

Cotton Replant Provisions Dictate Producer Options

Friday, June 7, 2019

By Shawn Wade

Producers across the High Plains have struggled to complete cotton planting activity as frequent rainfall events have caused intermittent planting delays, damaged existing stands and exacerbated the incidence of seedling disease in many fields. As producers work to plan their next steps, it is important to note in this regard that RMA rule changes implemented in 2018 will impact the direction some of these decisions take.

The primary change made in 2018 impacts the timing of when cotton can be planted behind a failed, initially planted, cotton crop. Beginning in 2018 a producer who wants to plant cotton after losing their first insured cotton crop is required to wait a minimum of 15 days after the Final Plant Date for their county for the crop to be considered an uninsured second crop.

According to the Crop Insurance Handbook and the Basic Provisions of the Upland cotton policy a producer planting cotton before the 15th day will cause the acreage to be considered a replanted crop under the original policy and delay any potential indemnity from being processed.

Due to the weather challenges that growers have been dealing with throughout the month of May, many producers are evaluating their options as they work to complete planting or determine which acres will be turned into insurance and possibly replanted. As noted above growers need to be aware of the options they have available to them under the federal crop insurance rules.

Fields that have been planted and subsequently damaged by heavy rains, hail or other causes will need to be evaluated for stand viability. At this point the producer can either submit their claim to insurance and schedule an appraisal or request permission from their AIP to replant.

It is important to note that when field conditions permit it generally is expected that producers will try to reestablish damaged stands through the end of any applicable late planting period.

Acreage damaged during the late planting period and instances where field conditions prohibit replanting typically will be scheduled for adjustment so that the producer can determine whether they want to keep the existing stand or fail the acres.

Farm Service Agency County Committee Nominations Open June 14

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

From FSA

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin accepting nominations for county committee members on Friday, June 14, 2019. Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate.

"I encourage America's farmers, ranchers, and forest stewards to nominate candidates to lead, serve, and represent their community on their county committee," FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce said. "There's an increasing need for diverse representation including underserved producers, which includes beginning, women and minority farmers and ranchers."

Committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Their input is vital on how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made of three to 11 members and typically meet once a month. Members serve three-year terms. Producers serving on our FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Producers should visit their local FSA office today to find out how to get involved in their county's election. Check with your local USDA service center to see if your local administrative area is up for election this year. Organizations, including those representing beginning, women and minority producers, also may nominate candidates.

To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections. All nomination forms for the 2019 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2019.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 4, 2019. Read more at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/county-committee-elections/index> to learn about important election dates.

Our View: Financial Woes on the Farm Bode Ill for the Nation

Monday, June 3, 2019

From Farm Policy Facts

Historic flooding across the heartland has left large swaths of farmland underwater and farmers unsure of when – or even if – they will be able to plant their crops.

Unfortunately, this stormy spring is just another in a series of blows to rural America. The financial security of our farmers and ranchers is increasingly at risk.

The most recent reports from the federal government indicate that a growing number of farm loan recipients are falling behind on payments.

Last week, the FDIC released their quarterly report on the state of our nation's financial institutions. The rate of agricultural loans that are past due or in nonaccrual status has reached the highest level since early 2012, according to a Reuters analysis of the data.

Diane Ellis, Director of the Division of Insurance and Research at the FDIC, said that the agency continues to “monitor challenges in the agriculture sector” and that “some farm banks are reporting asset quality deterioration.”

Farms are struggling to make ends meet in the face of difficult market conditions and unpredictable weather, putting a strain on the financial systems that support rural America. The banking data presented by Ellis demonstrated that the rise in noncurrent loans “mostly affects our community banks more or less in the middle of the country.”

A recent Wall Street Journal article quoted Tracey Allen, an agricultural commodity strategist at JP Morgan, regarding the spring planting delays and the financial hardships many farmers face. “We have some of the highest delinquency rates among U.S. farmers ever—that’s really terrifying,” Allen said.

As Ellis noted, however, this is not a new trend. Trouble has been brewing for several years.

Earlier this year, Farm Policy Facts highlighted the toll that years of depressed commodity prices and escalating costs has taken on the farm economy. Farm income has dropped more than 50% since 2013 while farm bankruptcies are on the rise.

Add to that mix ongoing uncertainty with our global trading partners, where farmers take the brunt in lower crop prices and higher input costs, and you have a recipe for disaster.

Not only do we rely on the food and clothing provided by America’s farmers, but our nation’s economy is intrinsically tied to the success of the agriculture community. Financial woes on the farm often have reverberating effects and the troubling news out of the FDIC last week bodes ill for the future.

Rural America is resilient. Our farmers will continue to work the land in hopes that the next season will bring renewed abundance. But they are also relying on Washington, DC to take decisive action to stand by U.S. farm families as we negotiate a quick end to ongoing trade disputes.

Standing idle and allowing rural America to endure another farm crisis like the one we faced in the 1980s would set our economy back in incalculable ways. We must support our farmers through these challenging times, just as they support us every day.

“Conservation Innovation Grants enable partners to co-invest with NRCS on the next generation of agricultural conservation solutions,” said NRCS Acting State Conservationist Kristy Oats for Texas. “Conservation Innovation Grants have helped spur new tools and technologies to conserve natural resources, build resilience in their operations, and improve their bottom lines, and we’re excited to see what these proposals will offer.”

National CIG

Conservation Innovation Grants support the development and field testing, on-farm research and demonstration, evaluation, or implementation of conservation technologies, practices, and systems and approaches to incentivizing conservation adoption. Grantees must match the CIG investment at least one to one.

The 2019 CIG priorities are:

- Increasing the pace and scale of conservation adoption
- Water quantity
- Pollinator habitat
- Urban agriculture

The complete funding announcement information can be accessed through the Conservation Innovation Grants webpage. The National CIG program supports early pilot projects or demonstrations of promising conservation approaches.

National CIG program is distinct from the \$25 million announced on May 15 for On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials. On-Farm Trials is a new CIG component created by the 2018 Farm Bill. On-Farm Trials include a Soil Health Demo Trial.

Applications for this national CIG must be submitted through Grants.gov by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 30, 2019. A webinar for potential applicants is scheduled for 12 p.m. Eastern on June 11, 2019. Information on how to participate in the webinar is posted on the CIG website.

State NRCS CIG

In conjunction with the national CIG, NRCS is also offering CIG state-wide competitions (awards maximum of \$75,000) in Texas. Projects must be within Texas and may be area-based or statewide in scope. Please visit Texas NRCS www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov for information about state CIG competitions.

USDA Announces Availability of \$12.5 Million in Conservation Innovation Grants

Friday, May 31, 2019

From NRCS

USDA announced today it is investing up to \$12.5 million to help support the adoption of innovative conservation approaches on agricultural lands. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting proposals through July 30, 2019, for national Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) and July 19, 2019 for state CIG funding opportunities. CIG projects inspire creative problem-solving that boosts production on farms, ranches, and private forests - ultimately, they improve water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat. All U.S.-based non-Federal entities and individuals are eligible to apply.

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Editor’s Note:

“Cotton News”, a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email PCG at: editor@plainscottongrowers.com