

February 2014



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Alabama FSA State Updates

Alabama FSA State Office

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State Executive Director:
Daniel Robinson

State Committee Members:
Dr. Walter Hill, Chairperson
Laura Elliott, Member
Danny Ellison, Member
George Hodge, Member
Fred Hughes, Member

Next State Committee Meeting: February 11-12, 2014

County Committee Election Results

County committee elections are over, the ballots are counted and the results are in.

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity, and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues.

County committee members are a valuable asset because they are comprised of local producers who participate in FSA programs themselves and have a direct connection to farmers and ranchers in the community. All recently elected county committee members and alternates will take office on Feb. 18, 2014, and join the existing committee.

For more information about county committees and the election process, please contact your local FSA Office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

NAP Provisions — Are Your Crops Covered?

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) application deadline dates vary according to the crop being insured. Producers should apply for NAP coverage using form CCC-471 (Application for Coverage) prior to the application closing date for the crop being insured. Most spring-seeded crops have an application closing date of February 28. Related service fees are due when the application is filed. Contact your local FSA office for the

application closing dates for your crops.

2014 Acreage Reporting Deadline Dates

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

The following acreage reporting deadline dates are applicable for Alabama:

- January 15, 2014: Blueberries, canola, rapeseed, fall oats, peaches, fall wheat
- March 15, 2014: Pecans and potatoes (planted Jan. 1- Mar. 1)
- May 15, 2014: Sweet corn, potatoes (planted 3/2-4/15), tobacco, tomatoes
- July 15, 2014: All other crops
- November 15, 2014: 2015-crop apiculture, PRF/perennial forage, onions (Note: November 15, 2013 [extended to January 15, 2014], was the deadline date to report 2014-crop apiculture, PRF/perennial forage, onions)

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 your local FSA county office.

FSA Allows Lenders to Use Evaluations Instead of Appraisals for Loans of \$250,000 or Less

Lenders that originate Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteed loans may now use internal real estate "collateral evaluations" to support loan requests of \$250,000 or less, rather than appraisals.

This policy change will allow lenders more flexibility and a faster underwriting process, and is consistent with industry standards.

Lenders must follow their regulator's "Interagency Appraisal and Evaluation Guidelines" and apply these same policies to FSA guaranteed loans as non-guaranteed loans. In addition, lenders should request an appraisal when they would do so for unguaranteed loans even if the loan is under the threshold, such as when the expected loan-to-value is above their established standards.

A description of the method of establishing the real estate value – whether appraisal or evaluation – needs to be described to FSA in their credit presentation.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

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 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 socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged 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, socially disadvantaged 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.

Selected Interest Rates for February 2014

- 90-Day Treasury Bill -- 0.125%
- Farm Operating Loans (Direct)-- 2.00%
- Farm Ownership Loans (Direct)--4.25%
- Farm Ownership Loans (Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher)--1.50%
- Emergency Loans--3.00%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)--2.375%
- Commodity Loans (1996-Present)--1.125%

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