

September 2014



Tennessee FSA Updates

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LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS URGED TO ENROLL IN DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY OCTOBER 1

Producers who have suffered eligible disaster-related losses are encouraged to act to secure assistance by Sept. 30, 2014, as congressionally mandated payment reductions will take place for producers who have not acted before that date. Livestock producers that have experienced grazing losses since October 2011 and may be eligible for benefits but have not yet contacted their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office should do so as soon as possible.

The Budget Control Act passed by Congress in 2011 requires USDA to implement reductions of 7.3 percent to the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) in the new fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, 2014. However, producers seeking LFP support who have scheduled appointments with their local FSA office before Oct. 1, even if the appointment occurs after Oct. 1, will not see reductions in the amount of disaster relief they receive.

USDA is encouraging producers to register, request an appointment or begin a Livestock Forage Disaster Program application with their county FSA office before Oct. 1, 2014, to lock in the current zero percent sequestration rate. As an additional aid to qualified producers applying for LFP, the Farm Service's Agency has developed an online registration that enables farmers and ranchers to put their names on an electronic list before the deadline to avoid reductions in their disaster assistance. This is an alternative to visiting or contacting the county office. To place a name on the Livestock Forage Disaster Program list online, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster-register..>

Producers who already contacted the county office and have an appointment scheduled need do nothing more.

The Livestock Indemnity Program, the Tree Assistance Program and the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program Frost Freeze payments will also be cut by 7.3 percent on Oct. 1, 2014. Unlike the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, applications for these programs must be fully completed by Sept. 30. FSA offices will prioritize these applications, but as the full application process can take several days or more to complete, producers are encouraged to begin the application process as soon as possible.

The Livestock Forage Disaster Program compensates eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire between Oct. 1,

2011 and Dec. 31, 2014. Eligible livestock includes alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland. Producers forced to liquidate their livestock may also be eligible for program benefits.

Additionally, the 2014 Farm Bill eliminated the risk management purchase requirement. Livestock producers are no longer required to purchase coverage under the federal crop insurance program or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program to be eligible for Livestock Forage Disaster Program assistance.

To learn more about USDA disaster relief program, producers can review the 2014 Farm Bill fact sheet at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill, the LFP program fact sheet, <http://go.usa.gov/5JTk>, or contact their [local FSA office](#).

DAIRY PRODUCT DONATION PROGRAM

The Dairy Product Donation Program (DPDP) assists dairy operations when margins are low by using Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds to purchase dairy products for donation to public and private nonprofit organizations that provide nutrition assistance to low-income populations. Purchases are only made by USDA during periods of low margins. Dairy operators do not have to enroll to benefit from DPDP. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will administer the program when FSA determines that the actual dairy production margin has been \$4 or less per hundredweight (CWT) for each of the preceding two months.

USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY REMINDS PRODUCERS: FARM BILL ALLOWS EARLY TERMINATION FOR CERTAIN CRP CONTRACTS

USDA Tennessee Farm Service Agency reminds producers that as of August 6, producers with acres under contract through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) can apply for early contract termination, as required by the 2014 Farm Bill. The deadline to request early CRP contract termination is January 30, 2015.

The effective date for early termination is no earlier than October 1, 2014. The CRP contract must be in effect for at least five years and other conditions must be met. The 2014 Farm Bill identifies 10 exceptions whereby land will not be eligible for the early-out provisions. For a complete list of these exceptions, please view the program fact sheet online at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp_opt_out_fact_sht.pdf

Once a CRP contract termination request is approved by the FSA County Committee, the decision cannot be reversed and the contract cannot be reinstated. Producers must meet conservation compliance provisions for all land that will be returned to production.

For more information on or to determine eligibility for early termination of existing CRP contracts, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

COTTON TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT IS UNDERWAY

Farmers can enroll in the Cotton Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) through Oct. 7, 2014. The enrollment period opened on Aug. 11, 2014.

The program, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides interim payments to cotton producers during the 2014 crop year until the Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX), a new insurance product also created by the legislation, is available. Details on the plan will be released by early fall.

CTAP applications approved before Oct. 1, are subject to congressionally mandated automatic reductions of 7.2 percent for the 2014 crop year. Applications approved after Oct. 1 will be reduced the required 7.3 percent for the 2015 crop year. The Budget Control Act of 2011 requires USDA to implement these reductions to program payments.

For more information about CTAP, visit a local FSA office or go online to www.fsa.usda.gov.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS IN TENNESSEE STILL HAVE TIME TO APPLY FOR DIRECT FARM OWNERSHIP LOAN PROGRAM

Low-Interest Loans Can Help Producers Start or Expand Farms

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced that farmers and ranchers still have time to apply for low interest 2014 loans available through FSA's direct farm ownership program.

Eligible producers can borrow up to \$300,000 in direct farm ownership loans to buy or enlarge a farm, construct new farm buildings or improve structures, pay closing costs, or promote soil and water conservation and protection. The interest rate on select loans can be as low as 1.5 percent with up to 40 years to repay.

FSA encourages all interested applicants to apply for direct farm ownership loans. For more information about the program and other loans administered by FSA, visit any FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov. For local FSA Service Center contact information, visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).