



GEORGIA FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWSLETTER

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Director's Message</i>	2
<i>Notice to Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers</i>	2
<i>Farm Loan Programs</i>	3
<i>Present Emergency Loan Application Deadlines in GA</i>	3
<i>Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for 2009 Through 2012</i>	4
<i>Attention: Foreign Owners of Agricultural Land</i>	4
<i>Many Counties Eligible for Grazing Assistance in LFP</i>	5
<i>Report Livestock Losses Due to Adverse Weather Events in a Timely Manner</i>	5
<i>Clearing up land? Better check First!</i>	6
<i>COC Elections – FSA Counts on You: Vote!</i>	6

CALENDER IMPORTANT DATES FOR FSA PROGRAMS

Final Availability Dates for 2011 Crop Loans and LDP's:

31-Mar	Wheat, Barley, Oats, Honey, Sesame, Canola
31-May	Cotton, Corn, Grain Sorghum, Soybeans, Sunflower Seeds

NAP Insurance Sales Closing Dates:

1-Dec	Honey
31-Jan	All annually planted crops, both spring and fall
15-Aug	Perennial crops, forage crops for hay and grazing, carrots, and all value loss crops

Additional Program Deadlines:

Now	Inquire and Sign-up CRP CPractices such as Riparian Buffers
Now	Emergency Conservation approved applicants – report completed practices to FSA
1-Apr - 31-Aug	CRP Nesting Season
1-Jun	Deadline to enroll into Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP)
1-Jun	The consent forms, CCC-927, "Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information-Individual," and/or CCC-928, "Consent To Disclosure of Tax Information-Legal Entity," should be mailed directly to IRS at the address given on the form. This is required for each year that participants receive payments.
15-Jul	Deadline to report Spring and Summer-seeded planted acreage
1-Aug	Signup Ends for The 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program
1-Nov	Deadline to initiate "Successor In Interest" transfers for Tobacco Transition Buy-out contracts with approved buyers as well as initiating contract transfers between immediate family members

NOTE: If the crop being reported has NAP coverage, the final date to timely report the acreage is 15 days PRIOR to the onset of harvest or grazing. It is important for producers to remember that crops with NAP coverage will usually have a NAP crop reporting date EARLIER than the regularly established reporting dates for crops without NAP coverage.

Present Emergency Loan Application Deadlines in Georgia:

26-Jul	Designation S3062 in 159 counties due to drought and excessive heat
8-Aug	Designation S3065 in 6 counties due to drought and excessive heat

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Many things are changing at FSA. In this time of economic instability and in an effort to cut costs for the delivery of services to our producers, FSA is shifting towards delivering more and more information via electronic media and the internet.

Although we understand that many producers rely on a paper copy of our newsletter received on a regular basis, we simply no longer have the funds to support the cost of bulk mailing our newsletter. We hope that this shift to electronic delivery of bulk mail items, like the newsletter, will save a significant amount of funds that will go directly to our producers. I think all of you would agree that we need more funds to directly support existing programs and potential programs. In Georgia alone, hundreds of thousands of dollars will be saved and better used to support FSA programs by switching to electronic delivery of this newsletter and other bulk

mail items.

Georgia's diverse agriculture, in my opinion, will become even more diverse as you, our producers, seek ways to improve your bottom line. As FSA information becomes more web based, it is very important that producers visit your local FSA office and provide your electronic contact information to us in order for you to continue to receive the very latest FSA information and program deadlines.

When you visit your county offices, they will have you complete a form certifying that you would like to receive bulk mail electronically. Please keep in mind that "bulk mail" refers only to information that is disseminated state-wide, like the newsletter. You will still continue to receive other mail, like COC ballots, program payments, etc. in the mail.

If you have access to a computer, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ga and sign up to receive electronic news releases and updates by clicking on the "email updates"

icon and entering your email address. Also, if you do not own a computer or do not have access to a computer with the internet, you can visit your local FSA office and provide them with your mobile telephone number. If you're mobile phone has text messaging capabilities, you will be able to sign up to receive news releases and other important FSA updates via text message straight to your cell phone.

Our mission at FSA is to assist you in any way we can to help you reach your goals and part of that is efficiently and effectively providing you with all the program updates and information you need. We hope that with the shift to web-based newsletters and other updates, we will be able to provide you with even more timely and useful information than we have in the past. We look forward to hearing any feedback you have in this regard and to serving you to the best of our abilities.

