



NEWSLETTER



August 2012

**Georgia State
FSA Office**

**Hobby Stripling, State
Executive Director**
355 E. Hancock Ave.,
Room 102
Athens, GA 30601-2775

706-546-2266 phone
706-546-2327 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/GA

Hours
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

State Office Staff

David F. Laster
Farm Loan Programs

Kula Campbell Moore
Administrative Officer

Brett M. Martin
Production Adjustment,
Conservation, Common
Provisions Section

Clark E. Weaver
Price Support,
Compliance, GIS
Section

Neal C. Leonard Jr.
State Outreach/Public
Affairs Coordinator

Barb J. Bundy
Newsletter Editor

2012 Dates and Deadlines

Acreage Reporting Deadlines: NEW REPORTING DATES ARE IN EFFECT

<u>Aug 15</u>	<u>Cabbage (Planted 6/15 – 7/15) and Tomatoes (Planted 7/1 – 8/15)</u>
<u>Sep 15</u>	<u>Sweet Corn (Planted 7/15 – 8/25)</u>
<u>Oct 15</u>	<u>Cabbage (Planted 7/16 – 9/30)</u>

Note: Crops with NAP Coverage:

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.

Important COC Election Dates:

<u>Aug 1</u>	<u>Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA Office. Nomination forms are available from your local FSA Office.</u>
<u>Nov 5</u>	<u>Ballots mailed to eligible voters.</u>
<u>Dec 3</u>	<u>Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office.</u>
<u>Jan 1, 2013</u>	<u>Elected committee members and alternates take office.</u>

Additional Program Deadlines

<u>Aug 1</u>	<u>Any Continuous CRP Contracts that are expected to expire on 09/30/2012 need to request re-enrollment with your local county office.</u>
<u>Now</u>	<u>Inquire and Sign-up CRP Continuous Practices such as Riparian Buffers, Longleaf Pine, Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds</u>
<u>Now</u>	<u>Emergency Conservation Approved Applicants -- report completed practices to FSA</u>
<u>Now</u>	<u>Emergency Forest Restoration Program Applicants -- report completed practices to FSA</u>
<u>Now</u>	<u>Complete for 2012 form CCC-931, Average Adjusted Income Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information</u>

Present Emergency Loan Application Deadlines in Georgia:

<u>Nov 16</u>	<u>Designation M4060 in 6 counties due to severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding</u>
<u>Dec 20</u>	<u>Designation S3245 in 2 counties due to frost and freezing temperatures</u>
<u>Mar 4, 2013</u>	<u>Designation M4068 in 4 counties due to losses caused by Tropical Storm Debby</u>
<u>Mar 11, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3262 in 15 counties due to frosts and freezes</u>
<u>Mar 11, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3263 in 15 counties due to hail and high winds</u>
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3265 in 13 counties due to drought</u>
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3271 in 11 counties due to drought</u>
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3272 in 140 counties due to drought</u>
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3286 in 13 counties due to drought</u>
<u>Mar 18, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3292 in 5 counties due to drought</u>

NOTE: 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.

With BCAP, It's Georgia's Turn

By Hobby Stripling, State Executive Director,
USDA Farm Service Agency

Job creation is tough when those with a plan meet roadblocks. Millions of Americans can't afford to wait.

That's why USDA is moving forward. The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), created in the 2008 Farm Bill, can provide consensus right now for real job growth.

Last month, Farm Service Agency announced \$4 million for farmers to grow switchgrass and a new biofuels crop, freedom giant miscanthus, a tall grass to be converted into cellulosic biofuels. The 18.5 million miscanthus rhizomes will be supplied by Repreve Renewables of Soperton, Georgia.

The South has plenty of capacity to grow biofuels crops, according to The Energy Department's "Billion Ton Study" last year. With tightening federal budgets calling for some older farm programs to end, BCAP offers new options for farmers seeking to diversify into energy crop markets while receiving up to 5 years of locked-in payments.

