

November 2015



- [Message from Craig A. McCain, FSA State Executive Director](#)
- [Producers are Reminded to Complete NASS Crop Surveys](#)
- [USDA Reminds Dairy Producers of Nov. 20 Deadline](#)
- [USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Louisiana Farmers Facing Market Downturn](#)
- [Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services](#)
- [Several Parishes in Louisiana are Eligible for Emergency Loans](#)
- [Selected Interest Rates for November 2015](#)
- [ASKFSA](#)

Louisiana FSA Newsletter

Louisiana FSA Office

3737 Government Street
Alexandria LA 71302
www.fsa.usda.gov/la

State Executive Director:

Craig A. McCain

Next State Committee Meeting:

To be determined

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

USDA Service Centers will be closed on Thursday, November 26 in observance of Thanksgiving

Message from Craig A. McCain, FSA State Executive Director

As we have discussed over the past several months, portions of the State have experienced extreme rainfall throughout the spring and early summer. The excessive rainfall caused severe flooding in and along the Red River in northwest Louisiana. This flooding was followed by 12 weeks of extremely dry weather which caused 15 parishes in the north central region of the State to enter into the 3rd stage of drought as determined by the US Drought Index. Another 26 parishes were classified as being in stage "D2" for at least 8 consecutive weeks. In recent days, the State has again experienced flash flooding due to excessive rainfall. Livestock producers in parishes north of Interstate 10 have been particularly affected during this wild ride. FSA is here to provide assistance and we trust that you will visit or contact your local office for additional information. During December, many producers will be contacted by NASS and asked to complete 2015 yield surveys. If you are contacted, please complete survey timely and as accurately as possible. NASS and RMA yield data, while always very important, has even greater significance in the 2014 Farm Bill. As always, if you feel that FSA can assist you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact your local office.

Producers are Reminded to Complete NASS Crop Surveys

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Field Offices are currently completing 2015 small grain yield surveys and will contact growers in December to complete row crop yield surveys. If you are one of the producers contacted to complete a 2015 yield survey, we encourage your participation and cooperation as many USDA agencies including the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) use the NASS yield data for their programs.

FSA uses NASS county yield data for farm credit, conservation, disaster programs, loan and commodity programs. Under the 2014 Farm Bill, FSA uses the NASS county yield data to calculate Agriculture Risk Coverage – County (ARC-CO) benchmark revenues and current year county revenues. For example, the 2014 NASS county yield, along with the crop's marketing year average price (MYA), are used to determine the county's current year revenue to determine if the county will trigger an ARC-CO payment. An ARC-CO payment is triggered for a county when the current year revenue falls below the guarantee revenue for the crop and crop year. In cases where NASS county yield data is not available, the FSA State Committee must determine a county yield using RMA yield data or the best available yield data, including assigning a county yield using neighboring county yields from NASS or RMA.

Any information that producers provide to NASS is kept confidential and protected by federal law. NASS publishes only aggregate-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified. All reports will be available at www.nass.usda.gov.

USDA Reminds Dairy Producers of Nov. 20 Deadline

Enrollment Opportunities Ending for 2016 Margin Protection Program

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that almost half of all dairy farms in America have made their annual elections for 2016 coverage under the Margin Protection Program, and reminded producers who have not yet enrolled that they have until Nov. 20, to select coverage.

Established by the 2014 Farm Bill, the program provides financial assistance to dairy producers when the margin – the difference between feed costs and the price of milk – falls below the coverage level selected by the applicant.

FSA estimates that based on current participation rates, had the program existed before the 2014 Farm Bill, producers in 2009 would have invested \$73 million in premiums and received \$1.44 billion in financial protection during that historically weak market period.

Enrolled dairy operations must pay a \$100 administrative fee annually to receive basic catastrophic coverage. Greater levels of margin protection are available for a higher premium, and provide expanded coverage based on historic dairy production. Once enrolled, producers can change their levels of coverage each year. Dairy producers are encouraged to review protection options online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or by visiting their local FSA county office. The nearest FSA county office can be found at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Louisiana Farmers Facing Market Downturn

The USDA Farm Service Agency has begun issuing financial assistance for the 2014 crop year to those agricultural producers who are participating in the new safety-net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new programs, known as Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), are designed to protect against unexpected drops in crop prices or revenues due to market downturns.

Unlike the old direct payments program, which provided funds in good years and bad years, these new programs only provide financial assistance when prices or revenues drop below normal. For example, nationwide, farms participating in ARC-County that are receiving payments experienced a \$20 billion drop in revenues relative to the historical benchmark. Similarly, lower prices in commodities such as long grain rice have triggered PLC assistance.

Also, please note that funds provided by the ARC-County program can vary from county to county. The 2014 Farm Bill requires ARC-County payments to be calculated using the national average market year price (which does not vary by county), and the average county yield (which varies by county). This creates county-by-county differences in payment rates. The yield data comes from surveys conducted by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the national standard that uses the highest-precision statistical procedures available. Where that data does not exist, the next strongest data is used: county-level crop insurance data from the Risk Management Agency. If that data does not exist, the next strongest data is used: NASS district data. Where NASS district data doesn't exist, the FSA State Committees provide data.

Because the new programs are designed as financial assistance for prices and revenues lower than normal, not all producers will receive a payment, (as occurred with the old direct payments program). ARC/PLC payments are designed to help with unexpected changes in the marketplace, and to supplement other assistance programs, such as crop insurance. To learn more about the data used in calculating payments, how payments are calculated, crop-specific and state-specific information, please visit our website at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

Local Offices Issue Receipts for Services Provided

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

To learn more about FSA, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or to find your local USDA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Several Parishes in Louisiana are Eligible for Emergency Loans

Several Parishes in Louisiana were declared a primary/contiguous disaster due to drought using the streamlined Secretarial Disaster Designation process. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

The streamlined disaster designation process issues a drought disaster declaration when a county has experienced a drought intensity value of at least a D2 (severe drought) level for eight consecutive weeks based on the U.S. Drought Monitor during the crop year.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans and to determine if your area qualifies as primary/contiguous, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Selected Interest Rates for November 2015

- 90-Day Treasury Bill — .125%
- Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.50%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.875%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%
- Emergency Loans — 3.50%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans(7 years) — 1.75%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) — 2.125%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) — 2.25%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans — 2.375%
- Commodity Loans — 1.25%

ASKFSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then ASK FSA at askfsa.custhelp.com.

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your FSA questions no matter where you are or what device you use. It is for ALL customers, including underserved farmers and ranchers who wish to be enrolled in FSA loans, farm, and conservation programs.

Through AskFSA you can:

- Access our knowledge base 24/7
- Receive answers to your questions faster
- Submit a question and receive a timely response from an FSA expert
- Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- Customize your account settings and view responses at any time

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).