



GEORGIA FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWSLETTER

Mar.—Apr. 2012

United States Department of Agriculture

Volume 9, Issue 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Directors Message</i>	2
<i>CRP Signup 43</i>	2
<i>2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP)</i>	3
<i>2010 Supplemental revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE)</i>	3
<i>FSA Welcomes COC Advisors</i>	4
<i>County Committee (COC) Elections</i>	4
<i>FSA's GovDelivery</i>	4
<i>FSA Near You!</i>	5
<i>GDA Announces Specialty Crop Block Grant Program</i>	6

CALENDER IMPORTANT DATES FOR FSA PROGRAMS

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

31-May Cotton, Corn, Grain Sorghum, Soybeans, Sunflower Seeds

NAP Insurance Sales Closing Dates:

See note

Sign-up Deadlines:

Mar 12– Apr 6 Conservation Reserve Program, CRP General Sign-up Period

Now–Jun 1 Direct-Counter Cyclical Program

Now–Jun 1 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program

Mar 31 Loan Availability Deadline Date for FY2011 Barley, Canola, Honey, Oats, Wheat

May 31 Loan Availability Deadline Date for FY2011 Cotton & Corn

Acreage Reporting Deadlines:

May 1 Tobacco

Jul 15 All other crops & land uses planted by July 15, 2012

Additional Program Deadlines:

Now Inquire and Sign-up CRP Continuous Practices such as Riparian Buffers, Longleaf Pine, Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds

Now Emergency Conservation approved applicants – report completed practices to FSA

Now Emergency Forest Restoration Program applicants – report debris cleanup to FSA

Now Complete for 2012 form CCC-931 Average Adjusted Gross Income Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information

Now–31-Mar Emergency Forest Restoration Program applicants – report completed tree planting practices to FSA

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.

Emergency Loan Deadlines:

Application deadlines for emergency loans are available to producers for losses sustained due to severe storms, tornadoes, flooding, straight-line winds, hail, severe drought and excessive heat range from Dec. 1, 2011 to March 29, 2012, depending on the designation a county may have received. If you suffered loss due to severe weather, check with your local FSA office to see if your county has received a disaster designation.

State Executive Director
Hobby Stripling

Administrative Officer:
Kula C. Moore

Farm Loan Programs:
David F. Laster

Production Adjustment/Emergency Conservation/Common Provisions Section:
Brett M. Martin

Price Support/Compliance/Conservation/GIS Section:
Clark E. Weaver

State Outreach Coordinator:
Neal C. Leonard, Jr.

Newsletter Editor:
Barb J. Bundy



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Charles Dickens, in his book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, wrote "It was the best of the times and it was the worst of times". This certainly applies to the Georgia Farm Service Agency at this time. It is the worst of times in that our budget and staffing continues to decline. Since November, 2010, we have had 22 of our staff retire and our staffing levels were reduced accordingly, so we are unable to replace them.

Secretary Vilsack has proposed that 131 FSA offices across the nation be consolidated with other FSA offices. Three of those offices are located in Georgia. They are Baker, Candler and Morgan County offices. In addition to losing 22 employees, our funds for expenses such as travel, supplies, postage, outreach, etc. were cut 36% from last year.

However, despite all these cuts, the one thing we have not had to do is terminate anyone. The staff reductions were handled by people retiring. It is the best of times in that commodity prices reached record levels this past year. Farm income was up 28% in 2011 and it is forecasted farm income in 2012 will reach another all time high. DCP Program payments in Georgia for fiscal year 2011 were over 100 million dollars and total program payments in Georgia were over 700 million dollars. FSA plays a significant role in providing a safety net for our producers.

In addition to the Farm Programs we administered, our Farm Loan Offices loaned over 149 million dollars to farmers. 38% of those loans went to Socially Disadvantaged Borrowers. We anticipate the need for FSA Farm Loans will be even greater this year as more and more of the traditional Ag Lenders seem to be less willing to make Agricultural Loans. Furthermore, the one thing that I want to emphasize more than anything else is the 69 FSA Farm Program Offices and the 11 FSA Farm Loan Offices in GA are here to serve all producers. That is our mission.

As always, your Georgia FSA is here to assist our famers in any way we can. Please do not hesitate to contact your local office if you have any questions or need assistance.

FARM PROGRAMS

PRICE SUPPORT/CONSERVATION/COMPLIANCE/GIS

CLARK WEAVER, CHIEF

CRP SIGNUP 43

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup is set to begin on March 12, 2012, and continue through April 6, 2012. During the signup period, farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

Producers who choose to enroll their land in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve water quality, control soil erosion and develop wildlife habitat. Participants are provided with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Land currently

not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this signup provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring September 30, 2012 may also submit offers to reenroll their land in CRP. Georgia has 33,868 acres whose current CRP contract expires on Sept 30, 2012. These contract acres may be re-offered. Each applicable person with an expiring contract will be provided a letter giving them the opportunity to reenroll those acres back into CRP.