Last year, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced more than \$55 million would be provided to enroll more than 50,000 acres to grow crops like miscanthus, switchgrass, poplar and camelina. In other southern states like Arkansas, for example, enthusiasm for BCAP runs high, where sterile miscanthus provides farmers with expanded revenue opportunities, a new cash crop so durable it grows where other crops won't.

If the U.S. is to address high fuel costs, there must be more choices at the pump. This can be done by meeting the statutory biofuels target of 36 billion gallons by 2022, of which only 15 billion gallons can come from corn-starch. We've nearly met this target. Since the remaining 20 billion gallons must be made from different feedstocks, we must start growing these non-food crops today. Many livestock

and poultry producers would prefer non-feed crops for biofuels, too.

The Repreve Renewables announcement is part of a nearly \$10 million dollar initiative announced by Secretary Vilsack that also proposes establishing fast growing willow in the eastern U.S. for energy. Continuing BCAP could create up to 700,000 new jobs in rural America by the end of the decade, with Georgia family farms and forest landowners playing an even bigger role in our homeland security. Without BCAP in the Farm Bill, however, energy crops will likely remain limited to farmers in the Midwest in the near future.

Isn't it time for southern farmers to be recognized for their potential to grow non-food, non-feed crops for domestic energy? With BCAP, it's Georgia's turn.

REVISED Crop Acreage Reporting Dates for FSA and Crop Insurance Are NOW Effective

Please review the 2012 Dates and Deadlines section of this month's newsletter for the new August 15 Acreage Reporting Deadlines for Cabbage and Tomatoes.

Beginning July 1, there was a big change in many of the Crop Acreage Reporting Dates (CARD) for several of the crops planted in Georgia, particularly vegetables. As stated in previous newsletters, the revision in reporting dates was the result of a combined effort of both FSA and the Risk Management Agency (RMA – crop insurance) to make acreage reporting easier for producers by standardizing the acreage reporting deadline for crops for both FSA and crop insurance purposes.

As a result, there were a few more deadline dates applicable to specific fruit and vegetable crops than in prior years. The newly established deadline dates for the specific fruit and vegetable crops mentioned below will apply to these crops regardless of whether the producer has them covered under a crop insurance plan or not. These particular crops (apples,

blueberries, peaches, cabbage, onions, pecans, fresh market sweet corn and fresh market tomatoes) now have a specific FSA reporting deadline date and must be reported by the newly established reporting deadline whether the crop is covered by crop insurance or not.

REVISED Crop Reporting Dates for Georgia – Effective July 1, 2012

January 2 --- Honey (producers with NAP coverage)

January 15 --- Apples, Blueberries, Peaches, Barley, Canola, Oats, Rye, Wheat, and any other Fall-Seeded Small Grains,

March 15 --- Cabbage (Planted between 10/1-2/20), Onions (Planted 10/21-2/1), and Pecans

May 15 --- Flue-cured Tobacco, Fresh Market Sweet Corn (Planted between 8/26-5/15), Fresh Market Tomatoes (Planted between 8/16-4/5)

July 15 --- Cabbage (Planted 2/21-5/31), Corn, Cotton, Grain

Sorghum, Peanuts, Soybeans, and all other crops

August 15 --- Cabbage (Planted between 6/1-7/15), Fresh Market Tomatoes (Planted between 7/1-8/15)

September 15 --- Fresh Market Sweet Corn (Planted between 7/15-8/25)

October 15 --- Cabbage (Planted between 7/16-9/30)

November 15 --- Apiculture and Pasture, Range, Forage (PRF) – Includes ALL Forage and Grazing Crops for the succeeding crop year.

December 15 --- Onions (Planted between 9/20-10/20)

The BIG changes in Acreage Reporting Dates are:

- (1) Winter-seeded small grains were moved forward from March 1, to January 15

- (2) Grass and forage crops **moved up** to November 15

- (3) Tobacco was moved back from May 1, to May 15

- (4) Specific dates were implemented for FSA compliance purposes for numerous fruit and vegetable crops, depending on the planting date

Producers are advised to contact their local FSA offices for more information on the revised crop acreage reporting deadlines and to obtain a copy of the new reporting deadlines.

