRP contract.

Violations Under CRP Contract Period

This is a reminder for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants that land enrolled in the CRP program must follow the terms and conditions applicable to the signed contract. Any violations such as, but not limited to harvesting of trees, selling of land without a successor-in-interest to the contract, enrolling into other Federal conservation

programs, and so forth will result in the termination of the contract and the participant being required to refund all CRP rental payments, cost share payments, incentive payments, interest and liquidated damages.

Please contact your local FSA County Office if you have any questions regarding permitted and/or restricted activities on your CRP land.

Georgia Farm Service Agency

355 E Hancock Avenue
Athens, GA 30601

Phone: 706-546-2266
Fax: 855-409-5735

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Georgia/index>

State Executive Director

Arthur L. Tripp, Jr.
Arthur.tripp@usda.gov

Administrative Officer

Dianne Westmoreland
Dianne.westmoreland@usda.gov

Farm Programs Chief

Brett Martin
Brett.martin@usda.gov

Farm Loan Programs Chief

Robert Tyson
Robert.tyson@usda.gov