



South Carolina State FSA Office

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Attention

Due to budget constraints, this newsletter is mailed to one recipient per address. Please share with others concerned in your household.



**Laurie C. Lawson, State Executive Director,
South Carolina Farm Service Agency**

I bring to you greetings and best wishes for a wonderful 2011! As our producers are making plans for their farming operations, we at FSA are planning on how we can best serve you in an efficient, effective, and friendly manner. We have so many good programs that are available for our farming people and it is my hope that you will become familiar with them. Our county offices are ready to serve in all of our thirty-six locations throughout South Carolina.

With commodity prices high it is my hope that we have a good growing season for our crops, pastures, and trees. I hope that all of us in our great state will be successful in whatever ventures we choose to be involved with.

Please pay particular attention to the "Dates to Remember" on the front page of this newsletter.

FORTY-THREE SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES QUALIFY FOR USDA EMERGENCY LOANS

On January 14, 2011, all counties in South Carolina except Jasper, Beaufort and Charleston were included in a Secretarial Designation due to losses caused by drought, extreme heat, and weather related insect infestations that occurred from May 1, 2010, and continuing. The decision makes all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low-interest emergency (EM) loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Farmers in eligible counties have until September 14, 2011 to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

In addition, Jasper County is also eligible for emergency loan assistance due to drought and excessive heat that began on 7/1/2010. Jasper is contiguous to one of the counties designated in the Georgia Disaster Declaration S3062. Applicants have until 7/26/2011 to apply for loans.

Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Dates to Remember

February 28, 2011	Deadline for 2011 NAP Coverage
February 1-28, 2011	Sorghum Referendum voting period
May 1, 2011 Also, final disposition date	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Fall Seeded Crops: Wheat, Barley, Oats, Rye, Triticale, Trees, and Fall Seeded Grasses
June 1, 2011	Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) – Final Enrollment Date
June 1, 2011	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Spring Planted Fruit and Vegetables, Production Reporting Date for Actual Production History (APH)
July 15, 2011	Acreage Reporting Deadline for: Flue-Cured Tobacco; Spring Seeded Crops (Cotton, Corn, Peanuts, Rice); Summer Seeded Crops (Soybeans, Grain Sorghum, Summer Seeded Grasses, and Other Land Uses); CRP; Orchards; Vineyards; all other NAP crops
July 29, 2011	Deadline for 2009 SURE Signup
September 14, 2011	Application deadline to apply for FSA emergency loan assistance due to a SC disaster declaration for losses caused by drought, excessive heat and weather related insect infestations.
September 15, 2011	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Fall Planted Fruit and Vegetables
September 30, 2011	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Ornamental Nursery, Aquaculture Species

NOTE: For spring planted fruit and vegetable crops not planted by the final reporting date, the acreage must be reported by 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

Measurement service is available to owners, operators, or other tenants. Contact your local FSA Office for rates and additional information.

FEBRUARY 2011 INTEREST RATES

Farm Operating	2.250%
Farm Ownership	4.750%
Farm Ownership – Beginning Farmer Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency – Actual Loss	3.750%

NAP Production Reporting

Producers enrolled in the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) are required to provide production records for individual crops each year to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information for this year and from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date.

Records submitted must be reliable and verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. It is recommended producers submit 2010 production records as soon as possible after harvest. All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.

2011 NAP Coverage Deadlines

Producers in need of insurance coverage for Spring and Fall annually planted crops under the Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) have until **February 28th** to apply for the following crops for which the catastrophic level of Crop Insurance is not available.

Beans	Cantaloupes	Cucumbers	Eggplant
Forage Sorghum	Grain Sorghum	Honeydews	Okra
Peanuts	Peppers	Pumpkins	Squash
Sunflowers	Sweet Potatoes	Tomatoes	Watermelons

The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 per producer for individuals with farming interests in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver for service fees.

To qualify, a producer must share in the risk of producing an eligible crop.

SURE

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop year 2009. SURE is available to eligible producers on:

- farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties, that have incurred crop production or quality losses, or both, and includes all crops grown by a producer nationwide, **except** grazed crops
- any farm in which, for the crop year, the actual production on the farm because of disaster-related conditions is 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer was required to have crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is not required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of the coverage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The signup for 2009 losses officially began January 10, 2011 and will end on July 29, 2011.

