Crop Insurance Now Tied to Conservation Compliance
By: Dr. Mark W. Jenner

The extended Update and Election periods of the new farm bill are ending on March 31, but there are still important updates to make. As farmers begin to turn to their Enrollment decisions it is important to review their conservation plans. One of the new provisions of the farm bill is that conservation compliance is now tied to your crop insurance risk management. Crop insurance is federally subsidized and coverage is contingent on individual conservation plans being in place and up to date. Conservation compliance is tied to many other USDA farm programs, but crop insurance has an approaching June 1st eligibility date.

The USDA Conservation Plans are a farming industry success story. The farm conservation policies and programs have provided tools for farmers to remain both profitable and enhance their land stewardship goals. USDA reports the millions of tons of soil that have not been lost through these programs.

The emerging concern is that once a farmer has initially filed Form AD-1026 it may not have been adjusted over the years as some of their farm activities have changed. Form AD-1026 is the document that communicates compliance to Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA). In addition, some of the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) practices also change periodically. The possibility exists that over time a collection of minor changes could make an audit come back as out of compliance, even though nothing major has changed on the farm or at USDA.

The Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification form, AD-1026, can be found at http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/AD1026.PDF. The producer must have their updated AD-1026 filed at the FSA by June 1st to be eligible for the subsequent crop year. According to the AD-1026 instructions, “If the producer is not in compliance and is not exempt, the producer will be ineligible for premium subsidy for all crops with a sales closing date between the following July 1st through the next June 30th.”

The NRCS and the RMA, as well as individual crop insurance companies, are all trying to notify producers who may need to review their paperwork. The producers being contacted are a very small percentage of participants. NRCS makes this determination, but this process is not as simple as walking into the office, making a request and completing the form. It can require a site visit and several weeks to develop a plan, and longer to get NRCS plan approval. Updates to the AD-1026 submitted just before the June 1st deadline will have insufficient time for approval. NRCS is holding informational meetings on the crop insurance/AD-1026 issue in this region. They are only being set up as this article is going to press. Check in with your local NRCS or FSA office.

Is it worth it to make sure your farm’s AD-1026 is up to date? The possible loss of a year’s worth of crop insurance and farm bill program payments make updating your paperwork worthwhile. If it has been years since your AD-1026 has had any modifications made, make sure it reflects you current operation. Please check it out.
Tall Fescue as a Hay Crop
By: John Hobbs, Ag and Rural Development Specialist

Tall fescue has long been an important forage crop in Missouri, and for years it has been the dominant species of Missouri pasture and hay land. "Fescue" is an extremely useful forage grass, but it is not without its' drawbacks. Although it comes as close to being a year-around forage as any species we can grow in Missouri, mid-summer production and forage quality are poor, especially during summers that are unusually hot and dry. Added to this problem is the fact that most of our fescue is infected with the endophytic fungus, which is known to produce toxins that have an adverse effect on livestock gains and reproduction.

How can we ensure quality hay when using tall fescue? Tall fescue has a reputation of being poor hay, but most of the reasons for the reputation are the haymaker, not the grass. Anytime a cool-season plant matures, forage quality drops rapidly. **Crude protein will drop 0.5% per day from boot stage to mature seed stage.**

The secret of quality fescue hay is adequate fertility and early cutting. Normally, fescue hay should be cut no later than May 20-25th in this area. Harvest when the plants’ seed heads are in the boot to early heading stage of growth. Often, producers harvest fescue hay after it has become mature to obtain higher yield and to avoid rain damage that might occur earlier in the spring. This results in poor-quality hay that contains large amounts of toxic fescue seed. Early-cut hay will be leafier and more digestible, and it will be consumed in larger amounts than late-cut hay. Cutting fescue earlier allows the chance of a second cutting of high-quality leafy hay. Hay made late is not only low quality, but also may contain higher levels of toxins, which reduce animal performance.

Fertilizers, especially N, are necessary for good fescue production. For hay production up to 2 tons per acre, apply the recommended rates of N, P and K in late winter at spring green-up. Fescue to be used for hay should receive at least 60 pounds N during early spring. But if a yield of 3 tons or more is desired, at least 200 pounds of N in split applications (120-80) should be used. Phosphorus and potassium may be applied any time during the year with satisfactory results.

