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Farm Program Signup Deadline Extended

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2015 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today provided farm owners and producers one additional week, until April 7, 2015, to choose between Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), the safety-net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill. The final day to update yield history or reallocate base acres also will be April 7, 2015.

“This is an important decision for producers because these programs help farmers and ranchers protect their operations from unexpected changes in the marketplace,” said Vilsack. “Nearly 98 percent of owners have already updated yield and base acres, and 90 percent of producers have enrolled in ARC or PLC. These numbers are strong, and continue to rise. This additional week will give producers a little more time to have those final conversations, review their data, visit their local Farm Service Agency offices, and make their decisions,” said Vilsack.

If no changes are made to yield history or base acres by the deadline, the farm's current yield and base acres will be used. If a program choice of ARC or PLC is not made, there will be no 2014 crop year payments for the farm and the farm will default to PLC coverage for the 2015 through 2018 crop years. Producers who have an appointment at their local FSA offices scheduled by April 7 will be able to make an election between ARC and PLC, even if their actual appointment is after April 7.

These safety-net programs provide important financial protection against unexpected changes in the marketplace. As part of the strong education and outreach campaign launched by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in September, to date more than 5 million educational postcards, in English and Spanish, have been sent to producers nationwide, and more than 5,000 events with more than 430,000 attendees, including training sessions and speaking engagements, have been conducted to educate producers on the programs. The online tools, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc, which allow producers to explore how ARC or PLC coverage will affect their operation, have been presented to more than 3,400 groups.

Covered commodities under ARC and PLC include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

Producers need to contact the Farm Service Agency by April 7. To learn more, farmers can contact their local Farm Service Agency county office. To find local offices, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

The 2014 Farm Bill builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past six years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for the taxpayer. Since enactment, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

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