Wetland Compliance

Producers renting or purchasing land that may have a converted wetland status need to check with the county office to learn if there are restrictions. The last thing FSA wants to do is to deny a producer benefits due to wetland noncompliance. The 1985 Farm Bill provides that, unless exempt, persons are ineligible for benefits under certain programs administered by USDA if they: plant an agricultural commodity on wetland that was converted after December 23, 1985 or convert a wetland after November 28, 1990. Following are permitted uses and restrictions of certain wetlands for compliance with Wetland compliance provisions:

- Wetlands can be farmed under natural conditions. However, wetlands cannot be converted.
- Wetlands converted before November 28, 1990, cannot be planted to an agricultural commodity and retain eligibility for benefits.
- Wetlands converted after November 28, 1990, must either be restored to wetland status or mitigated to regain eligibility for program benefits.
- Wetlands that can be farmed under natural conditions cannot be manipulated in any way, unless the Natural Resources Conservation Service determines the work would have a minimal effect on wetland values.

- Wetlands converted before December 23, 1985, can be farmed and maintained.

To avoid the possible loss of all USDA benefits it is strongly recommended that you check with NRCS before starting work in your fields or woodlands to convert a wetland to it make possible to plant a crop.

Importance of Accurate and Timely Acreage Reports

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of program benefits. In stressing timeliness of making an acreage report, it is important for producers to know that if a crop is not reported by the established state reporting date, or the required NAP reporting date (if applicable), a late-filing fee will be assessed. The crop can be considered timely reported as long as there is physical evidence of the crop still remaining in the field.

Prevented Planted Provisions

Producers should report prevented planted acreage to their local FSA Office when the crop acreage is not planted due to a natural disaster. To be considered timely, producers who request prevented planting acreage credit must report the acreage within 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Continuous CRP

FSA County Offices are accepting offers under the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program. Some of the practices available are:

- **Restoration of longleaf pine plantations** that provide habitat for numerous species of plants and animals. Land must have 4 out of 6 years cropping history in years 2002 through 2007 and be longleaf suitable soils. Other eligibility requirements apply.
- **Establishment of bird buffers** that provide habitat for the bobwhite quail and numerous other bird species. The bird buffer strips established under CCRP have been proven to increase quail populations in the State. Land must have 4 out of 6 years cropping history in years 2002 through 2007. Other eligibility requirements apply.
- **Establishment of riparian buffers** on marginal pastureland that protect water quality for all animals, including humans. This practice establishes a strip of trees next to an eligible permanent water body used for livestock drinking water. The livestock are fenced out of the protected water body and cost-share assistance and other lucrative benefits are provided to install wells as an alternate water source. Livestock producers that have utilized this practice in the past have stated that providing reliable clean well water to their livestock has greatly improved herd health.
- **Thinning CRP Pines** Producers may thin CRP pines without an annual rental payment reduction. The thinning must be done in accordance with State Specifications that provide enhanced wildlife habitat. Burns are required in conjunction with the thinning. Cost-share assistance is available to establish pollinator/wildlife habitat on logging roads and decks. Producers must receive approval by the County Committee prior to thinning.
- **State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement** – Available only in the following Counties: Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter and Williamsburg. SAFE acres will be used to establish and maintain native early successional habitat on cropland to benefit Northern bobwhite quail, loggerhead shrike, field sparrow, Eastern meadowlark, Eastern towhee, brown thrasher, painted bunting, indigo bunting, and American woodcock. It will also provide: nesting and brood-rearing habitat for wild turkey; feeding, bedding, and fawning sites for deer; control soil erosion; and enhance water quality. Habitat establishment will require planting a mix of three species of native warm season grasses and two species of forbs and managing for natural vegetation diversity. Land must have 4 out of 6 years cropping history in years 2002 through 2007. Other eligibility requirements apply.

Conservation Reserve Program Reminders

- ✓ Producers are required to annually certify CRP acreage by July 15 of each year. Failure to certify may result in contract termination.
- ✓ Pine straw cannot be harvested from CRP acreage.

