

DEADLINES FAST APPROACHING FOR FARM RISK MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

February 11, 2015

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds farmers in Maine that the final date to purchase or modify federal crop insurance coverage on most 2015 spring-planted crops is fast approaching. This includes the new Whole-Farm Revenue Protection policy, as well as policies for spring-seeded insurable crops. For 2015 spring planted crops: Corn, Forage Seeding, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Green Peas, Potatoes, Small Grains and Whole-Farm Revenue Protection, that date is **March 16**. This is the last date to apply for crop insurance coverage or to make changes in coverage from the previous year or to cancel your policy. Maine farmers have the option of purchasing an individual policy for each insured crop or the whole-farm revenue protection option to cover multiple crops under one policy. To determine if the specific crop is available in your county go to the [RMA website](#).

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection is tailored for any farm with up to \$8.5 million in insured revenue, including specialty or organic commodities (both crops and livestock). The new insurance policy provides premium discount incentives for crop diversification, and protection against low revenue due to unavoidable natural disasters and market fluctuations that affect income during the insurance year. Most farm-raised crops, animals, and animal products are eligible for protection. Coverage also includes replanting payments, provisions that increase coverage for expanding operations and the inclusion of market readiness costs in the coverage. Farmers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2015 crop year. Crop insurance coverage decisions must be decided on or before the sales closing date. More information, including availability of the product can be found on the [RMA whole farm](#) web page.

Other important changes in the 2014 Farm Bill include improved organic protection for more crops. The organic price coverage has been extended to eight additional crops (oats, peppermint, apricots, apples, blueberries, almonds, pears, and grapes for juice) to a total of sixteen. The producer has the option of using organic or conventional prices. In addition, RMA has removed the 5% premium surcharge for organic price options.

This Farm Bill makes crop insurance more affordable for beginning farmers. A beginning farmer is an individual who has not actively operated and managed a farm with an insurable interest in a crop or livestock as an owner-operator, landlord, tenant, or sharecropper for more than 5 years. See the [RMA website](#) for a complete definition. Beginning farmer provisions are available for all insurance plans for 2015, except insurance policies with contract change dates before June 30, 2014. The new benefits available for beginning farmers are:



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- Exemption from paying the administrative fee for catastrophic (CAT) and additional coverage (buy-up) level policies
- Additional 10 percentage points of premium subsidy for additional coverage policies (buy-up) that have premium subsidy
- Use of the production history of farming operations, if beginning farmers were previously involved in the decision making or physical activities
- An increase in the substituted yield for yield adjustment, which allows a replacement of a low yield due to an insured cause of loss, from 60% to 80% of the applicable transitional yield (T-Yield) for the crop in the county

Farmers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2015 crop year. Crop insurance coverage decisions must be decided on or before the sales closing date. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Producers can use the [RMA Cost Estimator](#) to get a premium amount estimate of their insurance needs online.

For further information, contact Program Co-Director David Handley at 207.933.2100, email david.handley@maine.edu; Program Co-Director Tori Jackson at 207.353.5550, email tori.jackson@maine.edu; or Program Manager, Leilani Carlson at 207.944.1533, email leilani.carlson@maine.edu. Please visit the Maine Risk Management and Crop Insurance Education Program website, <http://umaine.edu/agriculture/maine-risk-management-and-crop-insurance-education-program/>.



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