

June 14, 2016



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Florida FSA Newsletter

Florida Farm Service Agency

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Hurricane Season is Underway

The third named storm of 2016 rolled onto Florida's coast less than a week into the official hurricane season. In a state where all four seasons can be experienced during any 24-hour period, getting ready for Colin was business as usual. Floridians tend to fall into three categories when it comes to storms: those who put it off until the season begins, those who put it off until the first storm and those who are always prepared. No matter which group you are in, make sure you have a plan in place.

FSA's suite of Disaster Assistance Programs help producers and ranchers recover from natural disasters. Know what options are available to you before the next event. Contact your local Farm Service Agency office for more information.

FSA Unveils Monthly Webinar Series

The FSA Outreach and Education Division will host a series of webinars each month to inform producers about FSA programs and initiatives. To register for any of the below listed webinars, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach and click on "Outreach Webinars."

July 19 @ 2 p.m. EDT

Tom Hockert

Farm Loans

Justin Teuton

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

Understanding Receipt for Service

To ensure that all USDA customers and potential customers are being served properly in local offices, the 2014 Farm Bill requires that a receipt be provided. Learn more about Receipt for Service, how it affects you and what you can expect when you visit a local Farm Service Agency county office.

Aug. 9 @ 2 p.m. EDT

Need Commodity Storage? The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Can Help

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade permanent or portable facilities to store commodities. Learn how this program may be able to help your operation.

The webinars will be recorded for future viewing and can be accessed on www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach.

FSA Offers Improved Program to Limit Losses on Forages

Reduced forage quality is now considered a production loss for weather disaster assistance coverage under the new buy-up provisions of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

This safety net is important for cattlemen who produce non-insurable forages for feeding livestock. Previously, FSA only considered a decrease in overall forage tonnage produced when determining if the producer suffered a compensable loss after a qualifying weather event. Under FSA's new NAP buy-up provisions, a decrease in forage quality – such as protein content – is also considered.

To receive coverage for the 2017 crop year, producers must enroll their eligible forage in NAP by September 30, 2016. Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers are eligible for a waiver of the NAP service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction in buy-up provisions.

For more information on NAP, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

USDA Unveils New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting

Update Lets Farmers and Ranchers Report Common Acreage Information Once

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filing at one location, data that's important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

Since 2009, USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak

season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as **FSAFarm+**, gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Extends Deadline for Recording Farm Structure

Gives Non-Family Farming Operations More Time to Restructure in Response to 'Actively Engaged' Farm Management Rule

USDA announced a one-time, 30-day extension to the June 1 deadline for recording farm organization structures related to Actively Engaged in Farming determinations. This date is used to determine the level of interest an individual holds in a legal entity for the applicable program year. Farming operations will now have until July 1 to complete their restructuring or finalize any operational change. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued the extension in response to farmers and ranchers who requested more time to comply, and to assure that everyone has enough time to provide their information under the new rules.

The 2014 Farm Bill provided the Secretary with the direction and authority to amend the Actively Engaged in Farming rules related to management. The final rule established limits on the number of individuals who can qualify as actively engaged using only management. Only one payment limit for management is allowed under the rule, with the ability to request up to two additional qualifying managers operations for large and complex operations.

The rule does not apply to farming operations comprised entirely of family members. The rule also does not change the existing regulations related to contributions of land, capital, equipment or labor, or the existing regulations related to landowners with a risk in the crop or to spouses. Producers that planted fall crops have until the 2017 crop year to comply with the new rules. The payment limit associated with Farm Service Agency farm payments is generally limited annually to \$125,000 per individual or entity.

USDA's Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a comprehensive and detailed approach to support farmers, ranchers, and forest land owners in their response to address the causes of climate change in April 2015. The framework consists of 10 building blocks that span a range of technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon storage, and generate clean renewable energy through mitigation.

USDA's strategy focuses on climate-smart practices designed for working production systems that provide multiple economic and environmental benefits in addition to supporting resilience to extreme weather, reduced emissions and increased carbon storage.

Through this comprehensive set of voluntary programs and initiatives spanning its programs, USDA expects to reduce net emissions and enhance carbon sequestration by over **120 million metric tons** of CO₂ equivalent (MMTCO₂e) per year – about 2% of economy-wide net greenhouse emissions – by 2025. That's the equivalent of taking **25 million cars** off the road, or offsetting the emissions produced by powering nearly **11 million homes** last year.

For more information on the Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry click the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/documents/climate-smart-fact-sheet.pdf> . For additional information on ways to consider greenhouse gases when managing land, refer to the USDA Climate Hub webpage: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection."

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap that allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for their operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

Farm Loan Graduation Reminder

FSA Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

FSA periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower's ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower's financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer's operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance

sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower's potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower's name, loan type, balance sheet and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower's loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders that are interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA farm loan office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, FSA's intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers

Free basic coverage and discounted premiums available for new and underserved loan applicants

Producers who apply for FSA farm loans will be offered the opportunity to enroll in new disaster loss protections created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new coverage, available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), is available to FSA loan applicants who grow non-insurable crops, so this is especially important to fruit and vegetable producers and other specialty crop growers.

New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost, or higher coverage for a discounted premium.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered crops include "specialty" crops, for instance, vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. FSA allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

In addition to free basic coverage, beginning, underserved or limited income producers are eligible for a 50 percent discount on premiums for the higher levels of coverage that protect up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also may work with FSA to protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

FSA offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

Growers need not apply for an FSA loan, nor be a beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmer, to be eligible for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program assistance. To learn more, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans, or contact your local FSA office at <https://offices.usda.gov>.

Selected Interest Rates for June 2016

90-Day Treasury Bill

.250%

Farm Operating Loans — Direct
2.25

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct
3.50

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher
1.50

Emergency Loans
3.25

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)
1.625%

Sugar Storage Facility Loans
2.00%

Commodity Loans 1996-Present
1.625%

Dates to Remember

July 4 - Federal Holiday Observed. Offices Closed.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).

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