



# NEWSLETTER



March 2013

## Georgia State FSA Office

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

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## 2013 Dates and Deadlines

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

<u>Mar 31, 2013</u>	Final date to request Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) on CY 2012 Barley, Canola, Honey, Oats and Wheat
<u>May 31, 2013</u>	Final date to request MAL on CY 2012 Corn, Grain Sorghum, Cotton and Soybeans

### 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>Mar 1, 2013</u>	Newly appointed or reappointed COC Advisors take office.
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### Additional Program Deadlines

<u>Mar 31, 2013</u>	Final date to request a Marketing Assistance Loan or Loan Deficiency Payment on 2012 CY Barley, Canola, Honey, Oats, and Wheat.
<u>May 31, 2013</u>	Final date to request a Marketing Assistance Loan or Loan Deficiency Payment on 2012 CY Corn, Grain Sorghum, Cotton and Soybeans.
<u>June 7, 2013</u>	Final date to enroll in SURE for 2011 crop losses that occurred through September 30, 2011
<u>Aug. 2, 2013</u>	Final date to enroll in 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP)
<u>Now</u>	Emergency Conservation Approved Applicants -- report completed practices to FSA
<u>Now</u>	Emergency Forest Restoration Program Applicants -- report completed practices to FSA
<u>Now</u>	For 2013, complete form CCC-933, Average Adjusted Income Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information

### Present Emergency Loan Application Deadlines in Georgia:

<u>Mar 4, 2013</u>	Designation M4068 in 4 counties due to losses caused by Tropical Storm Debby
<u>Mar 11, 2013</u>	Designation S3262 in 15 counties due to frosts and freezes
<u>Mar 11, 2013</u>	Designation S3263 in 15 counties due to hail and high winds
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	Designation S3265 in 13 counties due to drought
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	Designation S3271 in 11 counties due to drought
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	Designation S3272 in 140 counties due to drought
<u>Mar 12, 2013</u>	Designation S3286 in 13 counties due to drought
<u>Mar 18, 2013</u>	Designation S3292 in 5 counties due to drought
<u>Apr 1, 2013</u>	Designation S3309 in 14 counties due to drought
<u>Apr 3, 2013</u>	Designation S3321 in 5 counties due to losses caused by Tropical Storm Debby
<u>Apr 22, 2013</u>	Designation S3352 in 12 counties due to drought
<u>Apr 29, 2013</u>	Designation S3360 in 3 counties due to drought
<u>May 20, 2013</u>	Designation S3397 in 6 counties due to drought
<u>May 27, 2013</u>	Designation S3407 in 17 counties due to excessive rain
<u>Sept 9, 2013</u>	Designation S3453 in 11 counties due to drought
<u>Sept 9, 2013</u>	Designation S3457 in 116 counties due to drought
<u>Sept 9, 2013</u>	Designation S3464 in 8 counties due to drought
<u>Sept 16, 2013</u>	Designation S3469 in 5 counties due to drought
<u>Sept 23, 2013</u>	Designation S3475 in one county due to drought
<u>Sept. 30, 2013</u>	Designation S3477 in one county due to drought
<u>Sept. 30, 2013</u>	Designation S3479 in one county due to drought
<u>Oct. 7, 2013</u>	Designation S3482 in 23 counties due to drought
<u>Oct. 15, 2013</u>	Designation S3486 in 51 counties due to drought

**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.

## **REVISED 2013 Crop Acreage Reporting Dates are NOW Effective**

All producers are asked to please review the **Dates and Deadlines Section** of this month's newsletter for the upcoming March Crop Reporting Deadlines for crops which now have a new Final Reporting Date.

In July 2012, the Crop Acreage Reporting Dates (CARD) for many of the crops planted in Georgia were revised to correlate with the Crop Insurance Reporting Dates. The revision in Final 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.

The newly established March 15 deadline date 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 (cabbage, onions, pecans, fresh market sweet corn and 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.

### **Crops with a REVISED Reporting Deadline Date of March 15 are:**

- Cabbage (planted between Oct. 1 and Feb. 20)
- Onions planted between Oct. 21 and Feb. 1)
- Pecans (All)

### **Future Crop Reporting Dates for Georgia are:**

**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; ALL other crops without a specific reporting date

**PLEASE NOTE: There was a big change in the Acreage Reporting Dates for winter-seeded small grains and grass crops with NAP coverage. These dates were moved forward from March 1, to January 15 and should have already been reported for 2013. Producers that have not already reported their winter-seeded small grains should do so immediately.**

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.

