

Agricultural News

By: Warden Alexander, FSA Director

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County Executive Director

Tobacco Payment Program (TOPP) - Do you own a farm for which tobacco quota was established in 2002? Did you own land on which tobacco was planted in 2002? Were you the grower of tobacco planted in 2002? If so, then the Tobacco Payment Program (TOPP) is for you. The Tobacco Payment Program (TOPP) will provide \$53 million to eligible applicants to help enhance the economic stability of tobacco producers. On Feb. 20, 2003, the President signed the Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003, which includes provisions to provide direct payments to all acreage allotment/marketing quota holders and tobacco growers.

Applications for direct payment sign-up for TOPP begins March 17 and ends May 16, 2003. Late applications will not be accepted. Funds will be dispersed according to allocation formulas tied to the various types of tobacco with payments being issued between mid-May and June 1, 2003.

Eligible persons are one who owns, controls or produces eligible tobacco on a farm for which an acreage allotment/marketing quota was established for the 2002 marketing year.

Eligible types of tobacco include flue-cured (types 11-14), Burley (type 21), flue-cured (types 21-23), Dark air-cured (types 35-36), Virginia sun-cured (type 37), Cigar filler/burley (types 42-44 and 54-55).

If you need more information about TOPP, please contact your local FSA office. Information is also available on FSA's Web site at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Livestock Compensation Program

The Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003 extended the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP), originally created in 2003 into 2003. The 2003 LCP is an emergency initiative administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) that provides immediate assistance to eligible owners and cash lessees of certain types of livestock for damages and losses due to any natural disaster.

Producers who did not receive assistance under the 2002 LCP and who in counties that were approved as a disaster area are eligible for LCP.

To be eligible for LCP assistance, a producer's livestock operation headquarters must be physically located in a county with a qualifying disaster designation. Eligible livestock are livestock owned or cash leased on or before June 1, 2002 and have been owned or cash leased for a minimum of 90 calendar days and include cattle, sheep, goats and buffalo, as well as cash.

Sign up for LCP begins April 1st at your local FSA office.

Pesticide Cards

County Agent Tom Mills will host the Restricted Pesticide Training on March 31st at 7 p.m. in the County Extension Building.

Producers who have pesticide cards expiring or expiring will need to attend this meeting before purchasing restricted pesticides.

Burley Tobacco Bits and Pieces

Producers who have completed marketing burley tobacco are reminded to return their marketing cards to the FSA as soon as possible.

If you have stored tobacco at the warehouse for marketing next year, we urge you to bring a copy of the

weigh sheet to the FSA office.

The 10% under-marketing rule with NOT apply when establishing marketing quotas for crop year 2003. Therefore, producers who did not sell the 100% effective quota in 2002 will be able to make up those pounds in crop year 2003.

If you received notification requesting documentation for sharing in the risk pertaining to purchased tobacco quota in the past three years, you will need to furnish FSA receipts (seed/chemicals) and the marketing sale bill for the 2002 marketing year.

Farmers Urged to Complete New Contracts

Warden Alexander, CED with the Farm Service Agency in Rockcastle County would like to take this time and opportunity to remind farmers they need to contact their FSA County Office to complete their base acreage and yield selection for the 2002 and 2003 Direct and Counter Cyclicals Programs as soon as possible. The deadline for base acreage and yield selection is April 1, 2003.

To date, approximately 40 percent of the farmers in Rockcastle County have completed the necessary program selections and signed contracts to receive payments for 2002 and 2003.

Under the new Farm Bill, farmers have more options. Their choices will impact their farm payments through 2007. Failure to make a base

acreage and yield selection by April 1, 2003 will default to the farm's 2002 PFC acreage plus 4-year-average oilseed acreage.

For the first time since the 1960's, farmers can update their acreage and yield information. This is a tremendous opportunity, but it is very complex and will require farmers to supply production information on their operations from 1998 through 2001. Mr. Alexander said.

Program participation is voluntary and producers are responsible for meeting deadlines and complying with rules and regulations.

