

December 2013



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## Sussex County FSA Updates

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### Sussex County FSA

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### County Executive Director

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### Farm Loan Specialist

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### County Committee Members

Mark Davis - Chair

Clay Vincent -Vice Chair

Matthew Smith - Member

Janice Arney- Minority Advisor

## USDA Designates Kent & Sussex Counties in Delaware as Primary Natural Disaster Areas

Eligible farm operators may qualify for Federal disaster assistance, including Farm Service Agency (FSA) Emergency (EM) Loans. This action is based on damages and losses caused by excessive rainfall that occurred between May 1, 2013 and September 15, 2013.

All contiguous counties are also eligible for assistance. These counties are:

Delaware - New Castle;

Maryland - Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne, Wicomico, Worcester

EM applications will be received through August 11, 2014.

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## Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL)

Short-term financing is available by obtaining low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month Marketing Assistance Loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing. The crop may be stored on the farm or in a warehouse.

Loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a

**Next County Committee****Meeting:** January 2014 - Date

TBA

commodity is lost, it is ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

**MAINTAINING THE QUALITY OF LOANED GRAIN**

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

**UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION OF GRAIN**

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

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## Sussex County Committee Election Ballots Mailed

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers on Nov. 4 were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County committee elections must use a secret ballot so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot will be destroyed unopened.

New ballots were mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places, including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot and on the outside of the return envelope.

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Sussex County FSA Office or postmarked by January 17, 2014. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on Dec. 31, 2013, will have their term extended to January 31, 2014.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; disaster programs; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Mark J. Davis of Georgetown and Cory Atkins of Seaford are the nominees in LAA 2, Sussex County, to serve as committee members.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2013 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at <http://fsa.usda.gov/elections> or at a local USDA Service Center.

## 2014 Acreage Reporting Dates

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report fall seeded small grains without paying a late-file fee. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

The following exceptions apply to regular acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Late file fees will be assessed for all 2013 crops reported after September 15, 2013, and 2014 small grains reported after January 15, 2014.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Sussex County FSA office at 302-856-3990.

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## FSA Advises Producers to Anticipate Payment Reductions Due to Mandated Sequester

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reminding farmers who participate in FSA programs to plan accordingly in FY2014 for automatic spending reductions known as sequestration. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) mandates that federal agencies implement automatic, annual reductions to discretionary and mandatory spending limits. For mandatory programs, the sequestration rate for FY2014 is 7.2%. Accordingly, FSA is implementing sequestration for the following programs:

- Dairy Indemnity Payment Program;
- Marketing Assistance Loans;
- Loan Deficiency Payments;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments;
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program;
- 2011 and 2012 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program

Conservation Reserve Program payments are specifically exempt by statute from sequestration, thus these payments will not be reduced.

These sequester percentages reflect current law estimates; however with the continuing budget uncertainty, Congress still may adjust the exact percentage reduction. Today's announcement intends to help producers plan for the impact of sequestration cuts in FY2014.

At this time, FSA is required to implement the sequester reductions. Due to the expiration of the Farm Bill on September 30, FSA does not have the flexibility to cover these payment reductions in the same manner as in FY13. FSA will provide notification as early as practicable on the specific payment reductions.

For information about FSA programs, visit your county USDA Service Center or go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/).

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