USDA Designates 142 Georgia Counties a Natural Disaster Area

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, Hobby Stripling, said that 142 counties in Georgia have received a Secretarial Disaster Designation under the Secretarial Drought Fast-track. These counties are eligible for FSA programs to assist with recovery.

The 142 designated primary and contiguous counties are reflected on the Georgia map attached to this newsletter.

All counties determined eligible were designated natural disaster areas on July 12, 2012, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

Georgia producers affected by the drought are reminded to keep thorough records of losses as the department's authority to operate the five disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2008 Farm

Bill expired on Sept. 30, 2011, and Congress has not yet acted to restore these vital forms of assistance.

Recent changes in the disaster program will provide faster and more flexible assistance to farmers and ranchers devastated by natural disasters. There are three significant improvements related to Secretarial disaster designations: a final rule that simplifies the process for Secretarial disaster designations and will result in a 40 percent reduction in processing time for most counties affected by disasters; a reduced interest rate for emergency loans that effectively lowers the current rate from 3.75 percent to 2.25 percent; and a payment reduction on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands qualified for emergency haying and grazing in 2012, from 25 to 10 percent.

USDA encourages all farmers and ranchers to contact their crop insurance companies and local USDA Farm Service Agency Service Centers, as applicable, to report damages to crops or livestock loss. In addition, USDA reminds livestock producers to keep thorough records of losses, including additional expenses for such things as food purchased due to lost supplies. More information about federal crop insurance may be found at www.rma.usda.gov. Additional resources to help farmers and ranchers deal with the disaster may be found at <http://www.usda.gov/disaster>.

Over the Counter Channel (OTCnet)

FSA/CCC is moving toward 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 that 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 statement?

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 electronic fund transfer from your account. You should contact your financial institution immediately if you believe that the transaction reported on your account statement was not properly authorized or is otherwise incorrect.

FSA County Committee Elections – Voting to Begin This Fall

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 take 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.

The nomination period closed August 1, 2012.

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters by November 5 and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by December 3, 2012. 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 5, 2012: Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 3, 2012: Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office.

January 1, 2013: Elected committee members and alternates take office.

Georgia FSA Office Consolidations

Over the past three years, FSA has faced a variety of budget-related challenges. Through a targeted office consolidation effort that included 125 offices nationwide, FSA is striving to balance significant budget cuts, staff reductions and increasing

workloads while focusing the efforts of our staff on high-quality service. There are 2,119 offices remaining in the FSA network to do just that.

As a federal agency, FSA has been affected by widespread budget reductions made by Congress. Since 2011, the agency has lost 1,230 permanent employees through voluntary early separation and normal retirement. In addition, FSA has been forced to reduce discretionary administrative expenses by over 30 percent in the last fiscal year alone.

Three Georgia FSA Offices will be consolidated as follows:

- The Candler County FSA Office will be officially consolidated on August 12, 2012. From this date forward, all FSA program services will be provided by the Bulloch County FSA Office located at 151 Langston Chapel Road, Suite 300, Statesboro, GA 30458 and the telephone is 912-871-2600.
- The Morgan-Greene-Jasper-Newton County FSA Office will be officially consolidated on August 12, 2012. From this date forward, all FSA program services will be provided as follows:
 - Morgan and Greene County's services will be provided by the Oconee County FSA Office located at 1291 Greensboro Highway, Suite A-104, Watkinsville, GA 30677 and the telephone is 706-769-3987.
 - Jasper County services will be provided by the Putnam County FSA Office located at 130 Sparta Highway, Eatonton, GA 31024 and the telephone number is 706-485-2341.
 - Newton County services will be provided by the Walton County FSA Office located at 111 East Spring Street, Suite C, Monroe, GA 30655 and the telephone number is 770-267-8363.

- The Baker County FSA Office will be officially consolidated on September 3, 2012. From this date forward, all FSA program services will be provided by the Miller County FSA Office located at 150 West Street, Colquitt, GA 39837 and the telephone number is 229-758-5219.

