

April 2013



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North Dakota FSA eNews

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From the State Executive Director

April has arrived and winter is finally losing its grip on the state. While some may be contending with too much water and others don't have enough, we are all anxious to get started on another growing season. As with any year, life in agriculture is not without its challenges.

On March 21, Congress passed legislation to provide funding through the remainder of the fiscal year. This legislation included a new reduction of approximately 2.5% for a number of items within USDA's budget, including FSA's salaries and expenses appropriation. It also maintained the across-the-board budget reductions under sequestration which took effect on March 1. We at FSA are committed to carrying out these sequester actions and reductions in a manner that is equitable and provides the least disruption to our customers.

USDA notified Congress of its intention to capture the required sequester savings by reducing 2013 direct payments by up to 8.5 percent. There is a 30 day Congressional notification period that must pass before we can move

forward. Therefore, payments in the following programs have been stopped: 2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for both 2012 and 2013 crop years, and the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC). After the notification period expires, we intend to resume making these program payments in full.

No matter what the weather may bring to the farm, or what fiscal limitations bring to the office, I, and all the employees at FSA, look forward to working with you this growing season.

--Aaron Krauter, State Executive Director

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2011 SURE Program

The sign-up for 2011 runs through June 7, 2013. Producers who believe they may be eligible for a SURE program payment must contact their local county office for an appointment to determine eligibility.

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop year 2011. 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.

For more information on the SURE program, please visit your local FSA county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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2013 DCP / ACRE Program

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extended the authorization of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill) for many Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) commodity, disaster, and conservation programs through 2013.

The extended programs include the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE).

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 (and vice versa).

The following signup dates have been established by FSA for 2013 DCP/ACRE:

- FSA began sign-ups for DCP and ACRE for the 2013 crops on Feb. 19, 2013.

- The ACRE sign-up period will end on June 3, 2013.
- The DCP sign-up period will end on Aug. 2, 2013.
- Advance payments are not authorized; final direct payments issued in October of 2013.
- FAV planting restrictions apply on participating farms.

At sign up, producers are given or provided access to the CCC-509 Appendix to the signed contract. Paragraph 3P addresses payments and the subject of availability of funds. As indicated in this section of the Appendix, payments may be reduced due to a sequester order required by Congress. This means that ALL producers will be affected by the reduction if it occurs REGARDLESS of the date of sign-up.

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FAV / Wild Rice Exception

Producers may not plant fruits, vegetables (FAVs) or wild rice on base acres enrolled in DCP or ACRE. However, if the farm has a history of planting FAVs or wild rice or if the producer has a history of planting the specific FAV or wild rice, the FAV or wild rice may be planted on base acres. In such cases, the direct and countercyclical payments shall be reduced acre for acre for each base acre planted to FAVs or wild rice.

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DCP FAV Plantings

Producers with plans for fruit and vegetable (FAV's) plantings in 2013 need to be aware of the FAV planting restrictions that apply on base acreage (Dry peas, Lentils and Garbanzo Beans are exempted from the FAV restriction). When planting FAV's, producers have the following options:

1. Plant FAV's on a participating farm's "free acres".
2. Plant FAV's on base acreage of a participating farm that has a farm FAV history and take an acre-for-acre reduction in the DCP payment. NOTE: Farm FAV history is based on the FAV planting history for 1991-1995 or 1998-2001.
3. Plant FAV's on base acreage of a participating farm without farm FAV history, using the producer's FAV history and take an acre-for-acre reduction in DCP payment. NOTE: Producer FAV history is based on the planting history the producer has of each specific FAV crop.
4. Plant FAV's on a nonparticipating farm.

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2012 ACRE Program – Farm Benchmark Yield Update

Producers who have a 2012 Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program contract on one or more FSA farms, must complete the FSA-658 (Record of Production & Yield) for each ACRE farm and each covered commodity planted in 2012 by not later than July 15, 2013. Production evidence that can be used to support the certified yields can be from the following sources:

- Crop Insurance loss records
- Sales records (buyer specific)
- Crop Insurance APH data base records

- Farm stored production records, appraisals

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CRP General Signup Begins May 20

A four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) begins May 20 and ends on June 14. 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). Nationwide, contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP. Additional sign-ups for continuous CRP programs such as Highly Erodible Land Initiative and Initiative to Restore Grasslands, Wetlands and Wildlife will be announced in spring 2013. For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

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Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

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Receiving FSA/CCC Payments by Treasury Check

FSA/CCC makes payments electronically through a program called Direct Deposit. Direct Deposit is a safe, convenient, and reliable way to receive your FSA/CCC payment through a financial institution. A financial institution can be a bank, credit union, or thrift account. Many financial institutions offer basic, low-cost accounts in addition to full-service checking or savings accounts.

If you currently receive your FSA/CCC payments by Treasury check, please contact your local county FSA office to complete a form SF-3881.

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Commodity Loan Rates for 2013 – Wheat, Feed Grains, Pulse Crops and Oilseeds

County loan rates for the 2013 crops of wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, soybeans, lentils, dry peas, chickpeas and other oilseeds (sunflower seed, flaxseed, canola, rapeseed, safflower, mustard seed, crambe and sesame seed). The rates are posted on the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport>

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Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade on-farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the eligible net cost of the storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. FSA requires additional security for all loans exceeding \$50,000 or when the aggregate amount of FSFL loans exceeds \$50,000. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. Sign-up for FSFL program is continuous as long as CCC funding is available. An FSFL loan must be approved before authorizing delivery of equipment or materials, site preparation, or construction. For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

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FSA Assists Risk Management Agency

FSA county office staff will be assisting Risk Management Agency and insurance providers in monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA staff will be making two inspections; one during the growing season and one during the time harvest is normal for the crop.

The staff will be checking to see if reported crops have been planted and cared for in a workmanlike manner. All suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program will be referred to RMA. Producers may report suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse to the county office staff, RMA office or Office of Inspector General. Additionally, FSA will assist RMA with auditing claims.

Need Help Planting a Crop?

Call Farm Rescue, the nonprofit organization that plants and harvests crops for family farmers who have experienced a major injury, illness or natural disaster. Up to 1,000 acres planted free of charge. Go to farmrescue.org or call 701-252-2017 for an application.

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April Loan and Interest Rates

Commodity Loans - 1.125%
Operating Loans - 1.375%
Farm Ownership Loans - 3.500%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment Loans - 1.50%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss - 2.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7-Year - 1.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10-Year - 2.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12-Year - 2.250%

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Important Dates and Deadlines

May 20 - CRP General Signup Begins

Jun 3 - 2013 ACRE Election Signup ends

June 7 - 2011 SURE Signup ends

June 14 - CRP General Signup Ends

July 15 - Acreage Reporting Deadline for Spring-Seeded Crops

August 2 - DCP Signup ends

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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).