- ✓ Clear-cutting CRP trees for any reason is a contract violation. If your CRP trees are damaged by root-rot, pine beetles or other disasters, immediately notify FSA.
- ✓ If CRP land is sold, or if there is a death of a CRP participant, the new owner or estate representative must assume the CRP contract within 60 days or the contract will be terminated. If you are considering selling your CRP land, contact the FSA office so that they can advise you of the penalties that will apply if the new owners do not assume the contract.
- ✓ Management and maintenance activities are prescribed in the Conservation Plan and must be completed outside of the primary nesting season. The primary nesting season is April 1 through September 1. CRP contracts will be considered in non-compliance if required management and maintenance activities are not performed or performed during the primary nesting season. Undesirable plants and insects must be controlled on CRP land. **Carefully review and follow your conservation plan.**

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

To be eligible for LIP, livestock deaths must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent to the participant. Report deaths due to normal mortality in the event livestock die due to natural disasters in the future. Provide pictures that are dated showing the dead livestock to the local FSA office.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP authorizes payments for eligible orchardist and nursery growers who produce nursery, ornamental, fruit, nut or Christmas trees for commercial sale and actually replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines that have been destroyed or damaged by a natural disaster. Applications must be filed within 90 calendar days after the disaster event.

24th Annual Wild Quail Management Seminar scheduled for March 10-11, 2011

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will hold the 24th Annual Wild Quail Management Seminar on March 10-11, 2011, at the Webb Wildlife Center (1282 Webb Avenue, Garnett) in Hampton County. The registration fee is \$80 and includes meals, overnight accommodations and seminar materials. If 20 participants are not registered by February 11, 2010, the seminar will be cancelled. Space is limited to 35 participants, so register early to reserve a slot. For more information write Quail Management Seminars, DNR, PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202, or call the DNR Small Game Project in Columbia at (803) 734-3609, or e-mail: castinep@dnr.sc.gov.

Farm Operators Subleasing Cropland

All producers planting on **DCP base acres** must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payments for the farm. Producers, who enroll a farm in DCP/ACRE and at a later date sublease DCP cropland to another producer, **MUST** revise the DCP Contract to reflect the proportionate share of the additional producer. Failure to report the new producer and revise the DCP/ACRE contract shares is a contract violation which will result in contract termination and loss of payments for **all** producers on the farm. To avoid DCP/ACRE contract violations, such changes in producers on the farm after enrolling in DCP/ACRE **must** be reported to your local FSA office to determine if new producer is planting on base acres. This can be done at the time the new producer reports his planted acreage. The DCP/ACRE contract may be revised any time prior to September 30, 2011 (all necessary signatures must be obtained by September 30, 2011). Contracts may also be terminated upon written agreement of all producers receiving payment under the contract, provided any advanced payments are repaid with interest.

Direct and Counter Cyclical Payments for 2011

Producers must enroll farms with base acres in DCP annually. All producers on base acres are required to sign DCP contract (CCC-509) no later than June 1, 2011. Producers on a farm are solely responsible for ensuring that enrollment (signature of all producers on base acres) is received by June 1, 2011. New producers may be added to the DCP

contract after June 1 if all producers sign a succession in interest contract no later than September 30th.

Farms with 10.0 base acres or less will not be paid DCP unless the farm is "wholly owned" by a socially disadvantaged or limited resource farmer or rancher. However, farms with total base acres of 10.0 acres or less MAY be combined with other base farms to increase the base acres to more than 10.0 acres and earn payments, provided that reconstitution rules are met. Since reconstitutions may be requested through August 1 of the applicable fiscal year and there is a final enrollment date of June 1 for DCP, the farms being combined **MUST** be enrolled in DCP on or before June 1.

