

FSA Accepts Crop Reports

YORK (York Co.) — The York County Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting 2000 crop acreage reports.

The 1996 Farm Bill removed the acreage report requirement in most cases for country farmers to remain eligible for USDA benefits. However, the commodity loan program and loan deficiency payment program still requires timely filed acreage reports by those who wish to pledge stored commodities as collateral for these nine-month loans.

Producers interested in re-

porting must visit the county office, review aerial photographs, and indicate the location of their crops. The York County office is located at 120 Pleasant Acres Road in York and is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Appointments are encouraged.

Call ahead to have the aerial photos mailed to you to mark at home. This will significantly reduce time spent in the office.

Final certification date is July 17 for corn, soybeans, fruit and vegetables.

Noninsurable Crops May Be Eligible For Disaster Assistance

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program is available for those crops that cannot be insured under the catastrophic coverage offered through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

Following a major crop loss, it provides benefits similar to those provided for insurable crops by the catastrophic level of crop insurance protection.

The program operates at no cost to producers. Payments can be made only when an area-wide disaster occurs. This area criterion may change sometime in the future.

Payments can be made after crop loss in an approved area is greater than 35 percent of the expected area yield, and an individual producer has more than a 50 percent loss of his approved yield. Producers must file an acreage report before the deadline, or they will not be eligible for payments, no matter how severe the disaster. July 15, 2000 is the deadline to report these crops. Producers also must report losses within 15 days of the occurrence of the natural disaster or when damage to the crop becomes apparent. There is no cost for signing up for NAP.

Eligible crops are those for which crop insurance is not available and are commercially grown for food and fiber. Also included are floriculture, Christmas trees, turfgrass sod, and industrial crops. It does not include trees grown for wood, paper, or pulp products.

Payments are limited to \$100,000 to eligible producers. A producer is eligible when it is determined that a conservation plan designed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service is in place. Also, qualifying gross income cannot exceed \$2 million. If a notice of loss is filed beyond the applicable period, it is considered late filed and shall only be determined acceptable if the crop acreage can be inspected to verify the damage or extent of damage caused by the disaster condition.

Production evidence should accompany the Notice of Loss/Application for payment. An appraisal by an FSA representative may be required to determine production loss.

Report your crops to the Farm Service Agency. Notify the Farm Service Agency of losses incurred as soon as the condi-

tion is known. The Lancaster County Farm Service Agency is located at the Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Lancaster PA 17601.

NFU President Speaks To World Farmers Congress

AURORA, Col. — "Farmers and the Food Chain" was the topic of National Farmers Union (NFU) President Lelaud Swenson's address to farm organization leaders from 50 organizations at the 34th International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) World Farmers' Congress recently in Hannover, Germany.

Swenson told the group he feels there is a misconception that the world's farmers and ranchers will see economic prosperity through trade liberalization and the elimination of domestic supports.

"The income crisis in agriculture is not caused by subsidies," he said. "The market is failing farmers! It is failing all around the world. It is failing to return a fair and adequate share of the consumer dollar to farmers; failing to allocate to farmers a reasonable return on labor, management, and equity from the agrifood system's huge revenue system."

The NFU leader explained that market failure is predictable. He said it is a direct result of dramatic market power imbalances between agrifood industry multinational corporations and

the family farmers that must do business with these firms.

"Industrial concentration is an issue for farmers and ranchers throughout the world. It is also an issue for consumers," Swenson said. "A major concern about concentration in the food system focuses on the control exercised by a handful of firms over decision-making throughout the food system."

He explained that the system is becoming more complex with the involvement in biotechnology, extending through production and ending with a highly processed food. Acquisition is still a common method of combining two or more firms, but mergers, joint ventures, partnerships, contracts, and less formalized relationships are also used. "These 'clusters of firms' control the food system from 'gene to supermarket shelf,'" said Swenson.

In a food chain cluster, the food product is passed along from stage-to-stage, but ownership never changes and neither does the decision-making. The farmer becomes a grower, proving the labor and often some of the capital, but never owns the product and never makes major

management decisions.

Using information from "Consolidation in the Food and Agriculture System" by Dr. William Heffernan of the University of Missouri and "The Farm Crisis, EU Subsidies and Agribusiness Power" by the National Farmers Union of Canada, Swenson told the group, "The loss of family farmers and ranchers because of the economic crisis, a result of low commodity prices and higher production costs does not affect the volume of production. It does affect the economic viability of businesses in rural communities, results in the depopulation of rural communities, forces consolidation of education systems and the loss of access to local health care services."

Swenson concluded his remarks saying, "In the USA, the top five food retailers control over 45 percent of the retail food on a national basis — even more on a regional basis as not all of the top five operate nationally. What do farmers expect from the food chain? 1) A fair and just price for the commodities they produce; 2) A fair, open and competitive market; 3) Leadership by farm organizations that are concerned about their members' economic future."

The World Farmers' Congress is a unique event which brings together the leaders of national farmers' organizations from throughout the world every two years.

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