NOTICE TO HISPANIC OR WOMEN FARMERS AND RANCHERS: COMPENSATION FOR CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. You may be eligible if:

1. you sought a farm loan or farm-loan servicing from USDA during that period; and
2. the loan was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, approved with restrictive conditions, or USDA failed to provide an appropriate loan service; and
3. you believe these actions occurred because you are Hispanic or female.

If you want to register your name to receive a claims package, you can call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or access the following website: www.farmerclaims.gov.

In 2011, a Claims Administrator will begin mailing claims packages to those who have requested one through the Call Center or website. The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process. In order to participate, you must submit a claim to the Claims Administrator by the end of the claims period.

If you are currently represented by counsel regarding allegations of discrimination against USDA or in a lawsuit claiming discrimination by USDA, you should contact your counsel regarding this claims process.

USDA cannot provide legal advice to you. You are not required to hire an attorney to file a claim, but you may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider in your community for additional guidance.

FARM LOAN PROGRAMS

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups 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.
- Agree 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 median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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 and/or the purchase or improvement of farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of Socially Disadvan-

tagged 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 the program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Administrative Offset

Under law, delinquent debt owed to Federal agencies must be offset against any payments due from the Federal Government. The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA), effective April 26, 1996, was passed to increase collections of Federal non-tax debt.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is required to collect payments that otherwise would be made to producers/borrowers who owe Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), or delinquent direct farm loan program debt, unless the borrower can present an acceptable plan to resolve the delinquency. FSA is also required to offset payments to guaranteed

farm loan program debtors who received loans after July 20, 2001, if a final loss claim has been paid on a loan. Payments subject to offset are issued by the United States and include:

- Program payments;
- Tax refunds;
- Federal salary offset;
- Federal retirement pay;
- Contract or vendor payments;
- Social Security, including Social Security Disability;
- Railroad retirement; and Black lung

FSA is committed to working with producers/borrowers to assist them in resolving any delinquency. If loan restructure is not feasible, interest rates may be lowered or the debt may be written down in certain circumstances. If the borrower has accepted a written offer from FSA to restructure the account, payments will not be offset. If the borrower presents an acceptable written plan that can be approved by FSA and will resolve the delinquency, the offset can be lifted. Guaranteed debtors can submit an offer directly to FSA to settle their Federal debt after a final loss claim has been paid. Your local Farm Loan Manager and County Executive Director may provide additional details on Administrative Offsets.

PRESENT EMERGENCY LOAN APPLICATION DEADLINES IN GEORGIA

14-Sept-11 Designation S3090 in 11 counties due to drought, extreme heat, and weather related insect damage

26-Sept-11 Designation S3095 in 5 counties due to drought

1-Dec-11 Designation M1965 in 4 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding.

5-Dec-11 Designation S3115 in 5 counties due to drought

28 Dec-11 Designation M1971 in 3 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds and flooding

29 Dec-11 Designation M1973 in 23 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

30 Dec-11 Designation M1973 Amend 1 in 27 counties due to severe storms, straight line winds, and associated flooding

3 Jan-12 Designation M1971 Amend 4 in 4 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and flooding

3 Jan-12 Designation M1973 Amend 2 in 24 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

3 Jan-12 Designation M1973 Amend 3 in 23 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

3 Jan-12 Designation M1973 Amend 4 in 32 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

3 Jan-12 Designation M1974 in 5 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

9 Jan-12 Designation M1973 Amend 6 in 7 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

2 Feb-12 Designation M1974 Amend 3 in 2 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

7 Feb-12 Designation M1974 Amend 4 in 1 county due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and associated flooding

24 Feb-12 Designation S3123 in 48 counties due to drought

8 Mar-12 Designation S3132 in 9 counties due to excessive rain, high winds and hail storm

20 Mar-12 Designation M4005 in 1 county due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight line winds, and flooding

29 Mar-12 Designation S3145 in 7 counties due to drought and excessive heat

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for information specific to the Emergency Loan Program and to determine whether their counties are declared under a certain designation.

