



“SCOOP”

ARKANSAS FARM SERVICE AGENCY - - STATE OFFICE

July 2012

JULY 15, 2012 ACREAGE REPORTING DEADLINE

July 15, 2012 is the final acreage reporting deadline for spring seeded planted crops. Many FSA programs require all cropland on a farm to be certified in order to earn FSA benefits. However, if the crops are not planted by July 15, 2012, FSA's provisions allow crops to be considered timely reported if reported to FSA within 15 calendar days after planting is completed. However, it is extremely important for producers to understand all fields that are planted by July 15, 2012 must be certified by this date. This extension is only applicable to fields planted after July 15, 2012.

PREVENTED PLANTED PROVISIONS

Producers should report prevented planted acreage to their local FSA Office when the crop acreage is not planted due to disaster-related conditions.

- **To be considered timely filed, prevented planted acres should be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date established by Federal Crop Insurance.**
- Final planting dates are provided in this SCOOP titled “Program Deadlines.”

FAILED ACREAGE PROVISIONS

Producers should report failed crop acres to their local FSA Office when the crop failed due to disaster related conditions. To be timely filed the failed acreage shall be reported to FSA before the crop is destroyed. For example, if a crop was completely destroyed by the recent floods, the producers shall report the crop loss to the FSA before preparing the land for other use. County Committee review, and action is required to receive history credit in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. The County Committee may require the office to conduct a field visit for crop residue and verification.

IT STARTS WITH 2013 WHEAT AND OATS FOR ARKANSAS
DON'T GET CAUGHT OFF GUARD

Beginning July 1, 2012, FSA and RMA will have the same acreage reporting deadlines for crops that are eligible to obtain Federal Crop Insurance Coverage. The change is to help improve services to farm producers with a common reporting environment and consistent deadlines. FSA deadlines will change beginning with 2013 Wheat and Oats certification. The next change will occur with the certification of 2013 Apples, Grapes, and Peaches with 2013 Fresh Market Tomatoes to follow. **Below is a table with the new certification dates. It is important for producers to understand these deadlines are applicable whether the crop is insured with RMA; or not insured with RMA.**

Crop Year (Harvested Year)	Crop	Reporting Date
2012 (no change)	Wheat and Oats	May 15, 2012
2012 (no change)	All crops except fall seeded	July 15, 2012
<i>(new) 2013</i>	Wheat and Oats	December 15, 2012
<i>(new) 2013</i>	Apples, Grapes, Peaches	January 15, 2013
<i>(new) 2013</i>	Corn, Upland Cotton, Grain Sorghum, Peanuts, Rice, Soybeans and other Spring Seeded Crops	July 15, 2013

Reminder for Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Producers:

The deadline for reporting crops insured under the Non-insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) could be different from the dates listed above. Producers are always encouraged to check with their local FSA for NAP certification deadlines. In addition you should continue to watch your county office newsletters and the State Office SCOOP publications since we strive hard to publicize these dates as they become near.

30 DAYS REMAIN
2012 DCP & ACRE LATE ENROLLMENT AUTHORIZED

FSA national office has authorized producers to enroll or withdraw 2012 DCP or ACRE Contracts through August 1, 2012. Producers meeting this new deadline will be considered timely enrolled if all required signatures are obtained. Required signatures include the farm operator, and all producers who have a share in base acres. Persons who have zero shares such as the owner who cash rents the farm may sign after this deadline provided the required signatures are obtained timely. However, the County Committee cannot consider the application final until all signatures are obtained. Producers are also reminded that supporting documentation, such as the Farm Operating Plan, Highly Erodible Wetland Certification, and Adjusted Gross Income Certification, can be provided after the DCP or ACRE enrollment deadline. DCP or ACRE payments cannot be issued until these documents are obtained, and are determined to meet the eligibility criteria.

MAINTAINING IDLE DCP & ACRE CONTRACT ACRES

DCP and ACRE participants are required to protect all idle contract acres from erosion and weeds. Idle fields designated as “contract acres” must have a sod cover, crop residue, or volunteer grass cover. Weeds are not an acceptable cover and must be mowed. Failure to control weeds on contract acres will cost you program benefits if the County Committee determines that the producer failed to demonstrate a good faith effort to control weeds and/or erosion.

PLANTING FLEXIBILITY

Any commodity may be planted on the following:

- any land, including base acres, on a farm NOT enrolled in a DCP contract
- non base acres of a farm enrolled in a DCP contract
- base acres of a farm enrolled in a DCP contract, except for fruits, vegetables and wild rice.

Check with your local office to see if you or the farm qualifies for allowable exceptions.

PLANTING OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (FAV's) OR WILD RICE

If you or your farm qualifies to plant FAV's, or wild rice, you are reminded to check with your local FSA office to determine the number of acres that are eligible on your farm to be planted to FAV's, or wild rice. We often find that producers are not advising FSA of changes in available land, such as a sale of land, until after the FAV's or wild rice has been planted, and/or harvested. Unfortunately, some producers have had large penalties enforced for planting too many acres of FAV's or wild rice. **Do not let this happen to you.**

FSA MUST BE NOTIFIED

FSA must be notified **immediately** upon the death of producers who are participating in FSA programs. It is not acceptable to wait until the beginning of a new program year. Failure to notify FSA and make modifications to program contracts timely may result in a loss of benefits for the share of the deceased producer, **and** the other producers on the program contracts. *Producers are also cautioned to never sign using a power-of-attorney for a person who is deceased. Once a person dies, the power-of-attorney is no longer valid. Any document signed with a power-of-attorney for a deceased is invalid, and usually all producers on the document are ineligible to earn payments for the year.*

BIOMASS CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BCAP)

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced an expansion of the BCAP Project Area 2. BCAP project areas provide financial incentives to eligible landowners and operators to establish, and produce biomass crops for heat, power, biobased products, and advanced biofuels. A BCAP project area must have specified boundaries approved by the Secretary of Agriculture. Agriculture land in project area two is eligible for the establishment of giant miscanthus for energy purposes.

Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) continued:

Giant miscanthus is a sterile hybrid warm-season grass that is cultivated by planting plugs or rhizomes in open fields. Yields for giant miscanthus are expected to range between 10 and 12 tons of dry matter per acre, and can be as high as 15 tons/acre. These four new project areas will use a common approach to establish the crop over two years. In the first year, a small number of "propagation acres" will be established using centrally irrigated fields. FSA will enter into five-year contracts with producers to cultivate rhizomes from the first year's propagation acres onto a larger area of "plantation acres" comprised of the total number of BCAP acres enrolled. The normal time period for planting giant miscanthus rhizomes varies regionally, but is generally in the early spring.

As a condition of enrollment, participants must provide evidence that they have an agreement with either a project sponsor, or other qualified miscanthus-planting contractor. These agreements must provide for the planting, production and harvesting of the approved miscanthus rhizomes, according to the specific two-phase establishment process included in these project areas.

Project Area 2 Target Acreage and Counties

PROJECT AREA NUMBER & STATE	PROJECT AREA SPONSOR'S LOCATION	FY* 2012 ACREAGE TARGETS & COUNTIES
Project Area No. 2 Arkansas	MFA Oil Biomass LLC, Paragould, AR	1,200 acres Clay, Craighead, Greene, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, and Randolph.

***FY means fiscal year.**

Producers who enter into these contracts and establish giant miscanthus on their land will generally be eligible for:

- Establishment payments of 75 percent of the eligible costs of the plantings;
- Annual payments for the land enrolled, and;
- Subject to the availability of funds, matching payments for up to two years for the collection, harvest, storage, and transport of the biomass to a qualified biomass conversion facility.
- The sign-up period for the Arkansas project area will begin June 18, 2012.
- The deadline to sign up for the project areas is Friday, Sept. 14, 2012.
- FSA, administering the program on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation with conservation planning assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other partners, will enter into contracts with landowners and operators in these project areas.
- Producers interested in participating in the project areas should visit their local FSA county office.

For More Information

For more information about BCAP visit the FSA BCAP website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap>, or see the general BCAP fact sheet at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/bcap_proj2_exp.pdf

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

Effective June 12, 2012 an increase in acreage allotments for the following CRP Practices was announced along with an increase in the Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) rate for these same practices.

Practice Incentives

SIP's will increase to \$150 per acre for newly enrolled acres only, regardless of the practice length for the following practices:

- CP23, Wetland Restoration
- CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- CP33, Habitat Buffer for Upland Birds
- CP42, Pollinator Habitat (for continuous signup only)

For more information on this and other initiatives, contact your local FSA office.

COUNTY COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA County Committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County Committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on County Committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA County Committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County Committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions. The COC nomination period runs from June 15, 2012 through August 1, 2012. For more information, just contact your local FSA office.

FSA MOVING TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION & NEWSLETTERS

The USDA Arkansas Farm Service Agency offices are moving toward a paperless operation. Producers are asked, to enroll in the new electronic mail system, which will provide newsletters, and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail.

Printed newsletters will no longer be mailed to producers. For those without internet or e-mail access, producers may visit the county office to obtain a printed copy of the newsletter or contact the office to have a copy via U.S. mail.

FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via e-mail will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars.

County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

Interested producers may sign-up to receive e-mail updates by contacting their local county FSA office.

PROGRAM DEADLINES	DATE
<u>Final</u> date to inform FSA of crop losses	Before Crop Disposition
<u>Final</u> date to file prevented planted acreage/credit for Soybeans Following Another Crop (FAC)	July 10, 2012
<u>2012 NAP Acreage Reporting Date for:</u> Beans - All Varieties, Corn, Sweet Corn, Cotton, Cantaloupes, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Grain Sorghum, Okra, Onions – All Varieties, Peanuts, Peas – All Varieties, Peppers – All Varieties, Pumpkins – All Varieties, Rice, Squash, Watermelons, Soybeans, Sunflowers, Sweet Potatoes Mechanically Harvested Forages: Millet, Yellow Corn, and Sorghum	July 15, 2012
<u>Final</u> date to Report 2012 Spring Seeded Crops	July 15, 2012
<u>Last</u> date to request a 2012 reconstitution on a DCP or ACRE farm <u>Final</u> date to file a 2012 DCP and/or ACRE (yearly) enrollment Under late filed provisions <u>Final</u> date to return signatures for producers sharing in the DCP and/or ACRE contract Under late filed provisions	August 1, 2012
<u>Final</u> date to prioritize crop to receive ACRE Payments <u>Final</u> date to file a 2012 successor-in-interest DCP or ACRE contract if the change occurred after June 1, 2012 <u>Final</u> date to return signatures for producers who share in a DCP and/or ACRE contract that had a 2012 successor-in-interest contract filed after June 1, 2012	September 30, 2012
New!!! <u>Final</u> date to report <u>2013</u> planted and prevented planted wheat and oats	December 15, 2012

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