Producers of the consolidated counties may also elect to transfer their records to another county office of their choice if the newly designated office location is inconvenient for them. FSA places the utmost priority on ensuring that our services to producers remain strong as this consolidation process begins.

Although we recognize that change is never easy, we strongly believe that taking this action now is critical to ensuring FSA can continue to serve its customers as it adjusts to budget constraints. FSA can only achieve the high level of service expected through consolidation of our human, financial and technical resources.

Sale of Land under CRP Contract

This is a reminder for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants who sell land under CRP contract to get a successor-in-interest to the contract. Failure to get the buyer to assume a contract will result in the original owner having to refund all CRP rental payments, cost share payments, incentive payments received on the contract, plus interest and liquidated damages. One way to prevent this from happening is to have a sales contract prepared that requires the new owner to assume the CRP contract.

Local county FSA committees have no authority but to terminate a CRP contract when the CRP participant loses control of the land and there is no successor-in-interest to the contract. Please call or visit your local County FSA Office before you sell land that is currently in a CRP contract.

Emergency Loan Interest Rate Changes

For the first time since 1993 when the interest rate for Emergency loans was set at 3.75%, the rate has been reduced. Commercial farm loan rates and other FSA farm loan interest rates have since been reduced without a corresponding reduction in the Emergency loan interest rate. With the recent improvements to decades-old programs and processes, the Emergency loan interest rate is lowered from 3.75% to 2.25%, bringing emergency loan interest rates in line with other rates in the marketplace.

Emergency loans are used to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters or quarantine. Because Emergency loans to eligible applicants can sometimes be used for similar purposes as operating loans, use of Emergency loans may relieve the pressure on operating loan fund availability, which can be tight as the fiscal year draws to a close.

Availability of “Your Guide to FSA Farm Loans”

USDA has made available a plain language customer’s guide on how to apply for farm loans and farm loan servicing. The guide is now available in an electronic version on the FSA website, <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl>. In addition to providing information on farm loan programs and farm loan servicing, a list of other resources that are available to farmers and ranchers is also provided.

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 no 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 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 the program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaska Native, 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.

FSA Near You -- Affects of the Drought in Southwest Georgia prompts a visit from Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Kathleen Merrigan

The drought affecting southwest Georgia is different than in the Corn Belt. Calhoun County and southwest Georgia are suffering from a prolonged drought. This drought has been ongoing since 2010 and has affected farmers directly through crop losses and prevented planting. This area of the State produces peanuts, cotton, corn, wheat, soybeans, and grain sorghum. Most farmers in the area operate with some irrigation -- about 60% within Calhoun County. Farmers depend on their irrigated crops to make a living. Some years the dryland makes a good yield, but some years it doesn't. The prolonged drought has taken a toll on both irrigated crops and dryland crops. The water for irrigation comes from surface water (creeks and ponds) and from our underground aquifer.

The aquifer that we pump water from does not provide enough water to directly run an irrigation system; therefore, the water has to be double pumped. This requires building a holding pond, pumping into it, and then pumping out of it to irrigate the crop. Our water level in our aquifer is

below normal due to the prolonged drought. Many wells have ran out of water. The creeks that we irrigate from are formed by springs that are fed from these aquifers. Since the water levels in the aquifers are below normal, the water entering the creeks has been seriously lowered and in many cases, has dried up.

We are at a very serious point in our crop year. Yields of corn will be low in many cases due to lack of available water to irrigate in a timely manner. Corn requires about 25 inches of water in a four month period to produce. This year, Southwest Georgia has had about 10.0 inches of rain during a 4 month period. For a good corn crop, producers had to pump about 15 inches of water. Some producers had an adequate water supply available to do this but many did not as creeks, ponds, and wells are drying up. We are about half way through our growing season on peanuts and cotton. If the area does not start getting rainfall soon, the water supply for these crops may not last. We could be looking at serious

crop losses by the end of the year.