## **2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP)**

### **Background**

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, enacted on Jan. 2, 2013, extended the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 for one year. This extension included the Direct and Counter-Cyclical (DCP) program.

To be eligible for Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments, producers must enroll their farms in DCP on or before Aug. 2, 2013.

There are two types of DCP payments: Direct payments and Counter-Cyclical payments. Both are calculated using the base acres and payment yields established for the farm. DCP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Regulations covering the provisions for DCP appear in 7 CFR Part 1412.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for DCP, owners, operators, landlords, tenants or sharecroppers must:

- Share in the risk of producing a crop on base acres on a farm enrolled in DCP, and be entitled to share in the crop available for marketing from the base acres or would have shared had a crop been produced;
- Annually report the use of the farm's cropland acreage;
- Comply with highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation requirements on all of their land;
- Comply with average adjusted gross income limitation provisions;
- Meet requirements to be considered actively engaged in farming;



- Comply with planting flexibility requirements;
- 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.

### Eligible Commodities

Base acres and payment yields are established for the following commodities:

- Wheat;
- Corn;
- Grain sorghum, including dual purpose varieties that can be harvested as grain;
- Barley;
- Oats;
- Upland cotton;
- Soybeans;
- Canola and sunflower seed, including oil and non-oil varieties, or any oilseed designated by the USDA secretary; and
- Peanuts.

Farms with 10 or less base acres are not eligible for DCP payments, except for farms whose owners are socially disadvantaged or limited resource farmers or ranchers.

### DCP Election and Enrollment — 2013

The sign-up period to enroll began on Feb. 19, 2013 and ends on Aug. 2, 2013.

### Maximum Payment Amounts

Direct payments are limited to \$40,000 per person or entity and Counter-Cyclical payments are limited to \$65,000 per person or entity. The limitation is applied by attributing both the amounts received directly by entities and persons, and indirect amounts received through entities.

### Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

Persons or legal entities whose average non-farm AGI exceeds \$500,000 are not eligible for Direct or Counter-Cyclical payments. Persons or legal entities whose average farm AGI exceeds \$750,000 are not eligible for Direct payments. Persons or legal entities whose average total AGI exceeds \$1,000,000 are not eligible for Direct payments.

### Direct Payments

Direct payment rates for the eligible DCP commodities are as follows:

- Wheat: \$0.52 per bushel;
- Corn: \$0.28 per bushel;
- Grain sorghum: \$0.35 per bushel;
- Barley: \$0.24 per bushel;
- Oats: \$0.024 per bushel;
- Upland cotton: \$0.0667 per pound;
- Soybeans: \$0.44 per bushel;
- Other oilseeds: \$0.80 per hundredweight;
- Peanuts: \$36 per ton.

For each commodity, the total Direct payment for producers on a farm is determined by multiplying 85 percent of the farm's base acreage by the farm's Direct payment yield by the Direct payment rate.

Advance Direct payments are not authorized and will not be issued.

### Counter-cyclical Payments

In addition to Direct payments, Counter-Cyclical payments are authorized, which provide income support as part of a "safety net" in the event of low crop prices. Counter-Cyclical payments for a commodity are only issued if the effective price for a commodity is below the target price for the commodity. Target prices for each commodity are as follows:

Crop	Target Price
Barley	\$2.63/bu
Corn	\$2.63/bu
Grain Sorghum	\$2.63/bu
Oats	\$1.79/bu
Peanuts	\$495/ton
Soybeans	\$6.00/bu
Upland Cotton	\$0.7125/lb
Wheat	\$4.17/bu

The Counter-Cyclical payment rate is the amount by which the target price of each commodity exceeds its effective price. The effective price for each commodity equals the direct payment rate plus the greater of:

The national average market price received by producers during the marketing year as determined by the USDA Secretary (see Example A) or the national loan rate for the commodity.