FARM PROGRAMS

PRODUCTION ADJUSTMENT/EMERGENCY CONSERVATION/COMMON PROVISIONS

BRETT MARTIN, CHIEF

AVERAGE ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME (AGI) FOR 2009 THROUGH 2012

The 2008 Farm Bill required the implementation of the average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations for program eligibility for the 2009 through 2012 program years. The average AGI provisions are applicable to the majority of programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Different income thresholds will be used to determine eligibility for different Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) programs for a person or legal entity as follows:

Adjusted Gross Nonfarm Income exceeding \$500,000 is ineligible for all commodity program payments and benefits and Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) Direct Payments Adjusted Gross Farm Income exceeding \$750,000 is ineligible for Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) Direct Payments

Adjusted Gross Nonfarm Income exceeding \$1 million is ineligible for conservation programs, unless at least 66.66% of total AGI was farm income. (Note: This limitation may be waived on a case-by-case basis for the protection of environmentally sensitive land of special significance.)

For the tax review process, written consent will be required from each producer requesting benefits for the applicable year. Producers must complete and sign the applicable consent forms, CCC-927, Consent To Disclosure of Tax Information-Individual, and/or CCC-928, Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information - Legal Entity. This is required by law to grant the IRS the authority to provide tax information data to USDA. Do not return the completed

and signed forms to the FSA office. Producers must mail consent forms directly to the IRS. This process ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits.

Forms CCC-927 and/or CCC-928 may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov>. If you chose to print the forms from the website, do the following:

1. click on Browse Forms to the left of the screen
2. enter agency name from dropdown as Farm Service Agency
3. enter program name from dropdown as Payment Limitations
4. enter form number as 927 or 928
5. click on search
6. on next screen click on form number, CCC-927 (Individual) or CCC-928 (Legal Entity), whichever is applicable, to pull up form.

To verify average AGI, USDA receives the results of these comparisons with indicators of whether the participant appears to exceed or not exceed the average AGI limitation amounts. No actual tax data will be included in the report. NRCS will be the only other USDA agency that will have knowledge of this information since conservation programs administered by NRCS are subject to the \$1 million average nonfarm AGI for conservation programs.

Participants who choose not to submit a completed CCC-927 or CCC-928 will be determined non compliant with AGI limitations for the applicable crop programs and fiscal years (FY's) and may require refund of applicable payments received from FSA and NRCS.

ATTENTION FOREIGN OWNERS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 became effective on February 2, 1979.

It requires any foreign person who: acquires or transfers any interest other than a security interest in agricultural land to submit a completed FSA-153 to the Secretary of Agriculture no later than 90 calendar days after the date of acquisition or transfer, or held any interest, other than a security interest, in agricultural land on February 1, 1979, to have submitted a report to the Secretary not later than August 1, 1979.

The information required by the Secretary should be documented on a form FSA-153 which can be obtained from any Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office. Once the FSA-153 form is completed you should return the FSA-153 to the FSA office that administers the

county in which the land is located. The FSA Office will then forward the FSA-153 to the Secretary of Agriculture. Any foreign person who holds, acquires, or transfers any interest in agricultural land, who the

Secretary of Agriculture determines did not submit FSA-153, or who knowingly submitted a report that was incomplete, misleading, or false is subject to civil penalty of not more than 25 percent of the fair market value of the land on the date the penalty is assessed. FSA-153's that are filed are analyzed by the United States Department of Agriculture to develop reports for the Secretary of Agriculture and the agriculture department in each State. Completed FSA-153's and the resulting analysis are available for public inspection at the Department of Agriculture located in Washington, DC.

We appreciate your cooperation and any help you can provide pertaining to this important matter.

If you have questions concerning the Act, please contact your local Farm Service Agency Office.

FARM PROGRAMS

PRICE SUPPORT/CONSERVATION/COMPLIANCE/GIS

CLARK WEAVER, CHIEF

MANY COUNTIES ELIGIBLE FOR GRAZING ASSISTANCE IN LIVESTOCK FORAGE PROGRAM (LFP)

As of the date this article is written, there are 115 counties in Georgia that have been determined eligible for assistance under the 2011 Livestock Forage Program (LFP). At the present time, the eligible counties lie in a line stretching from Heard County in west-central Georgia through Coweta, Fayette, Henry, Newton, Morgan, Greene, to Wilkes and Lincoln counties in the Northeastern part of the state. These counties, as well as counties lying south of this line are included in those counties determined eligible for 2011 LFP. The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) provides disaster benefits to eligible livestock producers in counties that have been determined eligible based on a qualifying Drought Intensity Rating as shown in the Georgia Drought Monitor.

