

June 2013



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Alabama FSA State Updates

Alabama FSA State Office

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June 7 is the Deadline to Apply for 2011 Crop Losses Under SURE

June 7, 2013, is the deadline to submit applications for 2011 crop losses under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) Program. The program provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or quality losses.

The SURE program takes into consideration losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. To be eligible, producers must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance and obtained a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), for all economically significant crops. A producer must have a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Secretary of Agriculture under a Secretarial Disaster Designation or have actual production on the farm that was less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster.

A producer interested in signing up for SURE for their 2011 crop losses must do so before the close of business June 7, 2013, at the county FSA office servicing the producer.

CRP Sign-Up Ends June 14th

Enrollment for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ends June 14, 2013. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the program can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract which is 10-15 years.

Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2013.

Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

County Committee Election Nominations Begin June 17

The FSA County Committee Election will be held this fall; however, preparations begin now. The election of agricultural producers to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. County committees provide local input on: (1) commodity price support loans and payments; (2) conservation programs; (3) incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities; (4) emergency programs; and (5) payment eligibility.

For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA contributes one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency County Committee. Most counties are divided into three LAAs. Combined counties may have three to five LAAs. Each year, an election is held in an LAA where a committee member's three-year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election. In combined counties, two seats may be up for election. This varies among counties.

Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency County Committee Election, representing producers in the Local Administrative Area, will be accepted beginning June 17 through August 1, 2013.

Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the County Committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged, minority or women farmers or ranchers, as well as beginning farmers, may also nominate candidates.

A nomination form, FSA-669A, dated 04-15-2013, must be used to nominate a candidate. The form and details may be picked up at the FSA County Office or downloaded from the FSA Web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>, click on "Newsroom," then "County Committee Elections." Eligible voters can nominate as many candidates as they wish.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected, as well as the person making the nomination, and returned to the FSA County Office by the close of business on August 1, 2013, or postmarked by midnight August 1, 2013.

Crop Certification Deadline is July 15

After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops enrolled in programs other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program), acreage reports are to be certified by the July 15, 2013 deadline for corn, cotton, grain sorghum, peanuts, soybeans, and many other crops, including many fruits and vegetables.

Acreage reports on crops covered by NAP are due in the county office by the earlier of: 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported, or July 15, 2013, for NAP crops where the NAP policyholder has paid a fee for NAP coverage.

Farm Reconstitutions Must Be Requested by August 1

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in 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. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 1 for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different farm reconstitution methods:

1. Estate Method — The division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate
2. 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
3. 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
4. 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.

Payment Limitations Provisions Extended for 2013

All payment eligibility and payment limitation provisions, including AGI limitations, are extended for the 2013 crop year, program year, and fiscal year.

All rules and requirements effective for 2012 program payments and benefits are applicable to eligible recipients of 2013 program payment and benefits. This includes the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash-rent tenant, substantive change, minor child, and spousal provisions. Payments will continue to be limited by direct attribution to person and legal entity.

Contributions*

All partners, stockholders or members with an ownership interest in the legal entity must make a contribution, whether compensated or not compensated, for:

- Active personal labor,
- Active personal management,
- A combination of active personal labor and active personal management to the farming operation

*Note: There are exceptions for spouses.

Additional information on payment limitations is available at FSA county offices or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov

Special Accommodations Are Available

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

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).