

June 2013



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Virginia FSA State Office Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from the Virginia FSA State Office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

Virginia FSA State Office **County Committee Nominations**

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Hours

Monday - Friday
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Virginia FSA Internet

More Information about Virginia
FSA programs, activities and
news can be found on the VA

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

The COC nomination period runs from June 17, 2013 through Aug. 1, 2013. For more information contact your local FSA office.

DCP Deadline Approaches

The sign-up period for DCP is still open. Producers are encouraged to sign up for DCP before the Aug. 2, 2013, deadline.

The 2013 DCP program provisions are unchanged from 2012.

[Read more about DCP](#) or contact the FSA county office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

FSA Internet at

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

To learn more about FSA programs you can also visit the National website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

General CRP Sign-Up 45 Ends June 14th

Enrollment for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up 45 ends June 14, 2013. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the program can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract which is 10-15 years.

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. Interested producers should contact their local FSA office to submit an offer for CRP enrollment NO LATER THAN Friday, June 14. For more information about General CRP sign-up opportunities in Virginia, visit our website: www.fsa.usda.gov/VA.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Sign-Up Restarts

On Monday, May 13 FSA once again began accepting offers for enrollment in many continuous CRP practices, including VA [CREP](#) practices, which had previously been suspended after the expiration of the 2008 Farm Bill on September 30, 2012.

Since the Virginia Farm Service Agency began enrolling land in 2000, thousands of participating farmers and landowners have made the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) one of Virginia's most active water quality improvement efforts. Virginia CREP is an offshoot of USDA's nation-wide Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). During the development of the Virginia CREP program, Federal and [State partners](#) identified the primary natural resource concerns affecting the State to create the Virginia CREP. CREP aims to improve Virginia's water quality and wildlife habitat by offering financial incentives, cost-share and rental payments to farmers who voluntarily restore:

- Filter Strips,
- [Riparian forest buffers](#),
- Grass and shrub buffers,
- Wetlands.

CREP helps producers by providing financial incentives and cost-share reimbursement for up to 115% of out-of-pocket expenses; including costs for associated components such as wells, pipeline, watering troughs, livestock crossings and animal trails and walkways. Virginia [Soil and Water Conservation Districts](#) may also provide financial assistance for complimentary "[best management practices](#)" to help a producer meet his/her goals and

address all natural resource concerns on the tract.

CREP participants quickly realize that the program offers more than environmental benefit and peace of mind. Livestock producers see herd health benefits after excluding animals from natural water sources. A decreased instance of waterborne illness, improved rate of gain, and overall production benefits are a few. Crop producers also enjoy economic benefit from removing marginal, shaded field border from production and dedicating those acres to a conserving use. Input costs are reduced on these acres that rarely produce a yield and CREP also provides an annual rental payment on the acres.

The time to sign up for CREP is limited! Offers to enroll in CREP will be accepted at all FSA offices from **May 13 – September 30, 2013**. The [American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 \(ATRA\)](#) extended authority under the 2008 farm bill for one year -- to 2013. **These provisions will again expire on September 30, 2013** and FSA will no longer have the authority to accept CREP enrollment. The future of the CRP and CREP programs is uncertain and legislation is pending on the availability of these programs in the next Farm Bill. Click [HERE](#) to locate your local USDA Service Center and begin the conversation about conservation

2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program Application Deadline

The last day to submit SURE applications for 2011 crop losses is June 7, 2013. The SURE Program provides payments to producers when crop revenues are less than the crop guarantee. The SURE Program payment is equal to 60 percent of the difference between the crop guarantee and revenue.

To determine the guarantee and revenue for the SURE Program, all crops on all farms for a producer are included in the calculation. Payments under the SURE Program are limited to \$100,000.

To be eligible for the 2011 SURE Program, producers must have crop insurance on all insurable crops. For crops that are not covered by crop insurance such as pumpkins and cucumbers, producers **MUST** have purchased Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage.

For more information concerning the 2011 SURE program or other Farm Service Agency programs, contact the local FSA office or visit the Farm Service Agency website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/.

Crop Certification

After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops enrolled in programs other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program), acreage reports are to be certified by:

- **July 15th** - Burley Tobacco, Corn, Cotton, Dark Air Tobacco, Fire-Cured Tobacco, Flue-Cured Tobacco, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Fresh Market Tomatoes (Planted 5/16-7/5), Grain Sorghum, Peanuts, Processing Beans (Planted 9/6-7/10), Soybeans, Tomatoes, and all other crops.
- **August 15th** - Cabbage
- **September 15th** - Fresh Market Beans (Planted 7/15-9/5), processing Beans (Planted 7/15-9/5).
- **November 15th** - Apiculture, PRF, and ALL PASTURE & HAY ACREAGE for 2014.

Acres reports on crops covered by NAP are due in the county office by the earlier of (date) for small grains and (date) for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

Direct and Guaranteed Loans

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,302,000. This makes the maximum combination of direct and guaranteed loan indebtedness \$1,602,000.

The one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

Beginning and Limited Resource Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of county's median size.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has farm operating loans as well as loans to purchase or improve farms or ranches to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has priority funding for socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is a person who is a member of a group that has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice without regard to the members' individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African-Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders. FSA loans are available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of seven, 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 U.S. Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Controlled Substances

Program participants convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for program payments and benefits.

If convicted of one of these offenses, the program participant shall be ineligible during that crop year and the four succeeding crop years for Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible for any or all program payments and benefits:

- For up to 5 years after the first conviction
- For up to 10 years after the second conviction
- Permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants convicted of federal or state offense for the possession of a controlled substance shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits as follows:

- Up to one year upon the first conviction
- Up to five years after a second or subsequent conviction.

Special 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.

Selected Interest Rates for June 2013

90-Day Treasury Bill - 0.125%

Farm Operating - Direct - 1.25%

Farm Ownership - Direct - 3.375%

Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher - 1.5%

Emergency - 2.25%

Farm Storage Facility – 7 year - 1.250%

Farm Storage Facility – 10 year - 1.750%

Farm Storage Facility – 12 year - 2.000%

Commodity Loans 1996-Present - 1.125%

Dates to Remember

June 14 - Final day to submit offer for CRP Signup 45.

July 15 - Final day to report planted acreage for the 2013 crop year.

August 2 - Final day to enroll in 2013 DCP.

Continues - Continuous Conservation Reserve program

For more information on bulletin subjects or details regarding your GovDelivery subscription with the Virginia FSA State Office, contact Linda Cronin, Outreach/Information Coordinator at linda.cronin@va.usda.gov or call at 804-287-1537.

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