<b>2013 Scheduled Timetable for DCP Payments</b>						
Month/ Year	Commodity					
	Barley Oats Wheat	Dry Peas Lentils	Peanuts Rice Upland Cotton	Corn Sorghum Soybeans	"Other" Oilseeds	Large Chickpeas Small Chickpeas
Marketing Year	June 1 May 31	July 1 June 30	Aug 1 July 31	Sept 1 Aug 31	Varies by crop	Sept 1 – Aug 31
Beginning Oct 2013	Final Direct		Final Direct	Final Direct	Final Direct	
Beginning Oct 2014	Final Counter- Cyclical	Final Counter- Cyclical	Final Counter- Cyclical for Peanuts & Upland Cotton	Final Counter- Cyclical		
Beginning Dec 2014					Final Counter- Cyclical	Final Counter- Cyclical
Beginning Feb 2015			Final Counter- Cyclical for Rice			

### Timing of Payments

For 2013, no advance Direct or partial Counter-Cyclical payments are authorized. Producers will receive the entire 2013 direct payment in Oct. 2013. Final Counter-Cyclical payments are made beginning October 2014, or as soon as practicable, after the end of the marketing year for the crop.

### Planting Flexibility Provisions

Producers who participate in DCP may plant cropland in excess of the total base acreage on the farm to any commodity. However, producers are subject to certain restrictions on the planting of wild rice, fruits and vegetables (other than mung beans and pulse crops). Information on wild rice, fruits and vegetable restrictions is contained in the FSA fact sheet "ACRE and DCP: Wild Rice, Fruit, and Vegetable Provisions." A 2013 fact sheet is available on FSA's website at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov); click on "find FSA fact sheets", or

follow this link:  
[http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsRelease?pf\\_20130123\\_insup\\_en\\_acredcp.html](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsRelease?pf_20130123_insup_en_acredcp.html)

### For More Information

Further information on DCP is available at local FSA offices or on FSA's DCP website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp).

### **CRP General Signup to begin May 20, 2013**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup is set to begin on May 20, 2013 and last through June 14, 2013. 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 will plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve water quality, control soil erosion and develop wildlife habitats. 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, 2013 may submit offers to reenroll their land in CRP. Georgia has 15,614.40 acres whose current CRP contract is set to expire on September 30, 2013. Be reminded that these contract acres may be re-offered. Each applicable participant with an expiring contract will be provided a letter giving them the opportunity to reenroll 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, 2013.

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 offers.

For more information you may visit your local FSA service center or view online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).





FSA State Committees (STC) officially appoints advisors who are recommended by county committees.

We welcome all COC Advisors and thank you for your willingness to serve for a 12-month period beginning March 1, 2013.

For more information about FSA county committees and advisors, visit your local FSA Office or the Web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>

### **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.

### **Violations under CRP Contract Period**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are reminded that land enrolled in the CRP program must follow the terms and conditions that were signed under the CRP-1 at the beginning of the contract period. Any violations such as harvesting trees, selling of land without county notification, enrolling into other Federal conservation programs, and so forth will result in termination of the CRP Contract and the owner having to refund all CRP rental payments, cost share payments, plus interest and liquidated damages.

If you have any issues with your CRP land, please call or visit your local FSA office first so that they are made aware of the situation and can act accordingly.

### **Welcome FSA COC Advisors**

FSA County Committee (COC) Advisors are a valued voice for underrepresented groups and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Advisors are appointed to county committees in counties or multi-county jurisdictions that have significant numbers of minority or women producers and lack such members on FSA county committees. Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interests of minorities and women in decisions made by county committees.

### **Redrawing of Local Administrative Area Boundaries**

Local Administrative Areas (LAA's) are established as elective areas for FSA committees in a county or jurisdiction. For election purposes, counties are divided into LAAs. Each LAA elects 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.

COC's are required to complete their annual review of LAA boundaries within each FSA County Office jurisdiction no later than April 1 of each year.

Regulations require that previously established LAA's be redrawn after the consolidation of two offices. The following FSA offices were involved in an office consolidation in 2012; therefore, the COC's are required to review and redraw LAA's in these office jurisdictions:

- Bulloch /Candler County FSA Office - Gay C. Harris, CED - (912) 871-2600
- Miller/ Baker County FSA Office - Paige D. Sheffield, CED - (229) 758-5219
- Oconee/Barrow/Clarke/Greene/Morgan County FSA Office – Thomas L. Verner, CED (706) 769-3987
- Putnam/Baldwin/Jasper/Jones County FSA Office - Kaye J. Walker, CED (706) 485-2341
- Walton/DeKalb/Gwinnett/Newton/Rockdale County FSA Office – Carolyn D. Pierce, CED (770) 267-8363

To ensure the COC members fairly represent the agricultural and socially disadvantaged producers in these FSA offices, public comment is requested on the redrawing of the LAA boundaries. Contact the CED in the applicable

office listed above for complete details regarding the comment period and final date to submit comments.