The first thing that must be understood is that a county's eligibility is based solely on the drought level as shown on the U.S. Drought Monitor for Georgia. In order to be eligible for LFP a county must be rated at least at the D-2 level for 8 consecutive weeks or the D-3 level or greater for at least one week during the applicable grazing period. There are no other means by which a county can qualify for LFP but by the Drought Monitor Intensity Ratings as shown for Georgia. Counties that have not been determined eligible for LFP in Georgia at the present time have not met the criteria reference above. A link to the Georgia Drought Monitor website is provided: http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM_state.htm?GA,SE

It is also very important to understand that even when a county is determined to be eligible for the Livestock Forage Program; there are several other qualifying conditions that individual producers must meet in order to be determined eligible for assistance in LFP. The most important eligibility requirement is that producers are required to obtain NAP coverage or Crop Insurance on the particular type of grazing for which LFP benefits are requested, or meet one of the three exemptions to the Risk Management Purchase Requirements (RMPR). If the producer qualifies as either a Limited Resource or Socially Disadvantaged producer, or Beginning Farmer, they are not required purchase NAP or Crop Insurance to meet RMPR. Producers have until January 30, 2012 to apply for benefits resulting from 2011 grazing losses under the Livestock Forage Program.

REPORT LIVESTOCK LOSSES DUE TO ADVERSE WEATHER EVENTS IN A TIMELY MANNER

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible livestock producers that suffered livestock losses due to eligible adverse weather events such as, but not limited to, hurricanes, floods, blizzards, tornados, lightning, wildfires, disease (in limited cases) and extreme heat and cold, only if the temperatures are determined to be so extreme and abnormal they could reasonably be expected to be the direct cause of death. Please note that drought is not an eligible cause of loss for LIP.

Generally speaking, livestock eligible for benefits under LIP include beef and dairy cattle, buffalo/beefalo, sheep, goats, deer, equine, swine, poultry, alpacas, emus, and llamas. Please be aware there are specific eligibility requirements for each of these types of livestock that also must be met.

Livestock producers that suffer livestock deaths in calendar year 2011 due to eligible adverse weather events are required to file a Notice of Loss the

earlier of (1) 30 days from the date the producer becomes aware of the loss of livestock, or (2) October 31, 2011. In addition, an Application for Payment must also be submitted by January 30, 2012. Please be aware there are no provisions for approving "late-filed" Notices of Loss or Applications for Payment received after these established deadlines.

When filing an Application for Payment, the producer must also provide verifiable or reliable documentation to substantiate the livestock losses. It is vitally important that livestock producers understand that specific requirements must be met for the documentation to be considered acceptable under the provisions of this program. The best thing a livestock producer can do to insure the livestock deaths are verifiable is to contact their local FSA office immediately upon discovering the loss of livestock. If the local FSA office is notified timely of the livestock death(s), FSA personnel can make a farm visit to verify the loss of livestock. However, if extreme heat is cited as the cause of death, it is strongly suggested producers

contact a veterinarian to have them certify that extreme heat was the direct cause of loss as there is no other way to verify that it was the extreme temperatures that caused the livestock death(s). It is also important to note the local FSA office will not be able to verify the loss of livestock if the producer has already disposed of the remains of the livestock; so please contact your local FSA office immediately if there are livestock deaths you believe qualify for assistance under LIP.

FARM PROGRAMS— CONT.

PRICE SUPPORT/CONSERVATION/COMPLIANCE/GIS

CLARK WEAVER, CHIEF

CLEARING UP LAND? BETTER CHECK FIRST!

Many FSA County Offices have reported they are discovering producers are clearing up land to plant crops without first discussing this activity with FSA or NRCS to insure they remain in compliance with the “Sodbuster/Swampbuster” provisions of the Farm Bill. The main problem is that the discovery is coming too late in a lot of cases to prevent these producers from losing FSA program benefits. If the land is cleared-up BEFORE the person files form AD-1026 with FSA, and NRCS later determines the land in question is classified “converted wetland”, the producer is in violation of the 1985 Sodbuster–Swampbuster Act, and could be ineligible for FSA benefits until the land is restored.

This problem is especially wide-spread throughout the state where land is being cleared up to go into crop production. As a result of increasingly high commodity prices, some producers are clearing up land adjacent to existing fields, while other producers are expanding their farm operations by converting existing grasslands to row crop production. It appears that many producers are under the impression that since FSA and NRCS do not consider certain crops, such as blueberries and grass “an agricultural commodity which is planted and tilled on an annual basis”, there is no problem with clearing up this land if planted with grass or another crop that is not considered “an agricultural commodity.” This is NOT correct! In fact, there are some situations where the land might meet FSA and NRCS standards, but not those of the Corps of Engineers as they relate to the Clean Water Act.