The lengths of CRP contracts are between 10 and 15 years. Contracts awarded under this signup will become effective Oct. 1, 2012.

FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that shows the environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in CRP. FSA uses the following six EBI factors to assess the environmental factors: wildlife, water, soil, air, enduring benefits and cost. Decisions will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI data of all the offers.

For more information you may visit your local FSA service center or view online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

FARM PROGRAMS

PRODUCTION ADJUSTMENT/EMERGENCY CONSERVATION/COMMON PROVISIONS
BRETT MARTIN, CHIEF

2012 DIRECT AND COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM (DCP)

The deadline for enrollment into the 2012 version of the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) is June 1, 2012. In addition to the filing of the CCC-509 the following documents must be filed before payment can be earned:

Applicable payment limitation forms (CCC-902 and related forms)

An average adjusted gross income certification (CCC-931)

A certification of compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions (AD-1026).

A certification of the acreage of all cropland on the farm (FSA-578) is needed before final payments can be issued.

In addition, persons/entities seeking participation in DCP must also:

Comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements on all of their land

Comply with planting flexibility requirement

Limit plantings of fruits and vegetables to eligible acres

Use the base acres for agricultural or related activities and

Protect all base acres from erosion, including providing sufficient cover as determined necessary by the county FSA committee, and controlling weeds.

DCP provides two types of program payments: direct payments and counter-cyclical payments. Both are calculated using the base acres and payment yields established for the farm and both will be issued starting in October of 2012. Unlike previous years, there will be no advance payments in 2012.

For further information, contact your local FSA office and ask for a copy of the 2012 DCP Fact sheet and/the CCC-509 Appendix.

2010 SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM (SURE)

The 2010 version of the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program is currently open and for enrollment. The deadline is June 1, 2012. This program provides assistance to producers suffering crop losses due to natural disasters.

To receive SURE payments, an eligible producer must have a qualifying loss. A qualifying loss means at least a 10 percent production loss affecting one crop of economic significance due to a disaster on a farm in a disaster county. Producers outside a declared disaster county, but with production losses greater than or equal to 50 percent of the normal production on the farm (expected revenue for all crops on the farm), may also qualify for SURE. Please remember that for SURE purposes, a "farm" refers to all crop acreage in all counties that a producer planted or intended to plant for harvest for normal commercial sale or farm livestock

feeding. A "crop of economic significance" is a crop that contributes at least 5 percent of the expected revenue for a producer's farm. A "disaster county" is a county for which a Secretarial disaster designation has been issued or a county contiguous to a county with a Secretarial disaster designation.

To be eligible for SURE, a producer must have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for all crops through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and obtained Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, if available, from the Farm Service Agency. Forage crops intended for grazing are not eligible for SURE benefits. It is noted that "Socially Disadvantaged," "Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," do not have to meet this requirement.

ADDITIONAL FSA UPDATES

FSA WELCOMES COC ADVISORS

FSA County Committee (COC) Advisors are a valued voice for underrepresented groups and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. County Committee members and their County Executive Directors, actively reach out to producer groups who are underrepresented on county committees. Each COC has submitted the name of their nominee to the State Committee for confirmation and the State Committee has approved these nominations.

We welcome all COC Advisors and thank you for your willingness to serve for a 12-month period beginning March 1.

Duties and Responsibilities of COC Advisors include:

- attending each COC meeting, including executive sessions
- participating in all deliberations
- increasing awareness of and participation in FSA activities, including elections, by eligible voters to ensure that socially disadvantaged group problems and viewpoints are understood and considered in FSA actions
- helping to develop interest and incentives in socially disadvantaged group members for considering FSA work as a career
- actively soliciting candidates from socially disadvantaged groups for nomination during the election process
- able to perform special duties at COC's request.

COUNTY COMMITTEE (COC) ELECTIONS

Since COC elections happen only once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into *local administrative areas*, or LAA's. Each LAA selects one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee. Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election. In combined counties in some years, two seats may be up for election.

Nominations

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 farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates. The nomination form, FSA-669A, is available at the county office or may be downloaded online at www.fsa.usda.gov. To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected. The nomination period begins in June of each year and closes in August.

Voting

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm can also vote. No one can be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

Candidate Eligibility

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed forces.

FSA'S GOVDELIVERY

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation. Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will provide notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail. FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifica-

tions via email will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

Producers can now subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>.

FSA NEAR YOU!

FSA AT CAREER DAY



Mount Vernon middle and high school held it's first "Career Fair" on Friday, January 20, 2012. Lesia B. Hogan – CED Montgomery-Treutlen and Josh Cammack Soil Conservationist provided a booth to represent Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service at the career fair. There were approximately 50 vendors at the fair. There were over 300 hundred students that came through and talked with each representative. It was a great day to share our FSA and NRCS Programs with the schools, giving them a better understanding of what we do.