County Committee Election Results for 2011 LAA3 Elected Unless Otherwise Designated

<u>Counties</u>	<u>Person Elected</u>
Abbeville/Greenwood/McCormick	Elizabeth L Willis
Aiken	Monroe Danley Jr
Allendale	Mark Connelly
Anderson	Dwain Whit Chamblee
Bamberg	Laurie Copeland
Barnwell	C Kelly Craig
Calhoun/Richland - LAA3	Rawl Dargan Culclasure III
Calhoun/Richland - LAA5	John K Fogle
Charleston/Berkeley	Robert L Clarke Jr
Chester/Fairfield - LAA3	Edward H Mills
Chester/Fairfield - LAA5	WM Estes III
Chesterfield	Bobby T Sullivan
Clarendon	Don C Brunson Jr
Colleton	Irving M Benton Jr
Darlington	Frankie Woodard
Dillon	W Phillip Price
Dorchester	James Roger Clark
Edgefield	WG Smith III
Florence	Jimmy D Poston
Georgetown	Malene B Baxley
Greenville/Pickens	Rocky Burdette Jr
Hampton	Bob Youmans
Horry	ND Hardwick Jr
Jasper/Beaufort	Stan Wells
Kershaw/Lancaster - LAA3	Reece S Kirk
Kershaw/Lancaster - LAA5	Frank G McLeod Jr
Laurens	Don L Willis
Lee	William A Tomlinson Jr
Lexington	Clarence Jones
Marion	David W Drew
Marlboro	Stephen T O'Neal
Newberry	Mark E Livingston
Oconee	James E Stone II
Orangeburg	Michael W Shuler
Saluda	Warren Johnson
Spartanburg/Cherokee/Union	Henry L Sprouse
Sumter	JT Rivers III
Williamsburg	Shane W Stuckey
<u>York</u>	Ira O Johnson

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)

The purpose of ELAP is to provide compensation to eligible producers of livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other loss conditions, including losses due to blizzards and wildfires, that are NOT covered under LIP, LFP, or SURE. Eligible losses include feed losses, physical losses and additional costs incurred in providing feed to eligible livestock. Contact your local FSA office if you believe you have an eligible loss. Crop insurance requirements must be met in order to be eligible.

Office Closures

February 21, 2011	Offices Closed – Presidents Day
May 30, 2011	Offices Closed – Memorial Day
July 4, 2011	Offices Closed – Independence Day

Sorghum Check-Off Program Referendum February 1 – 28, 2011

Producers and importers are entitled to one request to vote on February 1 – 28, 2011, if they engaged in the production or importation of sorghum at some time between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2010. Form LS-379, Ballot and supporting documentation to show production or importation of sorghum are needed back to the FSA office for producers and AMS Offices for Importers by Close of Business February 28, 2011. Further details are available at FSA office or AMS website <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/sorghumpage>

The referendum will allow an opportunity for producers and importers to decide whether they would like the Sorghum Promotion Research and Information Order to continue. The program assessment began on July 1, 2008.

FSA Conservation Loan Program

The Farm Service Agency makes and guarantees conservation loans on farms and ranches to help conserve our natural resources. The Conservation Loan (CL) Program provides farmers with the credit necessary to implement conservation measures on their land.

The direct CLs loan limit is up to \$300,000 and guaranteed CLs up to \$1,119,000 (amount adjusted for inflation), may be available by applying with lenders working with FSA to obtain a guarantee.

Applicants will work with Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff to develop a conservation plan. Conservation practices must be approved by NRCS before FSA can provide financing. Examples of conservation practices include installation of conservation structures; establishment of forest cover; installation of water conservation measures; establishment or improvement of permanent pastures; transitioning to organic production; manure management, including manure digestion systems; etc.

For additional information, please contact your local FSA office.

The Future of Your Farm:

A workshop for landowners will be held at the following locations on the following dates:

February 1	Florence	6pm - 8pm	Pee Dee REC, 2200 Pocket Rd
February 3	Hemingway	6pm - 8pm	JJ Mitchum Center 2233 Hemingway Hwy
February 8	Bennettsville	6pm - 8pm	Marlboro Civic Center 106 Clyde St.

Workshop includes presentations by professionals, an opportunity to talk with them, workbook, and a light dinner.

There will also be a Q&A with professionals: appraiser, attorney, fellow landowners, & host organizations.

If you are interested in attending this event, please RSVP by January 28, 2010 to 843-661-1644 or info@peedeelandtrust.org.

Please visit our website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sc>

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