

February 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Topics for February

South Carolina Farm Service Agency

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State Executive Director:

Boone Peeler

State Committee:

Anthony Grant, Chairperson
Robert Battle
Bill Sarratt
Landy Weathers
Beth White

Administrative Officer:

Kenn Jameson

A Message from the State Executive Director

USDA will be hosting a Farm Bill listening session on February 26 in Washington DC. Anyone interested in participating should go to farmers.gov/farmbill to register. Written comments may be submitted until March 1st by accessing regulations.gov.

Congratulations to all newly elected COC Members! I look forward to meeting and working with you. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

I would like to remind producers that the last day to submit your Market Facilitation Program (MFP) application was Feb. 14, 2019. The final day to certify 2018 production is May 1, 2019. Contact your local FSA county office for more details to apply or visit www.farmers.gov/MFP.

USDA to Host 2018 Farm Bill Implementation Listening Session

Farm Programs Chief:
Amy Turner

Farm Loan Programs Chief:
William Shelley

Producers can contact their [local FSA Office](#) for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Important Dates and Deadlines:

February 28: NAP Application Closing Date for Beans, Cantaloupes, Sweet Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Grain Sorghum, Honeydew, Korean Golden Melon, Millet, Okra, Peanuts, Peppers, Pumpkins, Sorghum (Dual Purpose), Sorghum (Forage), Soybeans, Sprite Melon, Squash, Sunflowers, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Watermelons

USDA is hosting a listening session for initial input on the 2018 Farm Bill. USDA is seeking public input on the changes to existing programs implemented by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Risk Management Agency. Each agency will take into account stakeholder input when making discretionary decisions on program implementation.

The listening session will be held Feb. 26, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. in the Jefferson Auditorium in the South Building located at 14th Street and Independence Ave. S.W. in Washington, D.C.

The listening session is open to the public. Participants must register at farmers.gov/farmbill by February 22, 2019, to attend the listening session and are encouraged to provide written comments prior to the listening session. For those orally presenting comments at the listening session, written comments are encouraged to be submitted to regulations.gov by February 22, 2019. Additional written comments will be accepted through March 1, 2019. Comments received will be publicly available on www.regulations.gov.

For more information on the listening session visit farmers.gov/farmbill.

Supervised Credit

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, it is our goal to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will advise borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation's goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA's staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

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

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

To be effective for the current Fiscal Year (FY), farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the FY** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. A reconstitution is considered to be requested when all:

- of the required signatures are on FSA-155
- other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

USDA Acreage Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage Changes to July 15

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has established a new acreage reporting deadline for perennial forage for 2019 and subsequent years. Previously set in the fall, the new deadline is July 15 for all states, except for Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Timely and accurate acreage reports for all crops and land uses, including prevented planting or failed acreage, are the foundation for many FSA program benefits, including disaster programs for livestock owners. Producers must report their acreage to maintain program eligibility.

Producers who have coverage for perennial forage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must report their crop acreage by the earlier of any of the following:

- the established acreage reporting date (July 15)
- 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported

the established normal harvest date for the end of the coverage period.

Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).