



Mark Your Calendar

August 1 – Last Day to request Farm Reconstitution

August 3 – CRP & spring seeded crops certification deadline and final date to submit nomination for COC Election

August 14 – DCP and ACRE Enrollment Deadline

DCP & ACRE Signup Deadline – August 14

Sign-up for enrollment in the 2009 Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) continues until **August 14, 2009**. All owners and operators who will share in the DCP payments on the farm must sign the CCC-509 by August 14. Unlike past years, there are no late file provisions. Participants may NOT enroll a farm in DCP after the August 14th deadline. Payments are computed using 83.3 percent of the farm's base acres times the farm's payment yield times the direct payment rate. An advance payment of up to 22 percent of the total payment may be requested. Producers who do not elect to receive an advance payment will receive the entire payment in October 2009.

The enrollment period for the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program has begun and also ends **August 14, 2009**. The optional ACRE program provides a safety net based on State revenue losses and acts in place of the price based safety net of the counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A decision to elect ACRE is irrevocable and cannot be changed from the time of election through the 2012 crop year. Producers who elect and enroll a farm in ACRE agree to forgo counter-cyclical payments, take a 20 percent reduction in their direct payments, and a 30 percent reduction in the marketing assistance loan rates. ACRE payments are based on planted and considered planted acres of eligible commodity crops, but are limited to the total base acres on the farm.

COC Election/Nominations

For County Committee Election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA selects one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee.

Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee election will be accepted June 15 through Aug. 3, 2009. Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates. The nomination form, FSA-669A, is available at the county office or may be downloaded from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/>. To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected. The completed nomination form must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Aug. 3, or postmarked by midnight Aug. 3, 2009.

Acreage Reporting Deadline Approaches!

There are a number of FSA programs that require producers to submit accurate annual acreage reports of all cropland on a farm to qualify for program benefits. All farmland, including hay and grazing land, must also be reported to remain eligible for disaster programs. The final reporting date is **August 3, 2009** for all spring seeded, NAP, and grass crops, as well as CRP. Reports taken after this date will be considered late-filed and a late fee of \$46 per farm will apply.

Sericea Lespedeza Treatment Reminder

CRP acres are required to be kept free of Sericea Lespedeza and other noxious weeds. Special emphasis is placed on Sericea Lespedeza control since it is hard to kill once established. Abundant summer rainfall will cause a large amount of Sericea Lespedeza seed to be produced this fall if control measures are not taken. Treatment is optimal in the bloom state, which is usually late August or September.

You should consult your local county weed department or extension agent to take advantage of technical advice and possible chemical discounts.

FSA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Loans

Did you know that FSA not only provides conservation and commodity programs, but also provides loan program assistance? FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, and farm equipment or be utilized as annual operating credit. One FSA program, in particular, targets a portion of loan funds to beginning farmers and ranchers who meet our eligibility requirements.

The Beginning Farmer Loan Program is for individuals who have participated in the management of a farm or ranch and have operated a farm or ranch for less than 10 years. FSA loans can be made directly by FSA or made in partnership with your lender. For real estate loans an applicant must have materially participated in the management of a farm and/or operated a farm or ranch for at least 3 years, operated a farm less than 10 years and own less than 30% of the median farm size in the county in which they operate.

The Beginning Farmer Down Payment Loan Program is a special program available exclusively to Beginning Farmers who are able to make a 5% down payment on the purchase of a farm or ranch. FSA will provide 45% of the financing (not to exceed \$225, 000) at a fixed rate of 1.5% (subject to change) with a second mortgage for a twenty year term, if a local lender will provide 50% at their rates for a thirty-year term.

For additional information about our loan programs and eligibility requirements please contact the Farm Service Agency office that serves your county or check out our website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Foreign Investors 90-Day Reporting Rule

Foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land are required by law to report their land holdings, acquisitions, leases of 10 years or more, and land use changes within 90 days to the local FSA Office. Failure to report these changes can result in a civil penalty of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of their interest in the agricultural land.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

The 2008 Farm Bill includes the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) which provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have incurred livestock death losses due to a natural disaster on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011. Losses because of adverse weather, as determined by the Secretary during the calendar year, including blizzards, disease, extreme cold, extreme heat, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires, are eligible for LIP.

FSA advises farmers and ranchers who lose livestock due to adverse weather to compile and document their livestock death losses. Producers are advised that **verifiable** death loss documentation will not be accepted by County Offices until their LIP applications are filed.

Adequate documentation must prove the death of eligible livestock occurred as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested.

If adequate verifiable proof of death records documentation is **not** available, a livestock producer may provide reliable records, along with verifiable beginning and ending inventory, as proof of death.

Certifications of livestock deaths by third parties may be accepted by FSA **only** if verifiable proof of death records or reliable proof of death records along with verifiable beginning and ending inventory records are **not** available.

Additional information about LIP is available at FSA County Offices or by going on line at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Banking Changes?

All FSA payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This innovation has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. It has been calculated that having a problem with a payment is 20 times greater with checks than with Direct Deposit. Another benefit is that Direct Deposit to your account can be made within 48 hours.

To ensure accurate and prompt payment, it is critical to keep the county office staff up to date on all changes made to your financial account on record.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit currently on file with your FSA office, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to ensure continued uninterrupted service.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA offers seven-year, low-interest loans to grain producers to build new or upgrade existing storage facilities and related essential, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment. Loan opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- New conventional-type cribs or bins, oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures, and flat-type storage structures designed for whole grain storage
- Perforated floors, safety equipment, electrical equipment and concrete components considered essential for a fully functional storage facility
- Remodeling of existing storage facility

Farm storage facility loans must be approved prior to site preparation, equipment purchase or construction, and must be secured by a promissory note and security agreement. Special provisions apply for loans exceeding \$50,000.

The maximum loan amount will be 85 percent of the net cost of the applicant's needed storage or handling equipment, not to exceed \$100,000 per borrower. A minimum down payment to the supplier or contractor is required to bridge the gap between the net cost of the storage facility and the loan amount.

Fixed interest rates on farm storage facility loans are equivalent to the rate of interest charged on U.S. Treasury Securities of comparable maturity on the date the loan is approved.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.