



# NEWSLETTER



**November 2012**

**Georgia State  
FSA Office**

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## 2012 Dates and Deadlines

### **Acreage Reporting Deadlines: NEW REPORTING DATES ARE IN EFFECT**

<u>Nov 15</u>	<u>Apiculture, PRF (Pasture, Range, and Forage – Crop Insurance Program)</u>
<u>Dec 15</u>	<u>Onions (Planted 09/20 - 10/20)</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>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>Jan 31, 2013</u>	<u>Final date to request a Marketing Assistance Loan or Loan Deficiency Payment on 2012 CY Peanuts and Wool.</u>
<u>Jan 31, 2013</u>	<u>NAP Application Closing Date for Annually Planted Crops</u>
<u>Mar 31, 2013</u>	<u>Final date to request a Marketing Assistance Loan or Loan Deficiency Payment on 2012 CY Barley, Canola, Honey, Oats, and Wheat.</u>
<u>May 31, 2013</u>	<u>Final date to request a Marketing Assistance Loan or Loan Deficiency Payment on 2012 CY Corn, Grain Sorghum, Cotton and Soybeans.</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>
<u>Apr 1, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3309 in 14 counties due to drought</u>
<u>Apr 3, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3321 in 5 counties due to losses caused by Tropical Storm Debby</u>
<u>Apr 22, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3352 in 12 counties due to drought</u>
<u>Apr 29, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3360 in 3 counties due to drought</u>
<u>May 20, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3397 in 6 counties due to drought</u>
<u>May 27, 2013</u>	<u>Designation S3407 in 17 counties due to excessive rain</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.

### **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.

### **Farm Service Agency Cautions Producers on Clearing-Up Land**

FSA County Offices have been reporting they are discovering numerous producers have been clearing-up land to plant crops without first discussing this activity with them or NRCS to insure they remain in compliance with the “Sodbuster/Swampbuster” provisions of the Farm Bill. FSA wants producers to know the main problem is that the discovery of the land clearing activities 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 as “highly erodible” or “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 to go into crop production. Increasingly high commodity prices are the main contributing factor for some producers deciding to clear up land adjacent to existing fields;

while other producers are expanding their farm operations by converting existing grasslands to row crop production. Many producers are under the impression that FSA and NRCS do not consider certain crops or land uses such as blueberries and grass “an annual agricultural commodity” because they are not planted and tilled on an annual basis. However, 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 come 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 work. NRCS will then work with the producer and 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!

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

All producers are asked to please review the 2012 Dates and Deadlines section of this month’s newsletter for the new November 15, Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture (a “Pilot” Crop Insurance Program for Bees) as well as another Crop Insurance Program for Pasture Range and Forage (PRF).

Beginning this past July 1, a big change was made for many of the Crop Acreage Reporting Dates (CARD) for several of the crops planted here in Georgia, most 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, fresh and 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) – All other forage/grass producers are encouraged to report their Forage and Grazing Crops for 2013 by this date as well.

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

### **The BIG changes in the 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 forward 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.

### **Farm Storage Facility Loan Program**

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program offers producers the opportunity to apply for a low interest loan to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The FSFL program receives an apportionment each FY to fund FSFL's approved that FY. The FY 2013 FSFL apportionment has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Loans are offered for 7-year, 10-year and 12-year terms from the date the Note and Security Agreement is approved and depending on the amount of the loan. Applicants will be charged a \$100.00 nonrefundable application fee. The maximum loan amount through the Farm Storage facility Loan program is \$500,000 per loan. All loans require a 15 percent cash down payment.

Eligible commodities for storage under the FSFL program are: corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, or minor oilseeds harvested other than grain, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas, hay,

renewable biomass, fruits and vegetables, including nuts.

Eligible storage facilities and upgrades include: new conventional cribs and bins, new oxygen-limiting structures and remanufactured oxygen-limiting structures, new flat-type storage, new electrical equipment, new safety equipment to improve or maintain or monitor the quality of the grain, new crete foundations, aprons, pits and pads, renovation of existing facilities, new grain and handling equipment, bunker type horizontal or open silo structures, new structures for storing hay, new structures suitable for storing renewable biomass, and new cold storage buildings.

