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Louisiana FSA Newsletter

Louisiana Farm
Service Agency 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 Monday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 2 for Christmas and New Year's Holidays

Message from Craig A. McCain, FSA State Executive Director

As the year draws to a close, it appears that the drought has also ended. What a year!!! Significant floods, declining commodity prices, more significant flooding followed by drought which has now been ended by a three day rain event.

FSA recognizes the challenges faced by producers and we are ready to provide assistance to those who have suffered economic loss or who face challenges in the current economic environment.

In addition, December offers an opportunity to celebrate the Holiday Season. We hope that you, your family and friends will take time to enjoy this very special Holiday Season!

Thank you for providing so much for so many!

Reporting Pasture for 2017

A late-filed waiver fee has been granted for pasture (grazing and hay) that now has a reporting date of Nov. 15, 2016. The waiver is good for 30 days only and expires at close of business on Dec. 15, 2016. This is **not** an extension of the acreage reporting date; acreage would still be considered late-filed, however, a late-filed fee will not be assessed on the acreage.

Producers are Reminded to Complete NASS Crop Surveys

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) recently distributed two surveys to the majority of row crop producers that have a big impact on farm safety net assistance levels.

The County Agricultural Production Survey (CAPS) was sent out to nearly every farm through their respective states and asks for planted acres, area harvested for grain, and quantity harvested. This survey is used across the Risk Management Agency, Farm Service Agency, and university research to determine production and economic values on a per county basis. The CAPS is open through early January and will be published on March 9, 2017.

The Agricultural Survey for December, was sent to a smaller sample of growers but requires responses by December 13. This survey gathers data on acres planted, acres harvested, yield per acre, and quantity stored. Conducted quarterly in all states, this survey is used by commodity markets, university researchers, and farm operators for market assessment, planning, and decision making.

Farmers receiving NASS surveys are encouraged to complete and return them within the deadline to ensure accurate data is used across USDA's various agencies and to reduce variations and discrepancies among counties and state data. If you do not receive NASS surveys and would like to be counted in the future, visit the NASS farm survey [enrollment page](#).

USDA Offers Louisiana Farmers and Ranchers Immediate Drought Assistance

Farm Service Agency Stands Ready to Assist Agricultural Producers Suffering Losses from Drought

Louisiana Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers across the state of federal farm program benefits that may be available to help eligible producers recover from drought.

FSA offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts during drought or similar qualifying natural disasters. Available programs and loans include:

- **Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for the applicable crop year. Producers must file a notice of loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.
- **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)** - provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normally permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire. Producers must provide a completed application for payment and required supporting documentation to their FSA office within 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the grazing loss occurred.

- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, tropical storms, tornadoes, lightning, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disaster.
- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** - provides emergency relief for losses due to water shortages, the cost to transport water, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. Producers must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- **Emergency Loan Program** – available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Secretarial disaster designation. These low interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses.
- **HayNet** - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze. www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet.

For more information on disaster assistance programs and loans visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ or contact your local FSA Office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576 by email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

Filing CCC-941 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certifications

Many producers have experienced delays in receiving Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Gains on Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) because they have not filed form CCC-941, Adjusted Gross Income Certification. LDPs will not be paid until all eligible producers, including landowners who share in the crop, have filed a valid CCC-941.

Producers without a valid CCC-941 certifying their compliance with the average adjusted gross income provisions will not receive payments that have been processed. All farm operator/tenants/owners who have not filed a CCC-941 and have pending payments should IMMEDIATELY file the form with their recording county FSA office. Farm operators and tenants are encouraged to ensure that their landowners have filed the form. FSA has been issuing 2016 LDPs and Market Gains.

FSA can accept the CCC-941 for 2015, 2016 and 2017. Unlike the past, producers must have the CCC-941 certifying their AGI compliance before any payments can be issued.

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

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 to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted underserved 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, targeted underserved 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.

Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

USDA Announces Additional Financial Incentives for Conservation Reserve Program Participants to Improve Forest Health and Enhance Wildlife Habitat

In an effort to improve wildlife habitat and the health of private forest lands, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced additional incentives available for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants to actively manage forest lands enrolled in the program.

Under the provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill, \$10 million is available nationwide to eligible CRP participants. Those selected will be encouraged to thin, prescribe burn or otherwise manage their forests in order to allow sunlight to reach the forest floor. This will encourage the development of grasses, forbs and legumes, benefitting numerous species including pollinators and grassland-dependent birds such as the northern bobwhite.

Eligibility is limited to landowners and agricultural producers already enrolled in CRP with conservation covers primarily containing trees. Incentive payments, not to exceed 150 percent of the cost to implement a particular customary forestry activity as described, have been established. CRP participants meeting eligibility requirements and interested in making offers to participate should visit their local FSA county office.

For more information about FSA conservation programs, visit the FSA office at the local USDA service center or go to www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation. To locate the nearest FSA office, go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

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

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a customer 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.

A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

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.

Selected Interest Rates for December 2016

- 90-Day Treasury Bill — .250%
- Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.250%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.250%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher — 1.50%
- Emergency Loans — 3.250%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) — 1.750%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) — 2.000%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) — 2.000%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans (15 year term) — 2.125%
- Commodity Loans — 1.750%

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).