

April 2013



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New London County FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your Name County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

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DCP/ACRE Sign-Up Continues

The sign-up periods for DCP and ACRE are still open. Producers are encouraged to sign up for DCP before the Aug. 2, 2013, deadline. An even earlier deadline is for ACRE, which will end June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

[Read more about DCP and ACRE](#) or contact the FSA county office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

MILC Contracts Automatically Extended

Dairy producers enrolled in the Milk Income Loss Contract program (MILC) will have their contracts automatically extended through Sept. 30, 2013. There is no need to re-enroll in the program. The MILC program was part of several FSA-related programs that were continued with the extension of the 2008 Farm Bill.

The production start month previously selected by an operation is applicable for FY 2013. Starting March 1, 2013, all production start month changes must be made according to normal start month selection provisions.

Normal start month provisions: Changes must be made on or before the 14th day of the month before the selected MILC production start month, except as otherwise provided during the applicable sign-up phase. A dairy operation cannot select a MILC production start month for any month that

has already begun, except as otherwise provided; has already ended or; milk was not produced by the dairy operation.

Electronic Check Cashing Implemented in County FSA Offices

FSA/CCC has moved to OTCnet, an electronic method for processing customer check payments. When a check is submitted for payment either in person or through the mail the check will be converted into an Electronic Funds Transfer(EFT). The funds will be debited from the producer's account, usually within 24 hours of receipt. Please see the U.S. Department of Treasury legal notices posted in the Service Center or visit the following U.S. Department of Treasury Internet site for detailed information. <http://fms/treas.gov/otcnet/legal.html>

What is OTCnet? OTCnet is a Web-based online application process for converting paper checks presented to FSA into electronic debits to the producer's bank account. It presents many benefits such as reducing lost/misplaced checks and paper handling. This improves customer relations, speeds the check clearing process and reduces the potential for human error.

How will my check be handled? The check will be scanned into the system and voided. The customer will not receive the check back from FSA. FSA will hold checks for up to 14 calendar days to ensure the the item was successfully processed and then FSA will shred the check.

How quickly will funds be transferred from my account? The transfer of funds from your account could occur within 24 hours. Therefore, you should be sure that you have sufficient funds in your account to process the transaction. If you do not have sufficient funds, we may initiate the transaction again.

How will this transaction appear on my account statemnt? The transfer of funds will be reflected on your account statement. The transaction may be recorded in a different place on your statement than where your checks normally appear, such as under "other withdrawals" or "other transactions".

What are my rights if there is a problem with the transaction? You have protections under Federal law for an unauthorized fund tranfer from your account. You should contact your financial institution immediatley if you believe that the transaction reported on your account statement was not properly authoized or is otherwise incorrect.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

This ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-931 to their local FSA County Office to avoid interruption of program benefits. This form may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet>.

Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process Extended

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced the extension of the voluntary claims process for Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades. All claims must now be filed by **May 1, 2013**.

USDA urges potential claimants to contact the Claims Administrator for information and mail their claim packages on or before May 1, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Claimants may register for a claims package by calling the telephone number below Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time or by downloading the forms from the website.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Fax: (855) 626-8343

Email: claims@hwfr.org

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 – May 1, 2013.

Claim packages and other documentation may be mailed to Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Administrator, PO Box 4540, Portland, OR 97208-4540. Claim packages and other documentation may also be emailed to claims@hwfr.org. Claimants may also fax claims packages and other documentation to (855) 626-8343. Completed forms and documentation must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. PDT on May 1, 2013.

2011 SURE Sign-Up Deadline June 7

The FSA will continue to accept SURE applications for 2011 crop losses through June 7, 2013. The SURE Program provides payments to producers when crop revenues are less than the crop guarantee. The SURE Program payment is equal to 60 percent of the difference between the crop guarantee and revenue. To be eligible, the producer must have at least one crop with a 10 percent production loss.

To determine the guarantee and revenue for the SURE Program, all crops on all farms for a producer are included in the calculation. Payments under the SURE Program are limited to \$100,000.

To be eligible for the 2011 SURE Program, producers must have crop insurance on all insurable crops. For crops that are not covered by crop insurance such as hay or fresh vegetables, producers must have purchased Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage from FSA. The Crop Insurance and NAP purchase requirements is waived for crops that are not economically significant to the farming operation.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).