Information on this and other FSA programs is available at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill>

Important Program Dates

April 1, 2003 - Ending date for owners to select base and yield options
May 16, 2003 - Ending date to sign up for TOPP
May 31, 2003 - Deadline to report

small grains (wheat)
June 2, 2003 - Sign up for the 2002 and 2003 DCP ends
Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC)
Program sign-up continues

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program
sign-up continues
Conservation Reserve Program
sign-up continues




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Annual Teacher-Preacher

Basketball Game

The 5th Annual Teacher-Preacher Basketball Game will be April 3rd at 6 p.m. at the RCHS gym. Admission is \$2 and proceeds benefit St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Alcohol Anonymous

Alcohol Anonymous meets Tuesday nights at 5 p.m. behind Our Lady of Mt. Vernon Church on Williams St. in Mt. Vernon. For more info, call 256-2129.

Republican Party Meets

The Republican Party meets the second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at Kastle Inn.

Center Hours

Rockcastle County Senior Citizens and Day Health Care Center hours are 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Attention WWII Vets

If you are a WWII veteran who is 65 or older, you can get a GED on affidavit from the Rockcastle County Board of Education by calling 256-4125.

Kiwiana Club

Rockcastle Kiwanis Club meets every Thursday at Noon at Kastle Inn. All visitors welcome.

Project Graduation 2003

Fishing Tournament

There will be a Fishing Tournament for Project Graduation 2003 on April 5th at 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Conley Woods on Lake Cumberland. \$50 cash prize. For information, call 738-4229.

Project Graduation 2003

March 31st meeting

Important Project Graduation meeting! Monday, March 31, 2003, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Pick up your Project Graduation basket drawing (don't forget to turn in money & tickets). Hostess: Annette Ruff. "Basketball Tournament" at RCHS - March 28th at 6 p.m. and March 29 - 8 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - Benefit Singing March 29th - 7 p.m. - RCHS - No meeting April 7, 2003 (Spring Break).

GED on Computer

GED Adult Learning Center is offering a program for you to study online using your computer or the center's. Choose your own time, use your own pace to use the computer. FREE! For more info, call 256-2345-1387.

SBDM Meeting

The Rockcastle County High School SBDM Council will meet in regular session the last Tuesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. in the school conference room. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 22.

Attention - Class of 1973

A meeting will be held Thursday, March 27, 2003 at Rockcastle Co. High School cafeteria to continue planning for our thirty-year reunion. All classmates are invited to attend.

Free Screening

Free Mammogram Breast Cancer Screening classes for any ladies groups offered by the Rockcastle County Health Center. To schedule a class, call 606-256-2242 and ask for Ruth Lane.

Bookmobile Schedule

Mon., March 31 - Calloway, Red Hill, Livingston, Lamoine and Pine Hill.
Tues., April 1 - Day Health/Senior Citizens, Brindle Ridge.

Hot Rod Sign-ups

Hot Rod Sign-ups will be held April 5-12 at the Snack Shack from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Feb. 3, 4 and 5-year old). Teaching the basics.

Historical Society Workshop

Do you want to research your family tree? Do you want to find out what country your ancestors traveled from? It may be easier than you think to answer those questions. Join us at The Rockcastle Historical Society Workshop. You can have access to Mt. Vernon Signal obituaries, alphabetically arranged by surname, dated from 1980 to present, transcribed census records, Rockcastle County Revolutionary War Soldiers and many other helpful documents. The Workshop will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2003 between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the BFC Garage on Spring Street, Mt. Vernon.

Come Back to Bitterweet

Anyone interested in helping with the Bitterweet Festival to be held Oct. 10 and 11, contact Bernice McLaughlin at 256-6740 or Tonda at City Hall 256-2977.

Board of Education

Special Session

The Rockcastle County Board of Education will meet in special session Tuesday, April 1, 2003 at 6 p.m. at the Rockcastle County High School auditorium. The public is welcome to attend.