Cut Hay at Proper Growth Stage
By: John Hobbs, Ag and Rural Development Specialist

It’s hay cutting time here in Southwest Missouri. Therefore, all farmers are reminded to start getting that harvesting equipment ready for hay harvest. If you need to make some repairs–get those parts ordered and check out the equipment.

It is also critical for farmers to know when hay is just right for cutting in order for their beef herds to eat well. The most important factor that determines hay quality is the state of maturity at harvest.

As legumes and grasses advance in maturity, they actually drop in crude protein and digestibility. It’s best to cut grass pastures and hayfields (for hay) from the boot stage to the early head stage for first cut, and then 4 to 6 weeks afterwards. The late boot level might best be described as when the seed head first pops out of the sheath. The early head stage is when the plant has grown about another foot or so.

Tall fescue or orchard grass hay cut early will be high quality, and good to feed a lactating cow with calf. These stages generally appear—if we receive a normal amount of moisture–around the first or second week of May. This year because of the abnormally cool spring, cutting hay from now to May 25 will give you quality hay.

Waiting too late to cut hay could mean an additional expense for producers. Granted, there will be more hay (tonnage) however the quality will be low. If the quality is low–then the farmer will have to provide a protein or energy supplement next winter to meet the nutritional needs of the herd.

Of course, getting hay up at the right time in May–can be hard. Many times it is very hard to find that 3-4 day window without rain to get the hay put up. You may be able to get part of the hay up on time–and then you can feed this good quality hay whenever the nutritional demands of the cow herd are highest. For example, many spring calving cows next winter will calve in February or March when not much is growing. This good quality hay could be utilized to feed these cows.
Search is on for Century Farms in Southwest Missouri

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – If your farm has been in your family since Dec. 31, 1915, you can apply to have it recognized as a Missouri Century Farm.

To qualify, farms must meet the following guidelines. The same family must have owned the farm for 100 consecutive years. The line of ownership from the original settler or buyer may be through children, grandchildren, siblings, and nephews or nieces, including through marriage or adoption. The farm must be at least 40 acres of the original land acquisition and make a financial contribution to the overall farm income.

“It is important to honor and respect our history,” said Michael Ouart, vice provost for University of Missouri Extension. “These farms represent both Missouri’s cultural heritage and the good stewardship that our farmers strive for.”

In 2008, the Missouri Farm Bureau joined MU Extension and the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources as a program sponsor.

“Missouri Farm Bureau is a proud partner in the recognition of century farms,” said Blake Hurst, president. “We applaud the hardworking farm families that have kept us fed and clothed for generations. They represent an important part of our heritage and laid a foundation for the bounty Americans enjoy every day.”

Since Missouri began the program in 1976, more than 8,000 century farms have been recognized.

For applications received by May 1st, a $65 fee covers the cost of a certificate, farm sign and booklet for approved applicants. If the application is received between May 1st and May 15th, the cost is $75. Applications must be postmarked by May 15, 2015 to be considered.

Applications can easily be completed online. For application forms and information, call Extension Publications toll-free at 1-800-292-0969, contact your local MU Extension office, or visit the program website at extension.missouri.edu/centuryfarm.

RECOGNITION

Applicants certified as owners of a 2015 Missouri Century Farm will be recognized by the MU Extension office in the county where the farm is located. Applicants are presented with a sign and a certificate. The dates of those recognition events vary from county to county.

Get Enrolled Now ...

Fescue Renovation School is March 30th in Mtn. Vernon

MT. VERNON, Mo. – During the last week of March, the Alliance for Grassland Renewal will host a series of fescue renovation schools at University of Missouri Farms and Research Centers across Missouri.

In southwest Missouri, the fescue renovation school will be held on Monday, March 30th at the Southwest Research Center located south of Mt. Vernon. There is a cost for the program and enrollment is limited to 60 individuals.

For more information or to register, contact Carla Rathman by telephone at 417-466-2148 or email at RathmannC@missouri.edu

The fescue renovation school will provide producers, veterinarians and industry professionals options for successfully converting Kentucky 31 tall fescue to novel endophyte varieties. Schools begin with understanding fescue toxicosis, then walk through the conversion process.

Conversion topics include establishment practices, fertility needs, smother crops, weed control, stand maintenance, and variety selection. Schools provide hands on training for drill calibration in addition to pasture walks to observe different novel endophyte varieties.

Schools combine expertise from University of Missouri Extension, NRCS, agribusiness and producers to give participants the opportunity to get answers to questions from a variety of perspectives and information sources.