### **FSA Microloan Program**

On January 15, 2013, the new Farm Service Agency (FSA) Microloan program was announced. The Microloan program is designed to help small and family operations and beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers secure loans under \$35,000. The Farm Service Agency developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations by modifying its Operating Loan (OL) application, eligibility and security requirements. The program will offer more flexible access to credit and will serve as an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA). These smaller farms, including non-traditional farm operations, often face limited financing options.

Microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan Program including, but not limited to:

- Initial start-up expenses;
- Annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents;
- Marketing and distribution expenses;
- Family living expenses;
- Purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials essential to farm operations;
- Minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers;
- Hoop houses to extend the growing season;
- Essential tools;
- Irrigation;
- Delivery vehicles.

The application process for microloans will be simpler, requiring less paperwork to fill out, to coincide with the smaller loan amount that will be associated with microloans. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to accommodate smaller farm operations, beginning farmers and those with no farm management experience.

FSA understands that there will be applicants for the microloan program who want to farm but do not have traditional farm experience or have not been raised on a farm or within a rural community with agriculture-affiliated organizations. Microloan program applicants will need to have some farm experience; however, FSA will consider an applicant's small business experience as well as any experience with a self-guided apprenticeship as a means to meet the farm management requirement. This will assist applicants who have limited farm skills by providing them with an opportunity to gain farm management experience while working with a mentor during the first production and marketing cycle.

For annual operating purposes, microloans must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount, and up to 150 percent, when available. Microloans made for purposes other than annual operating expenses must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products purchased with loan funds and having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount.

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$35,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular OL rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less.

Additional information on the FSA microloan program may be obtained at local FSA offices or through the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

### **Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period**

USDA has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between Sept. 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers



March 2013

USDA

Volume 10, Issue 3

and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

**Website:** [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

**Phone:** 1-888-508-4429

**Claims Period: Sept. 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.**

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

To read Secretary Tom Vilsack's entire news release click on the following link:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2012/09/0309.xml&contentidonly=true>

### **Multicultural Agriculture Conference to be Held in Cartersville**

The Upper Ocmulgee River RC&D Council, Inc., in partnership with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, will host a conference for multicultural farmers and producers March 12, 2013 at the Clarence Brown Conference Center, 5450 Georgia 20, Cartersville, GA 30121, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Registration fee is \$20 per person, which covers the cost of lunch and conference materials.

The theme of this conference is "myconservationPad" playing on the popular concept of gathering information through the use of "Apps" on a computer tablet. Attendees will receive a pad folio where they will insert individualized material, gathered from conference training sessions, to begin building a successful conservation plan for their farms. Topics include:

- Application and Eligibility for USDA Farm Bill Programs
- Developing a Farm Business Plan and Seeking Technical/Financial Assistance
- Your Soils and Plants
- Developing Conservation Plans and Risk Management
- Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Engineering Designs for Your Farm and Emerging Agriculture and Conservation Practices

Featured conference speakers are:

- Dr. George E. Boyhan, Extension Vegetable Specialist, University of Georgia (Athens, GA)
- Dr. James E. Brown, Professor of Horticulture, Fort Valley State University (Fort Valley, GA)
- Pilar Quintero, Owner/Operator, Rancho Alegre Farm (Dacula, GA)

Beginning/Growing/Established Farmers, Ethnic/Cultural Minority Farmers and anyone interested in learning more about USDA programs, Georgia and local agricultural resources should attend.

Pre-registration is required. To register, go to <http://tiny.cc/fh0kpw> or [www.upperocmulgeeriverrcd.org](http://www.upperocmulgeeriverrcd.org)

For more information contact the Upper Ocmulgee River RC&D Council, Inc. at 678-376-9518 or USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Office at 770-963-9288.

### **FSA Near You! Top Quality in Lanier County**

Three farms in Lanier County were recognized for high quality in cotton. The awards were given for highest grade of cotton in the surrounding 20 counties in the Southeast (Region 3) of Georgia. The contest is split into three categories for each of the four regions in Georgia: below 500 acres, above 500 acres and above 1,000 acres.

The awards were presented at the Georgia Cotton Commission Annual Meeting and UGA Cotton Production Workshop held at the UGA Tifton

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Conference Center on January 30, 2013. The purposes of the awards are to recognize producers and winners of high-quality cotton fiber and to identify their general management practices for the benefit of other cotton growers.

