

USDA NEWS

Grundy
Mercer
Putnam
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Crop Certification



The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

The certification form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. The producer certification deadline for fall-seeded crops is **June 30** and for spring-seeded crops, **July 31**.

CRP & NAP Certification:

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

A report of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop. Producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

DCP Enrollment Extended

The June 1, 2007, deadline to enroll in the 2007 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) has been extended to **August 3, 2007**. Computer problems have caused application processing delays which prompted the enrollment deadline extension. A late-file fee of \$100 per farm will be assessed to the producer for CCC-509's filed after August 3, 2007 and before September 30, 2007. Advance direct payments for the 2007 crop year are 22%.

Advance payments may be requested in any month starting with December 2006. The remaining final direct payment of 78% will be issued to participating producers in October of 2007. For clarification or an appointment, contact your local FSA office.

FSA Farm Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements.

If you're having trouble getting commercial credit, check with the FSA county office staff about loan eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, rates, term and use of proceeds.



Minority Farm Register

The Minority Farm Register is a tool to promote equal access to farm programs and services for minority farmland owners, farmers, ranchers, tenants and other individuals with an agricultural interest. Participants may receive information or be personally contacted through USDA outreach efforts. Programs include direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans, marketing loans, as well as conservation, housing and rural business and risk management.

Participation is voluntary.

All minority persons involved in farming or ranching are encouraged to participate. The information provided may be shared through the USDA Office of Outreach with other USDA-approved outreach partners, such as community-based organizations, educational institutions and other government agencies.

If you are involved with farming or ranching and wish to be included in the Minority Farm Register, you are invited to visit with the county office staff and request the register form or download a form from the FSA Web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>



2007 County Committee Election Approaches

It's county committee election time, and since this only happens once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA contributes one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee. Most counties are divided into three LAAs.

Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election. In combined counties in some years, two seats may be up for election.

There are three steps in the election process: (1) the call for nominations, (2) the election, and (3) the installation of new committee member.

Nominations for candidates to run for the FSA's county committee election will be accepted from June 15 through August 1, 2007. Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election, who participate or cooperate in an FSA program, and are of legal voting age may be nominated. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organization representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates.

A nomination form FSA-699A is available at your local FSA office. You may download the form from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mo/>.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Preventing Fraud, Waste

The FSA has joined with the Risk Management Agency to prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. In addition, FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to RMA.

Producers can report suspected cases to the county office staff, RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

Sodbuster Regulations

The term "sodbusting" is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985.

Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in FSA programs.

Before producers clear, plow, or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage, before bringing land into production. In addition, producers and the producer's affiliates have to file an AD-1026 with the staff in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer's signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation, provisions will not be violated.

CRP Compliance and Cover Maintenance

CRP participants should be mindful of the key general provisions contained in the CRP contract and appendix. If you are a participant and have not read the full contract, including the appendix, FSA strongly urges you to do so immediately. Likewise, if you are unfamiliar with your conservation plan, FSA urges you to review it immediately. **Failure to adhere to CRP program provisions, including any required management practice schedules, or failure to follow the conservation plan in any way, may jeopardize the CRP contract and result in costly penalties and refunds.** Highlights of the most important provisions are:

- ◆ CRP cover establishment must be completed timely and in accordance with guidelines set forth in the conservation plan.
- ◆ CRP acreage may not be harvested or grazed without a conservation or management plan that allows for such activity, and such activity is limited on a per acre basis to once in three years.
- ◆ Any CRP required maintenance activity such as mowing, burning, spraying, or disking is the participant's responsibility and is limited on a per acre basis to once in three years, and must be conducted according to the conservation plan.
- ◆ All CRP required maintenance activity, and managed haying or grazing, must be conducted outside the primary nesting season (May 1 through July 15)
- ◆ State noxious weeds and any other specified undesirable weeds must be controlled.
- ◆ Mowing of CRP acreage for generic weed control is prohibited, except as outlined in the conservation plan.
- ◆ Spot treatment of the acreage for weed or insect control may be allowed during the primary nesting season—with prior FSA Committee approval—if certain criteria are met.

Please contact your local county FSA office should you need additional information, or if any regulations that may apply to you are unclear. For help understanding your conservation plan, please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service.

MANAGED HAYING AND GRAZING OF CRP

Managed haying or grazing on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has now become an option for producers due to changes brought about by the 2002 Farm Bill. This sweeping change is retroactive, and not limited to newly enrolled CRP acreage.

Haying will be permitted from July 16th until October 15th.
Grazing will be permitted from July 16th until November 12th.

Haying and grazing will not be allowed on the same acreage, and will be limited to once in three years on a per acre basis. Other stipulations may apply as outlined in the conservation plan. A 25% reduction of the CRP rental payment will be levied for acreage hayed or grazed. Before haying or grazing, a conservation plan must be established in conjunction with NRCS that includes managed haying and grazing practices.



Farm Operation Changes

In Farm Service Agency terms, farms are **constituted** to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm **reconstitution** is necessary.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program. If 2007 DCP direct payments have already been issued on the farm, the reconstitution will be effective for 2008 unless the payments are re-funded.





What are eLDPs?

The FSA's electronic Loan Deficiency Payment (eLDP) is an Internet-based service allowing producers to request LDPs online and, in most cases, receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

Online eLDPs are offered as an additional option to producers requesting an LDP. LDP benefits are still available at the local FSA county office. However, eLDP services provide greater flexibility to producers who conduct business online and want to avoid travel time to and from the local FSA office.

Access to the eLDP service is available to all USDA customers. In order to insure personal identity, you must first register for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 Account. This process is easy and starts online by creating a user ID and password and confirming your e-mail address. The final step requires visiting a local USDA Service Center to complete the eAuthentication process.

USDA provides eLDP services in a secure online environment that protects your privacy through stringent security measures.

All participating customers will have an eLDP Customer Profile set up through a software application that validates their farming and crop information.

Local FSA county offices will maintain Customer Profiles for accuracy. Customer Profile information is provided by the customer and verified by farm records stored in the local FSA county office.

FSA's eLDP customers can use a personal computer to submit an LDP application. After the eLDP is approved by USDA, the payment is automatically routed by electronic funds transfer to the customer's bank account.

The eLDP process is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except during routine backup and maintenance periods. The applicable LDP rate is based upon the rate in effect on the application date for the location of the stored commodity.

Want to conduct your FSA business online?

Go to the following website and request a Level 2 ID.

<http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/#L2>



FSA Information on the Internet

Want to check out daily LDP prices, news releases, and other FSA information? Log on to these user friendly websites:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

The Missouri State FSA home page is **<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mo/>**

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