Pictured: Josh Cammack – NRCS and Lesia B. Hogan - CED Montgomery-Treutlen FSA

MAR.-APR, 2012. FEATURED PRODUCER: MR. OSCAR CHANEY JR., DOOLY COUNTY

As a child in Dooly County Georgia, Mr. Oscar Chaney, Jr., along with four brothers and three sisters, worked in his father's fields pulling weeds in peanuts, picking cotton, and harvesting cucumbers and peppers for the local cannery in Vienna. Like other families, they were self-sufficient—growing and canning vegetables from the garden, milking a cow each morning and evening for dairy products, picking up eggs in the hen house, feeding hogs and a steer for meat, and growing wheat and corn for flour and meal. Mr. Chaney remembers his aversion for picking cotton and was always looking for an excuse to get out of the cotton field. He remembers his father's first tractor purchased in the late 40's and learning to drive a truck in the peanut fields where he was responsible for erecting poles for stacking peanuts. He also remembers his father only had a third grade education but considered school and education so important that he drove his truck throughout the local community to pick up and carry children of black families to school because buses were not available. Later his father purchased a bus for the same purpose which Mr. Chaney and his brothers drove as they attended school even after their father's death in 1953.

At Oscar Chaney, Sr.'s death, his 340 acre farm was debt free and his sons continued to farm between attending school and stints in the military. As their father wanted, all eight children completed high school. After finishing high school in 1956, Mr. Chaney continued to farm during the day and work at a nearby frozen food processing plant at night. In 1958, he and wife Ara Belle were married and in 1960 they moved into a remodeled tenant house located on the family farm. In 1964, realizing the farming operation was too small to support his family, Mr. Chaney discontinued farming and began working full time at Warner Robbins Air Force Base. Like his father, Mr. Chaney believed a good education was important and he wanted each of his five children to have the opportunity to attend college. Therefore, in 1970 he began working a second job for three hours each evening at UPS.

Over time only the oldest brother continued to farm and he acquired ownership to most of the farm from his brothers and sisters. After several bad years in the late 80's and early 90's, the oldest brother ran into financial trouble and it appeared most of

the family farm would be lost to foreclosure. Mr. Chaney said "I couldn't imagine losing the farm that my father and we children had worked so hard to purchase. During this same period lots of black farmers were losing their farms and I did not want this to happen to our property." Consequently, Mr. Chaney assumed his brother's debt and with it, the title to all but 20 acres of his father's farm. Since then he has made improvements to the farm with assistance from USDA through FSA and NRCS.

After attaining the family farm, Mr. Chaney found a worthy tenant to lease and maintain the farm's cropland. This arrangement



has worked great because the same father and son operation has leased the cropland for 20 years. Mr. Chaney also acquired some cows and has slowly increased his herd to 48. He has received assistance from NRCS through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for construction of a pond and drilling a well, both for livestock watering purposes. EQIP also assisted with planting and establishing 10 acres of coastal Bermuda grass.

Mr. Chaney is currently serving his sixth year as an FSA Committee Advisor and he participates in many

FSA programs. He has greatly enjoyed serving as an advisor and has learned a lot about FSA and the complexity of farm programs. In 2007 he enrolled 8.3 acres into the Conservation Reserve Program for 15 years and planted the acreage with long-leaf pine. He annually participates in the Direct and Counter Cyclical Program receiving direct payments on approximately 20 acres. This year due to the extreme drought throughout Dooly County, he was eligible for a payment through the Livestock Forage Program which greatly assisted in the cost of providing supplemental feed for his livestock.

Mr. Chaney said the USDA has been a great help to him in providing both financial and technical assistance. Without this assistance he could not have established the conservation practices over the past ten years or expanded his cow herd. He is currently working with a local attorney on estate planning with the hopes his children and grandchildren will be able to keep the farm without a big financial burden.

Georgia Farm Service Agency
355 E. Hancock Avenue, Stop 100
Athens, Georgia 30601-2775
706-546-2266

We're on the web! Subscribe to News
Releases and read this Newsletter
online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/ga/

*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.

GDA ANNOUNCES SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) is pleased to announce the competitive solicitation process to award the 2012 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). The program funds projects that "enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops." Specialty Crops are defined as: fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, Christmas Trees, turf grass/sod, nursery and greenhouse crops, including floriculture. Please see the specific listing of all eligible crops at www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgbp.

The USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will make approximately \$55 million available, with Georgia's share being 1.3 million. Grant amounts will be awarded from \$10,000 to approximately \$150,000 per project. Grants will be awarded for up to three years. GDA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to Georgia's specialty crop producers, in relation to each dollar spent.

GDA is seeking applications from organizations that seek to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Georgia including: nonprofit organizations and corporations, commodity commissions, associations, state and local government entities, and colleges and universities. Applicants must reside in Georgia, or their business or education affiliation must be in Georgia.

For questions or additional information, contact: Jeanne Maxwell, Grants Administrator, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Farm Bill, 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SW, Room 247, Atlanta, GA 30334, by phone at 404-657-1584, or by email at Jeanne.Maxwell@agr.georgia.gov.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

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 20250-9410, 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).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.