

November 2015



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North Carolina FSA Newsletter

As we gather around the table for Thanksgiving, we can be thankful for those who have made our beautiful tables possible.

Realizing this is the middle of harvest time for some, This has been a tough year. We've had a cold, wet spring, hot summer and wet fall. As I send this note, 72 of the 100 counties have been designated either primary or contiguous area declarations due to heat or water related disaster. That being said the first payment under ARC-PLC just started flowing based on '14 prices and production. Trust this will help soften the blow some. We would also like to remind dairy farmers, sign up ends on November 20 and is fast approaching. Also there are a number of NAP signups as well. Please contact your local FSA office for more specific information.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving
Bob Etheridge
State Executive Director

North Carolina Farm Service Agency

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www.fsa.usda.gov/nc

State Committee:

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA

Local Offices Issue Receipts for Services Provided

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural

Pender Sharp, Chairman
John E. Ashe, Jr., Member
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Nancy Fish, Member
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State Executive Director:
Bob Etheridge

Executive Officer:
Cindy Kernodle

Division Chiefs:
Mike Eaves:
Administrative Officer

Tim Jones:
Chief Farm Programs

Mike Huskey: Chief
Farm Loan Programs

**State Committee
Meeting:
Monthly First Tuesday**

Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions specific to your operation.

Federal Holiday Closings
November 11 - Veteran's
Day
November 26 -
Thanksgiving Day

program assistance requested from FSA, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity. In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter. To learn more about FSA, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or to find your local USDA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Farmers Facing Market

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that beginning today, nearly one half of the 1.7 million farms that signed up for either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs will receive safety-net payments for the 2014 crop year.

Unlike the old direct payments program, which paid farmers in good years and bad, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized a new safety-net that protects producers only when market forces or adverse weather cause unexpected drops in crop prices or revenues.

Example: The corn price for 2014 is 30 percent below the historical benchmark price used by the ARC-County program, and revenues of the farms participating in the ARC-County program are down by about \$20 billion from the benchmark during the same period. The nearly \$4 billion provided today by the ARC and PLC safety-net programs will give assistance to producers where revenues dropped below normal."

The ARC/PLC programs primarily allow producers to continue to produce for the market by making payments on a percentage of historical base production, limiting the impact on production decisions.

Nationwide, 96 percent of soybean farms, 91 percent of corn farms, and 66 percent of wheat farms elected the ARC-County coverage option. Ninety-nine percent of long grain rice and peanut farms,

and 94 percent of medium grain rice farms elected the PLC option. Overall, 76 percent of participating farm acres are protected by ARC-County, 23 percent by PLC, and 1 percent by ARC-Individual. For data about other crops, as well as state-by-state program election results, final PLC price and payment data, and other program information including frequently asked questions, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Crops receiving assistance include barley, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, oats, peanuts, dry peas, soybeans, and wheat. In the upcoming months, disbursements will be made for other crops after marketing year average prices are published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Any disbursements to participants in ARC-County or PLC for long and medium grain rice (except for temperate Japonica rice) will occur in November, for remaining oilseeds and also chickpeas in December, and temperate Japonica rice in early February 2016. ARC-individual payments will begin in November. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

The Budget Control Act of 2011, passed by Congress, requires USDA to reduce payments by 6.8 percent. For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local Farm Service Agency office. To find a local Farm Service Agency office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

USDA Announces \$210 Million to be Invested in Renewable Energy Infrastructure through the Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership

21 States and Private Partners Match Federal Funds to Expand Infrastructure and Increase Fuel Options for Consumers

USDA is partnering with 21 states through the Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership (BIP) to nearly double the number of fueling pumps nationwide that supply renewable fuels to American motorists. In May 2015, USDA announced the availability of \$100 million in grants through the BIP, and that to apply states and private partners match the federal funding by a 1:1 ratio. USDA received applications requesting over \$130 million, outpacing the \$100 million that is available. With the matching commitments by state and private entities, the BIP is investing a total of \$210 million to strengthen the rural economy.

