

March 2013



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Grafton County FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from Grafton County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

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45th CRP General Sign-Up

USDA will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States. Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the sign-up can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15 years). Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP. For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit the Grafton County FSA Office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

DCP/ACRE Sign-up Continues

DCP and ACRE signups for the 2013 crops are on-going. The DCP sign-up period will end on Aug. 2, 2013; and the ACRE sign-up period will end on June 3, 2013. The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment. Read more about DCP and ACRE or contact the Grafton County FSA office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

DEADLINE EXTENDED: Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Must be Filed by MAY 1, 2013

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the extension of the voluntary claims process for Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades. All claims must now be filed by MAY 1, 2013.

"Hispanic and women farmers who believe they have faced discriminatory practices in the past from the USDA have additional time to file a claim in order to have a chance to receive a cash payment or loan forgiveness," said Secretary Vilsack. "USDA urges potential claimants to contact the Claims Administrator for information and to file their claim packages on or before May 1, 2013." The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application 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 and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants may register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) or may download the forms from the website. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to visit the website at any time or to contact the call center telephone number Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

Claim packages and other documentation may be mailed to Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Administrator, PO Box 4540, Portland, OR 97208-4540. Claim packages and other documentation may also be emailed to claims@hwfr.org. Claimants may also fax claims packages and other documentation to (855) 626-8343. Completed forms and documentation must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. PDT on May 1, 2013.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429 Fax: (855) 626-8343 Email: claims@hwfr.org

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 – May 1, 2013.

Independent 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.

Reminder of New Acreage Reporting Deadlines for New Hampshire Producers

The New Hampshire Farm Service Agency would like to remind producers of the new acreage reporting deadlines. New deadlines became effective July 1, 2012 and are as follows:

January 2: Honey; **January 15:** Apples, Peaches, Nectarines; **February 15:** Maple Sap; **May 31:** Ornamental Nursery; **July 15:** Corn, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Spring Forage Seeding, All Other Crops; **November 15:** Perennial Forage, Fall Forage Seeding, Fall-Seeded Small Grains, Late-filed reports will be accepted. From July 1, 2012, through September 15, 2013, late-filed fees will not be assessed for crops with final reporting dates that fall within that time frame. For more information on acreage reporting and acreage reporting deadlines contact the Grafton County FSA Office.

ATTENTION APPLE GROWERS

The Risk Management Agency (RMA), Eastern Regional Compliance Office (ERCO), is reviewing a number of insurance policies issued for fresh apple crops in multiple counties across New Hampshire and several other states, for the 2013 crop year. Apple growers who insure apple production with RMA are reminded that **"if you designate fresh apple acreage on the acreage report, you are certifying at least 50 percent of the production from acreage reported as fresh apple acreage, by unit, was sold as fresh apples in one or more of the four most recent crop years in accordance with the definition of "fresh apple production" and that you have the records to support such production."** This notice is to remind apple growers that insure with RMA to maintain sufficient records to meet fresh apple production eligibility on acreage reported as such.

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 checkclearing 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.

Dates to Remember

May 1, 2013 Hispanic and Women's Claims must be filed.

May 20, 2013 to June 14, 2013 - CRP 45 signup

June 3, 2013 ACRE signup ends

August 2, 2013 DCP signup ends

Crop Reporting Deadlines

May 31, 2013: Ornamental Nursery

July 15, 2013: Corn, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Spring Forage Seeding, All Other Crops

November 15, 2013: Perennial Forage, Fall Forage Seeding, Fall-Seeded Small Grain

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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 20250-9450, 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).