Rainfall at this time of year can help crops directly and temporarily replenish creeks and ponds, but it will not replenish our aquifer. It will take adequate rainfall in the winter months to help recharge our aquifers to get us out of this prolonged drought situation. So far this year, Southwest Georgia is in a rainfall deficit of over 12 inches. Last year, it was in a

deficit of over 20 inches and 2010 was not any better. The last normal year (52 inches of rainfall) was in 2009 when we had about 60 inches of rainfall. It has taken a long period of prolonged drought to get to the situation that we are in and it



Pictured from left: Jay Arnold, Calhoun FSA County Executive Director, James Tillman, NRCS State Conservationist, Hobby Stripling, FSA State Executive Director, Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan, Wilbon Greggs, Calhoun County Producer, Debbie Cannon, Representative for Senator Saxby Chambliss' Office and Ty Godfrey, FSA District Director.

will take a long period of normal rainfall for aquifers to fully recover.

Our biggest crop losses will be dryland crops. Wheat crop yields were down 15 to 25% due to the lack of rainfall in the winter months. It is still too early to predict what the yields will be for peanuts, cotton, soybeans, and grain sorghum. Many acres of double-cropped cotton, soybeans, and grain sorghum were not planted behind wheat due to the drought. If our water supply runs out, we will have crop losses on our irrigated peanuts and cotton also.

The Farm Bill debate is a growing concern for southwest Georgia farmers. Due to our area being 60% irrigated, we don't depend on crop insurance. Our dryland crop losses are usually offset by our irrigated crops. It will be a tremendous adjustment for this area to not have Direct Payments. The Direct Payments have been a large part of our Farm Budgeting process when getting loan approval. The



Producer, Wilbon Greggs of Calhoun County explains to Deputy Secretary Merrigan damages done to dryland peanut crops due to the on-going drought.

Safety Net of possible Counter-Cyclical payments also have been a large part of the loan approval process as both the Direct and CC payments are assigned to the lender. If you are depending on crop insurance to repay your crop loan, then your chances of loan approval are not good. Crop Insurance helps you come up with enough money to help pay your crop input bills, but it does not provide enough to pay for fixed costs. Crop Insurance alone provides only about 70% protection. The Direct Payments

and possible Counter-Cyclical payments (in years of low prices) have helped to finish paying the rest of the input bills and the fixed cost bills. Producers have never looked at Crop Insurance as a Government Benefit. In many cases, it has been purchased only because of Program and Lender regulations. Another big issue is having an adequate Crop Loan program in place with realistic loan rates. Crop loans have long been used as a marketing tool to help the farmer obtain a better price for his crop. The interim financing from the loan helps to pay crop input costs. There has not been much discussion about the Crop Loan program in the Farm Bill debates. Farmers depend on the Crop Loan program.

Farmers also depend on and have a need for the Conservation Programs (CRP, EQIP, and CSP) to continue. These programs have helped to offset the cost of being good stewards of the land. Funds help to retire environmentally sensitive land out of production (CRP) which is a great investment for everyone.