The 21 states participating in the BIP include Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The amount awarded to each state is available at: www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/energy-programs/bip/index. The final awards being announced today are estimated to expand infrastructure by nearly 5,000 pumps at over 1,400 fueling stations.

A typical gas pump delivers fuel with 10 percent ethanol, which limits the amount of renewable energy that consumers can purchase. The new partnership will increase the number of pumps, storage and related infrastructure that offer higher blends of ethanol, such as E15, E85, and even intermediate combination blends.

USDA's Office of the Chief Economist just released a comprehensive report on ethanol. The report, titled U.S. Ethanol: An Examination of Policy, Production, Use, Distribution, and Market Interactions, brings clarity to the complex interaction of ethanol production with agricultural markets and government policies. The corn ethanol industry is the largest biofuel producer in the country, with production increasing from about 1.6 billion gallons in 2000 to just over 14 billion gallons in 2014, stimulating economic activity in rural communities. Visit www.usda.gov/oce/reports/energy/EthanolExamination102015.pdf to read the complete report.

BIP is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/energy-programs/index.

USDA Extends Dairy Margin Protection Program Deadline

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that the deadline to enroll for the dairy Margin Protection Program for coverage in 2016 has been extended until Nov. 20, 2015. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating farmers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

Producers are encouraged to use the online Web resource at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. The secure website can be accessed via computer, smartphone or tablet.

Producers who were enrolled in 2015 will need to make a coverage election for 2016 and pay the \$100 administration fee. Although any unpaid premium balances for 2015 must be paid in full by the enrollment deadline to remain eligible for higher coverage levels in 2016, premiums for 2016 are not due until Sept. 1, 2016. Also, producers can work with milk marketing companies to remit premiums on their behalf.

To enroll in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Payments under the program may be reduced by a certain percentage due to a sequester order required by Congress and issued pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Should a payment reduction be necessary, FSA will reduce the payment by the required amount.

2016 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

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

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific deadlines.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the applicable 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 applicable 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 applicable dates or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office.

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture

production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

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.

Producers are Reminded to Complete NASS Crop Surveys

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Field Offices are currently completing 2015 small grain yield surveys and will contact growers in December to complete row crop yield surveys. If you are one of the producers contacted to complete a 2015 yield survey, we encourage your participation and cooperation as many USDA agencies including the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) use the NASS yield data for their programs.

FSA uses NASS county yield data for farm credit, conservation, disaster programs, loan and commodity programs. Under the 2014 Farm Bill, FSA uses the NASS county yield data to calculate Agriculture Risk Coverage – County (ARC-CO) benchmark revenues and current year county revenues. For example, the 2014 NASS county yield, along with the crop's marketing year average price (MYA), are used to determine the county's current year revenue to determine if the county will trigger an ARC-CO payment. An ARC-CO payment is triggered for a county when the current year revenue falls below the guarantee revenue for the crop and crop year. In cases where NASS county yield data is not available, the FSA State Committee must determine a county yield using RMA yield data or the best available yield data, including assigning a county yield using neighboring county yields from NASS or RMA.

Any information that producers provide to NASS is kept confidential and protected by federal law. NASS publishes only aggregate-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified. All reports will be available at www.nass.usda.gov.

2016 Acreage Reporting of PRF and Perennial Forage (grass intended for grazing or hay

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA Office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline for PRF/Perennial Forage. Programs that require certification of PRF and/or Perennial Forage include the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage Program (PLC).

Perennial Forage includes but is not limited to grass, alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, clover and mixed forage intended for hay or grazing. PRF includes acreage insured as PRF with crop insurance.

The acreage reporting deadline for PRF/Perennial Forage is November 15, 2015.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting date:

- 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 complete.

- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendars 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.

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 your local FSA office

Selected Interest Rates for November 2015

- 90-Day Treasury Bill .125%
- Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.50%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.875%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%
- Emergency Loans 3.50%

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).