### Greg & Glyn Register

Greg and Glyn Register received the GA Quality Cotton Award for acreage over 1,000 acres. This is the first award the brothers have received for their cotton crop. "We try to manage our crops the way we are supposed to. We are doing our best and it feels like we are good at what we do", said Greg Register. "It's nice to be recognized for the work we've done," said Glyn Register. "We put in a lot of hours. We go from sunrise to sunset."

Greg has been in business for 10 years, producing cotton, corn, peanuts and recently began producing wheat products. According to Kathy Register, their mother, Greg started the business and received help from his brother Glyn, who also worked as an electrician. Glyn has recently begun farming full time in the last two years.

They both grew up on the family farm on Hwy 37 and helped with it since they were very young. They both say they learned everything they know about farming from their father, Glyndon Register. Kathy stated Greg especially had a passion for farming at a very young age. "Since he was seven, he would set his alarm on Saturdays so he wouldn't miss the Farm Monitor at 6 a.m.," said Register.

Greg and his wife, Christie, have two daughters Meghan and Hannah. Glyn lives with his wife, Melody, and has a daughter, Katelyn Hunt.



Pictured left to right: Greg, Glyndon and Glyn Register

### River Bottom Farms

River Bottom Farm's, Kevin and Gayla Shaw, received the Cotton Award for acreage above 500 acres. "This is a great honor for Lanier County; we have the smallest county in the State and come out on top in cotton quality in our Region," said Kevin.

River Bottom Farms has been in business for 20 years producing cotton, corn, peanuts, wheat and soybeans. In the late 1990s, Kevin and his wife Gayla began grinding naturally grown white corn for personal consumption. Family and friends raved over Gayla's Grits so they began bagging and giving "Gayla's Grits" as gifts. In addition to the traditional row crops, Kevin and his cousins, Jason and Sam, have ventured into olives and are now producing Georgia olive oil.

Kevin was very happy with his cotton crop and quality. He is especially thankful to Andrew McBryde, his cotton scout, and Steve Bullard with BCT Gin, for all of their help and support during 2012.

Kevin and Gayla have four children, Smith, Swin, Bella and Campbell.



Pictured left to right: Gayla and Kevin Shaw





Pictured left to right: Swin, Campbell, Smith and Bella Shaw

### Ronnie Courson

Ronnie Courson received the Cotton Award for acreage below 500 acres. The highest award given is the Best Cotton Award. The 2012 overall State winner was Ronnie Courson from Lanier County and BCT Gin for producing cotton with the highest loan value and premium of all the awards presented in the program. Ronnie is one lucky individual. He also won the door prize at the Cotton Awards –a \$250 gift card!

Ronnie, retired from the Georgia Department of Public Safety, has been farming his entire life. In addition to cotton, he produces peanuts, olives and raises livestock.

Ronnie and his wife, Delores, have two children and four grandchildren.



Pictured: Ronnie Courson

Although all these producers were very appreciative of their awards, they commented that it would not have been possible without the direct leadership and guidance of Elvin L. Andrews. Elvin recently retired as their County Agent. His expertise and knowledge will be greatly missed by the residents and farmers of Lanier County.

All three winners received a plaque and a \$500 prize. The gin that nominated all of the winners, BCT Gin Company, was also recognized. The awards were co-sponsored by Bayer CropScience and the Georgia Cotton Commission and administered by the UGA Cotton Team.

The Farm Service Agency has been very instrumental in providing services and program benefits to each of these winners.

The Direct Loan for Beginning Farmers has proved to be a great program for Glyn Register. The low interest money allowed Mr. Register to purchase seed, chemicals, supplies and inputs needed to run his farming operation. His net income was more profitable to him with the low interest rate. This has also opened the door for him to qualify for low interest Ownership Loans. Glyn's cotton premium and yield enabled him to make the best of his 2012 cotton crop. In return, he paid his Operating Loan in full and well in advance of the due date. His brother, Greg also began his farming operation 10 years ago as a Beginning Farmer through FSA's Direct Loan Program. Additionally, Greg and Glyn both participate in the Direct and Counter Cyclical Program.

River Bottom Farms has taken advantage of the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program, Conservation Reserve Program and also participates in the Direct and Counter Cyclical Program as well as the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

Ronnie Courson participates in the Direct and Counter Cyclical Program and the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. During the drought of 2011, Mr. Courson was able to obtain benefits through FSA's Livestock Assistance Program for his livestock.

The Lowndes County Service Center would like to congratulate all the Lanier County winners!