For additional information, please contact your local FSA Office or visit the web at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

### **IRS 1099 Changes**

Calendar year 2012 has brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS. In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. Starting with calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA are less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more. The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA. However, this change will not apply to producers subject to voluntary withholding or backup (involuntary) withholding. These producers will continue to receive the appropriate IRS form, even if combined payments are less than \$600. Producers receiving less than \$600 in combined payments need to consult a tax advisor to determine if these payments must be reported on their tax return.

### **FSA County Committee Elections – FSA Counts on You to VOTE!**

County Committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on November 5. Ballots must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by December 3, 2012. All producers are encouraged to participate. If your local administrative area (LAA) is conducting an election, and you do not receive a ballot, contact your local county FSA office.

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.

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.

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

### **Guaranteed Loan Limit Increased for Fiscal Year 2013**

The loan limit for guaranteed Farm Ownership and Farm Operating loans has increased to \$1,302,000 for fiscal year 2013. This is an increase from last year's maximum of \$1,214,000.

### **Guaranteed Operating Loan Term Limit**

Presently, borrowers are prohibited from receiving guaranteed Operating Loans if the borrower has received guaranteed or direct Operating Loans in 15 or more years. This term limit will not affect any guaranteed Lines of Credit or term Operating Loans a borrower may currently have. It will only affect eligibility to obtain new guaranteed Operating Loans in the future.

Borrowers who believe they may be close to the 15-year limit are strongly encouraged to contact local Farm Loan Program personnel.

### **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](http://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 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 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 Announces Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Sign-Up Period for 2011 Crop Losses***

The sign-up period for the 2011 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program began on Oct. 22, 2012. The SURE program is part of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill). Under the 2008 Farm Bill, SURE authorizes assistance to farmers and ranchers who suffered crop losses caused by natural disasters occurring through Sept. 30, 2011.

"Any eligible producer who suffered losses during the 2011 crop year is encouraged to visit their local FSA office to learn more about the SURE program and how to apply," said Hobby Stripling, Georgia State FSA Executive Director.

As of Sept. 30, 2011, the Department's authority to operate the SURE program expired along with four other, important disaster assistance programs: the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Production losses due to disasters occurring after Sept. 30, 2011, are not eligible for disaster program coverage.

To be eligible for SURE, a farm or ranch must have:

- At least a 10-percent production loss on a crop of economic significance;
- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops;
- Been physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Secretary of Agriculture under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. A "farm" for SURE purposes means the entirety of all crop acreage in all counties that a producer planted or intended to be planted for harvest for normal commercial sale or on-farm livestock feeding, including native and improved grassland intended for haying.

Producers considered socially disadvantaged, beginning farmers or ranchers, or limited resource farmers may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

Farmers and ranchers interested in signing up must do so before the June 7, 2013 deadline.

For more information on the 2011 SURE program, visit your local FSA county office or visit the following website [www.fsa.usda.gov/sure](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure).

### ***FSA Near You! -- Worth and Mitchell Counties***

Zach Shanklin wanted to farm as long as he could remember or at least since the age of five. In 2008, after graduating from Sherwood Christian Academy, he finally realized his dream and planted his first crop. He has been following his dream ever since. Zach farms in Worth and Mitchell Counties on mainly family-owned land; farms owned by his grandfather, C. M. Shanklin, who started farming in the 1930s at the age of 15 when his father (Zach's great grandfather) passed away. Zach recently lost his grandfather but is carrying on the family tradition. Zach lives on the farm once owned by his grandparents at a little cross road called Shanklin's Crossing near the Bridgeboro community. He grows approximately 500 acres each year and is fortunate that the majority of his crops are irrigated. He has worked with his father to add irrigation in hopes of reducing some of his risk while also utilizing contracts on his crops when available. Zach farms peanuts, corn, soybeans, wheat, and grain sorghum. He also works with his father, Al, producing on halves and selling perennial peanut hay to Florida equine owners. Farm Service Agency has been able to assist Zach with Direct Operating Loans each year for crop production as well as equipment and irrigation loans. Zach would like to purchase a farm of his own someday and hopes to utilize FSA's Farm Ownership Loan program as a Beginning Farmer for that purchase.

