

December 2013



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North Dakota State Office

1025 28th St S
Fargo, ND 58103

Phone: 701-239-5224
Fax: 701-239-5696

State Executive Director:
Aaron Krauter

State Committee (STC)
Marcy Svenningson,
Chairperson
Todd Hall, Member
Lynn Jacobson, Member
Marie Marshall, Member
Lucy Matejcek, Member

State Office Staff
Administrative Officer
Russell Bubach

From the State Executive Director

As of December 2, North Dakota National Agriculture Statistics reports that 92% of the corn and 87% of the sunflowers in the state have been harvested. That means we have some acres to go either in December or in the spring. Many of those acres were harvested at high moisture, so keep those aeration fans and dryers going; a farmer would hate to see grain go out of condition, especially in a down market.

All of us at FSA wish the producers of North Dakota a great holiday season and a profitable 2014.

--Aaron Krauter, State Executive Director

2013 County Committee Elections

2013 County Committee Election Ballots, dated 07-03-13, were mailed to producers on November 4, 2013, with a misprint that invalidates all ballots mailed. Each ballot had the producer's name printed on the back side of the actual ballot that is returned to the County Office.

*Compliance/Payment
Limitations*
Bryan Olschlager
Conservation/Livestock
Brad Olson
DCP/NAP/Disaster
Dale Ihry
Farm Loan Programs
Curt Thoreson
Price Support
Brian Haugen

Producers have been notified by postcard to destroy or recycle ballots dated 07-03-13, and that any completed voted ballots mailed to the County Offices will be destroyed unopened. New ballots will be mailed to producers on December 20, 2013 and they will clearly indicate that they are "Corrected" in several places, including the outside of the mailing to the producers, the ballot itself, and the outside of the envelope returning the completed ballot to the County Office.

The corrected ballots must be returned to the local county office or postmarked by January 17, 2014. Ballots will be counted in your local office no later than January 24. New COC members will take office on February 18.

2014 Acreage Reporting Dates

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that have a November 15, 2013 reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include winter wheat and native and improved grasses intended for grazing or haying. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their county FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above 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 above 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.

Additionally, producers can purchase both NAP and RMA coverage for 2014 annual forage crops. NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annual forage crops.

Late file fees will be assessed for 2014 crops reported after January 15, 2014.

Continued Applicability of Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance

Even though the 1-year extension of the 2008 Farm Bill has expired, producers are reminded that highly erodible land conservation (HELIC) and wetland conservation (WC) provisions still apply. HELIC and WC compliance provisions are provided by the Food Security Act of 1985 and amended by subsequent Acts, resulting in the

continued application of those provisions.

In order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions is required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan.

Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

2013 Direct Payments Issued

The 2013 DCP or ACRE program direct payments should have been received by program participants. The 2013 direct payments were reduced by 8.6% due to the Sequestration Order passed by Congress. Transaction statements are issued from FSA's Kansas City Office to notify you when payments have been deposited into your bank account. Contact your local FSA office with questions regarding payments or payment calculations.

2014 NAP

The Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to eligible producers affected by a natural disaster. The program covers crops for which Federal Crop Insurance is not available. NAP covers losses greater than 50% of your expected production, based upon your approved yield and reported acreage. To apply for 2014 crop coverage, producers must complete a CCC-471 application for coverage and pay the service fee. The application and service fee must be filed by the applicable sales closing date. The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county, not to exceed \$1875 per producer in all counties.

Producers must purchase NAP policies for all spring planted crops, including grass for hay and grazing, by the 2014 sales closing date of March 15, 2014.

2013 ACRE Program – Farm Benchmark Yield Update

Producers who have a 2013 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 2013 by not later than July 15, 2014.

In the event a farm bill is enacted in the upcoming months, producers are encouraged to complete the 2013 production certification as soon as possible.

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

Crop Year 2013 Commodity Loan Disbursements

On November 1st, FSA resumed the processing and disbursement of 2013 commodity loans. Crop year 2013 loan-making was suspended on October 1, 2013, to make software changes necessary to accommodate the automatic funding reduction known as sequestration. Sequestration was mandated by the Budget Control Act of

2011.

Producers requesting a 2013 crop commodity loan on their harvested commodities will have a 5.1 percent reduction to the loan amount at the time of disbursement, due to sequestration. Repayments for these loans will be at principal plus interest, based on the loan amount as reduced for sequestration.

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.

Register to Use the FSA Financial Services Website

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Financial Services Website allows producers to generate reports that show both current and historical financial information. Once a producer has signed up for an e-Authentication Level 2 account, you will have access to the Financial Services Website.

Sign-up for an e-Authentication Level 2 account at FSA web site: www.eauth.usda.gov
When obtaining a Level 2 account, you must complete a customer profile and submit online. Once your customer profile is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail, and you must respond to it within 7 days to activate your account. Once completed, you must complete the "Identity Proofing" process by visiting a local USDA Service Center and presenting a photo ID, such as your driver's license.

Producers with a Level 2 account can:

- access Financial Services website to view their farm data via their Customer Account
- conduct business transactions via internet or submitting forms electronically.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her 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 only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Beginning Farmer 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 the 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.

Important Dates and Deadlines

December 15 - CRP Bale Removal deadline

December 20 - New Election Ballots mailed to all producers on eligible voter lists for LAA's holding election

January 17 - Last date COC Election Ballot to be returned to County Office or postmarked

January 24 - Final date for COC ballots to be counted

February 18 - New COC Members take office

March 15 - NAP Deadline - 2014 Spring Planted and Forage Crops

December Loan and Interest Rates

Commodity Loans - 1.125%
Operating Loans - 1.875%
Farm Ownership Loans - 4.125%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment Loans - 1.50%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss - 2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7-Year - 2.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10-Year - 2.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12-Year - 2.875%

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).