

Agricultural News

By: Wanda Alexander, FSA Director

USDA Announces Final Tobacco Referenda Results

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced the final results on the referenda held during March among producers of various kinds of tobacco eligible for price support to determine whether they favored mandatory grading. A vote by a simple majority of eligible producer size factor was necessary for mandatory grading to become effective for the 2002 and subsequent marketing years.

The final referenda results indicate that 56% of blue-cured tobacco producers (type 11-14) and 75% of burley tobacco producers (type 31) voted in favor of mandatory grading. Producers of Kentucky-Tennessee fire-cured tobacco (type 22-23), Virginia fire-cured tobacco (type 21), Virginia sun-cured tobacco (type 37) and dark air-cured tobacco (types 35-36) all voted in favor of mandatory grading with votes in favor of 74, 77, 92 and 82% respectively.

Burley Tobacco Leasing

Producers may lease burley tobacco quota effective immediately through July 1st.

Tobacco Spot Checks

Producers who have reported unmarketed tobacco stored on the farms are subject for random spot checks. Spot checks are performed by local FSA personnel to verify the amount of tobacco reported. These spot checks will be carried out in the next few months. If you have moved tobacco from where you first reported the storage, please contact FSA to report the new location.

Non-Insurable Assistance Program (NAP) Applications

Due by April 18
Producers have until April 18, 2002, to apply for coverage for certain eligible crop under the Farm Department of Agriculture's Nonmarketed Crop Disaster Program (NAP). This deadline applies to 2001 and 2002 crops for which the coverage period would normally have begun prior to March 19, 2002, or within 60 days after March 19, 2002. Along with submitting an application for coverage, producers must pay applicable service fees and provide a certification of prior crop year production for the crop by April 18, 2002.

The deadline for submitting an application for payment for 2001 crop losses is the 2002 acreage reporting date for the crop.

Producers seeking NAP coverage of eligible crops are encouraged to contact their local USDA Service Center prior to the deadline to identify applicable crops and file an application. Producers are reminded there are no late-file provisions for submitting applications for coverage after April 18, 2002.

NAP producers' financial assistance to producers for eligible crop losses and prevented planting due to natural disasters. Eligible crops are

those for which the catastrophic level of Federal crop insurance is not available and includes those produced for food, livestock feed, fiber, mushrooms, horticulture, honey, maple sap, aquaculture (including ornamental fish), Christmas tree crops, ginseng, ornamental nursery and turfgrass sod.

Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP)

Producers who retain beneficial interest in a commodity eligible for a loan or a loan deficiency payment are eligible for payment if all of the following remain with the producers: control of the commodity, risk of loss, title of the commodity, crops must have been produced on contract acreage (AMTA).

FSA realizes that many farmers may begin feeding, thus, the loss of beneficial interest occurs. Anyone who has lost title, risk and control of the crop, is NOT eligible for benefits. Final loan and LDP availability dates for the 2001 crop are:

Barley, Oats and Wheat - March 31, 2002.

Corn, Grain Sorghum and Soybeans - May 31, 2002.

Wheat Reporting
Small grains (wheat) crop reporting can now be completed at the FSA office after they are planted. Wheat crops reporting must be on file by May 31, 2002. All crop reporting must be on file by July 15, 2002.

FY 2002 PFC Reminder

Producers who wish to receive their 2002 PFC (Production Flexibility Contract) payments early must sign a form for what month you wish to receive your 2002 payment. The deadline to sign or revise a PFC for FY 2002 is August 1, 2002.

For additional information on the PFC program contact the FSA office. All changes reflected on the CCC-478, Application for PFC Payment, must be signed by August 1, 2002.

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. Farms involving combined and/or must be properly constituted by June 1, 2002 with farms involving burley tobacco being constituted by July 1, 2002.

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Overfilling prevention devices became mandatory on April 1

The propane industry's ongoing commitment to providing consumers with the most effective way to safely fill propane cylinders has led to the development of the Overfilling Prevention Device (OPD). States across the country, including Kentucky, have adopted National Fire Protection Association regulations requiring all small propane cylinders (4-40 lbs.) be equipped with an OPD by April 1st.

The Overfilling Prevention Device is another innovation from the propane industry that allows consumers to enjoy the many exceptional uses of propane in a safe, reliable manner, said Roger Parsons of Parsons Gas.

When an OPD-equipped cylinder is being filled, a valve within the cylinder closes when the designated liquid capacity of propane is reached. However, an OPD is a safety enhancement, not a primary filling device.

Propane cylinders manufactured after October 1998 already contain OPDs and are available in all 50 states. The OPD device is easily recognized by a unique triangular hand wheel that is used to open the valve on propane cylinders. If a cylinder does not contain a triangular hand wheel, it is obsolete and cannot be refilled. Obsolete propane cylinders

should never be abandoned or thrown in the trash. Local propane marketers should be contacted for proper disposal information.

"Obtaining an OPD-equipped tank or equipping your tank with an OPD device is a quick and easy process," according to Parsons. "There are a number of exchange centers or filling stations in our area that can help."

The OPD device will provide consumers additional peace of mind as they enjoy propane-fueled appliances such as gas grills. Based on a 1999 Barbecue Industry Association survey, at least three billion barbecue events take place each summer among the estimated 75 million households that own grills. Of those households, 50 percent own propane gas grills. Additional measures that consumers can take to ensure safe and enjoyable propane grilling include:

- Always follow all of the grill manufacturer's instructions and keep written materials and manuals in a safe, accessible place.
- When not in use, make sure all grill burner controls are turned off and that the valve cylinder is closed.
- Make sure the gas grill is shut off and cooled before covering your grill after use.
- Always use or store cylinders outdoors with the relief valve in direct contact with the vapor space, usually in an upright (vertical) position.
- When you fill or exchange your cylinder, have your supplier check for dents, damage, rust or leaks. If you exchange your cylinder, these inspections are already completed on the full cylinder.
- After filling or exchanging, take your cylinder home immediately. Keep your vehicle ventilated and keep the cylinder valve closed and plugged or capped in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- When your grill is not in use, cover disconnected hose-end fittings and burner air intakes with small

grill after use.

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When your grill is not in use, cover disconnected hose-end fittings and burner air intakes with small

plastic bags, or obtain protective fitting caps from your propane supplier to keep out dirt, insects and moisture.

If there is an uncontrolled release of gas or a fire, call the fire department immediately and move all people and pets away from the unit.

Do not smoke while handling the propane cylinder.

Do not allow children to tamper or play with the cylinder or grill.

Do not use, store or transport your cylinder where it would be exposed to high temperatures. (This includes storing spare cylinders under or near the grill.)

Consumers can obtain additional information on OPDs by contacting their local propane marketers or visiting www.nrga.org



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