Additional information about the program in southwest Missouri -- as well as the other programs planned in Missouri -- is available online at http://grasslandrenewal.org/education.htm.

Contact: Tim Schnakenberg, agronomy specialist
Headquartered in Stone County
Tel: (417) 357-6812
E-mail: schnakenberge@missouri.edu
Newton & McDonald County Regional Grazing School

School Dates: June 9th, 10th & 11th, 2015
Crowder College-Neosho
William Agriculture Building
June 10th — Farm Tours
Showing, fencing, watering systems, warm season grasses & wildlife habitat development

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

2015 Grazing School Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday, June 9th</th>
<th>Wednesday, June 10th</th>
<th>Thursday, June 11th</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Pasture Tours to be Announced</td>
<td>8:00-9:15 a.m.</td>
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<td>Registration</td>
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<td>Evaluating Soil Resources, Topography</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>and Pasture Fertility on the Farm/Ranch</td>
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<td>John Hobbs</td>
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<td>8:00—8:30</td>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>9:15—11:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Art and Science of Grazing</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Field Exercises (Concurrent Sessions)</td>
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<td>Management and Evaluating Farm resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>(45 minutes each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>… Myron Hartzell</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of Field Exercise… Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fencing Equipment…… Nathan Witt</td>
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| 8:30—9:30                                 | 1:00–2:00            | Field exercises and their practical applications, Myron Hartzell
| Economic Aspects of Grazing               | Livestock Nutrition… Reagan Bluel              |
| Management… Wesley Tucker                 |                      | Weed identification… Staff                   |
|                                           |                      |                                               |
| 9:30–9:45                                 | 2:00–3:00            |                                               |
| BREAK                                     | Stockpiling & Strip grazing… Nathan Witt      |
|                                           |                      |                                               |
| 9:45–12:00                                |                      |                                               |
| Field exercise on                         |                      |                                               |
| Pasture allocation… Staff                 |                      |                                               |
| Pasture evaluation… Staff                 |                      |                                               |
| Weed identification… Staff                |                      |                                               |
|                                           |                      |                                               |
| 12:00–1:00                                |                      |                                               |
| LUNCH                                     |                      |                                               |
|                                           |                      |                                               |
| 1:00-2:00                                 |                      |                                               |
| Grazers Arithmetic… Wesley Tucker         |                      |                                               |
|                                           |                      |                                               |
| 2:00–3:00                                 |                      |                                               |
| Forage Basics… Tim Schnakenberg           |                      |                                               |
|                                           |                      |                                               |

**Location**
Williams Ag Building on Neosho Crowder College Campus (east end of campus) located on Hwy D. (South side of Neosho)

**Funds were provided to defer the cost of the school by McDonald and Newton County SWCD’s**
Who’s Who

Eldon Cole, University of Missouri Extension Livestock Specialist for SW Region– headquartered in Lawrence County.

Nathan Witt, Resource Conservationist, Newton & McDonald County.

John Hobbs, University of Missouri Extension Ag/Rural Development Specialist for SW Region- headquartered in McDonald County.

Wesley Tucker, University of Missouri Extension Ag Business Specialist for SW Region– headquartered in Polk County.

Tim Schnakenberg, University of Missouri Extension Agronomy Specialist for SW Region– headquartered in Stone County.

Myron Hartzell, NRCS Resource Conservationist, for Dallas County as a Grassland Specialist.

Reagan Bluel, University of Missouri Extension Dairy Specialist for SW Region– headquartered in Barry County.

Registration Information

Minimum enrollment is 15 people– Maximum enrollment is 30 people.
Participants will receive Missouri Grazing Handbook, Summer Grazing in Missouri, Pasture Management, Guide for the Ozarks, Grazing Sticks, Plant I.D. Cards, and other pertinent handout materials. Meals, drinks and refreshments will be provided.

Please complete and return the registration form. For more information, contact the McDonald County University Extension Center at (417) 223-4775 or NRCS at (417) 451-1007 Ext. 3

Registration Form

Name______________________________________
Telephone________________________
Address ___________________________________
City____________ State_______ Zip__________

Seminar Fee is $ 135 per person, or $225 if spouse attends:
Amount Enclosed $__________

Please enclose check for full amount payable to “University of Missouri Extension”.
Registration must be received no later than May 27, 2015.
Return to: University of Missouri Extension– P.O. Box 336 Pineville, MO 64856.