

Certify All Crops By July 15 Deadline

PINE BLUFF, ARK.

July 15 is the deadline to certify spring-seeded crops, says Dr. Henry English, director, Small Farm Program, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB). Both traditional crops such as corn, cotton, grain sorghum, soybeans and rice as well as commercial vegetables should be certified. This includes okra, cantaloupes, cucumbers, watermelons, sunflowers and sweet potatoes.

Failure to certify makes it difficult, if not impossible, to participate in disaster programs, says Dr. English. Many Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs require that all cropland on a farm to be certified to earn FSA benefits. In some cases, vegetable producers have gone to their local FSA office to sign up for the disaster program only to learn that there is no record of their crop being planted. This is because farmers neglected to certify their crops, says Dr. English.

Some of the programs that require acreage reporting for participation include the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Direct

and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Marketing Loan Program (MLP) and the Livestock Feed Program (LFP).

All crops planted by July 15 must be certified by that date, but if crops cannot be planted by July 15, FSA will consider them as "timely reported" if reported to FSA within 15 calendar days after planting is completed. Timely certification verifies the acreage planted as well as any failed acreage and provides a history of crops planted.

Because of the current lack of rain and potential drought conditions, Dr. English reminds producers to notify and file a notice of loss with their local FSA county office within 15 calendar days of damage or loss to NAP crops.

Most row crop producers know to certify their crops, however, many fail to do so on time, says Dr. English. Others who may have added commercial vegetables to their operations may not certify their vegetables thinking that vegetable crops do not need to be certified. But, they do, adds Dr. English. Δ