Therefore, anytime a person is planning on clearing-up any land, they should stop by their local FSA office and file form AD-1026 indicating what they intend to do and where they intend to clear-up the land, BEFORE beginning the work. NRCS will then make a farm visit and provide an “official” determination on whether the land is “highly erodible” or considered a “wetland-type” soil.

REMEMBER – Check First, To Be Sure!

ADDITIONAL FSA UPDATES

COC ELECTIONS – FSA COUNTS ON YOU: VOTE!

The election of responsible agricultural producers to FSA county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer takes part in this election because county committees are a direct link between the farm community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on committees help decide the kind of programs their counties will offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters by November 4 and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by December 5, 2011. All producers are encouraged to participate.

More information on the elections is available at the county office or online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>

November 4, 2011: Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 5, 2011: Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office.

January 1, 2012: Elected committee members and alternates take office.



Above from left: Keith Willis—CED, Worth County, Ty Godfrey—District Director, Jeanette Miller—Acting CED, Baker County, Ray Pate—CED, Tift County and Hank Hammond—CED, Lee County with their donation ready to be delivered to the Salvation Army Center in Albany, GA.

FEDS FEED FAMILIES FOOD DRIVE

USDA once again partnered with the Office of Personnel Management to participate in Feds Feed Families Food Drive, a nation-wide summer long food drive for all Federal Employees. Several Georgia USDA Service Centers, along with the Georgia State Office, participated in this effort. Approximately 1500 pounds of food was donated by District 6 employees and COC members, and donations were also accepted from several local producers. The donations received in District 6 were delivered to the Albany Salvation Army Center on August 11.

The State FSA Office also contributed a grand total of 6,000 lbs. of food, over 2,000 lbs. of which was donated by State Executive Director, Hobby Stripling. Hobby worked with his peanut contacts throughout the state and was able to pull together 85 lbs. of individually wrapped single serving peanuts, 1,881 lbs. of peanut butter (996 jars) and 102 lbs. of various canned nuts. The State Office donations were delivered to the Northeast Georgia Food Bank in Athens, GA. A big THANK YOU goes out to all the employees, COC members and producers who graciously gave to this Summer’s Feds Feed Families Food Drive.



State Executive Director, Hobby Stripling with a truck load of peanuts, mixed nuts and peanut butter.

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*Farm Service Agency is equitably
serving all farmers, ranchers, and
agricultural partners through the
delivery of effective, efficient
agricultural programs for all
Americans.*



Producers are reminded when they have an address change due to 911 upgrades or relocation, to please contact your local FSA office to update your address.

UTILIZE NEW ONLINE PAYMENT PROCESS FOR SUBSCRIBING TO THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S MARKET BULLETIN

Payments for new subscriptions for Georgia Department of Agriculture's "Farmers and Consumers Market Bulletin" now can be made online at www.thegamarketbulletin.com. Market Bulletin subscriptions are \$10/year (26 issues) for Georgia delivery and \$20/year for Out-of-State delivery.

Please note there is a \$1 convenience fee added for online subscriptions.

Following are some instructions to assist you in completing your online subscription payment:

- Once the online subscription webpage is displayed, first indicate if your address is In State or Out of State. Once the selection is made, you will then need to provide address information in three sections. (Subscribers are encouraged to provide an email address for future correspondence). Please make certain the sections for Applicant Address, Location of Business and Mailing Address are completed. (Applicant Address is your contact address. Location of Business Address is if you also have a business; otherwise enter the same information as for Applicant Address. Mailing Address is where you wish your Market Bulletin to be mailed). Please note that there is a convenient drop down box to copy addresses from the prior sections. Click "Submit" to continue.
- When the next webpage displays, the Total Fees will be listed and you will be asked to provide a Credit Card Number (Visa or MasterCard ONLY), the credit card expiration date, the billing address and city of the credit card holder, and the billing zip code for the credit card holder. Please note there is a \$1 convenience fee added for online subscriptions. Click "Submit" to continue.
- If the bank is able to process your credit card with no problem, you will receive the message "Thank you for your order." If an email address was provided, a receipt will be sent via email to you.

If you experience difficulty using the online application and need assistance, please send an email message to mb-issues@agr.georgia.gov.