Agricultural News

By Warden Alexander, FSA Director

Burley Tobacco

The Secretary has announced the national marketing quota and national reserve for the 2003 crop of burley tobacco as follows:

•Marketing quota is 287.8 million pounds.

•Reserve for: New Farms is 24,300 pounds and •Correcting and adjusting inequities is 100,000 pounds.

The national factors are as follows:

•Quota is 0.8890

•Current year equivalent is 0.8890

The notice of burley tobacco quotas are scheduled to be mailed to producers on April 18, 2003 with leasing to begin Monday, April 21. Leasing will end July 1, 2003.

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 included 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 filed 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/binder (types 42-44 and 54-55).

Payments shall be made by direct deposit unless a waiver is on file. Therefore, to expedite things, please bring a voided check for sign-up in direct deposit when applying for TOPP.

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.

Power of Attorney Forms

If you currently have a Power of Attorney on file with FSA, it is not valid for the new programs or transactions authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). If you wish to retain an agent to act on your behalf for the new Direct and Counter-Cyclical programs, a new Power of Attorney form is required.

The FSA Power of Attorney, form FSA-211, has been revised to cover programs in the Act (referred to as the Farm Bill). Non-FSA power of attorney forms currently on file are not valid for any new program authorized by the Act. Farmers are cautioned that either an FSA employee or a Notary Public must witness signature on the FSA-211.

Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) The Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003 extended the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP), originally created in 2002, 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 are in counties that were approved as a disaster area are eligible for LCP.

To be eligible, 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 catfish.

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

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 Cyclical 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.

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 for 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/pas/farmbill

Important Program Dates

May 16, 2003 - Ending date to sign-up for TOPP

May 31, 2003 - Deadline to report small grains (wheat)

June 2, 2003 - Signup for the 2002 and 2003 DCP ends

July 15th - Deadline to acreage report (corn, soybeans, tobacco, grass)

Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) Program signup continues

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program signup continues

Conservation Reserve Program signup continues.

Farm Changes

Producers who have purchased or sold land should inform the FSA office of the change. A copy of the deed or land contract sales is required to update FSA records with correct ownership. Producers are also reminded to inform the ESA office of any change of address.

Continuous CRP Sign-up

Eligible acreage devoted to certain special conservation practices such as riparian buffers, filter strips, grassed waterways, shelter belts, living snow fences, contour grass strips, salt toleration vegetatioin and shallow water areas for wildlife may be enrolled at any time under CCC's continuous CRP sign-up. These practices are not subject to competitive bidding. For more information, contact your local FSA office

(Cont. to B4)

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A local Board of Education shall award a high school diploma to a veteran who was discharged under honorable conditions and who was enrolled in, but did not complete, high school prior to being inducted into the United States Armed Forces during World War II or the Korean conflict as defined in KRS 40.010 or who served in Vietnam as defined in KRS 40.400

For more information contact Rosamond Brown at Rockcastle County Schools 606/256-2125.

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