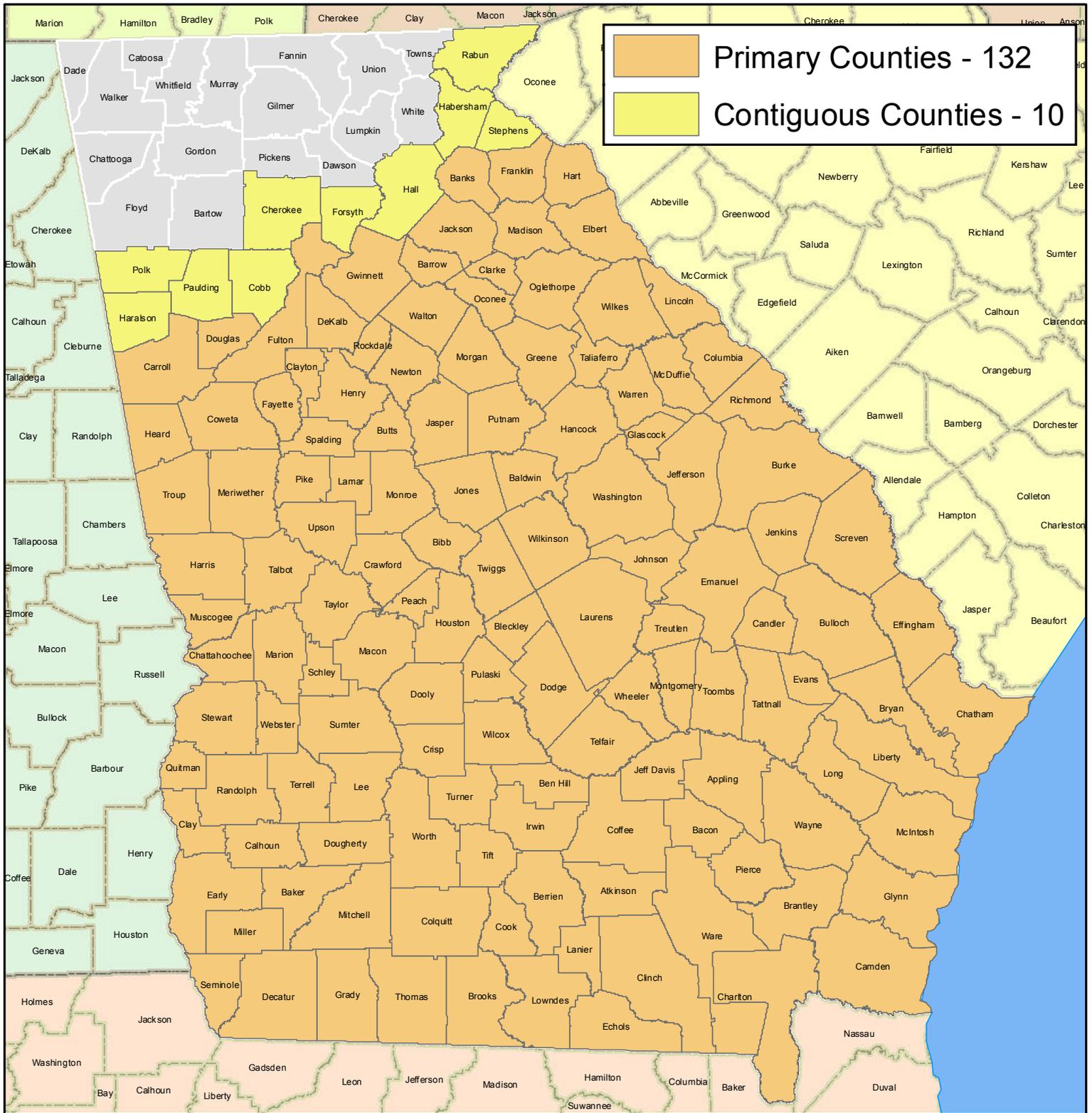
Agriculture is a business and an industry just like other important industries in our country. We must make sure that we can adequately feed our country and others. Many other industries have been bailed out, but with Agriculture, a little support goes a long way. A Farm Bill that provides that support is greatly needed.

While in Calhoun County, Georgia, Deputy Secretary Merrigan visited Cathy Arnold's farm (wife of Jay Arnold, FSA, CED) who showed her fields not planted behind wheat due to drought. She continued to Pachitla Creek to observe the low water levels due and also visited the farm of Tom Jackson to see dryland grain sorghum with poor stand. She saw a pond used for irrigation at the farm of Mike Ginn, then moved on to Wilbon Gregg's farm to see his dryland peanut field and the future site of an irrigation pond and system acquired through funds from NRCS and FSA. She completed her tour at Waylan Cheney Farms where she witnessed the affects of drought on permanent pasture.



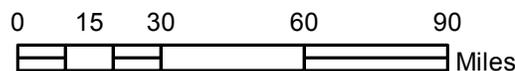
Georgia Farm Service Agency

Fast-Track Secretarial Disaster Designation Counties for Drought



Created by the GA GIS Section
July 17, 2012

1 inch = 40 miles



UTM NAD 83
Zone 16 N

