

Family Farming and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC)-County Payments 2016 Special Order of Business

The first payments for the new 2014 Farm Bill rolled out in October 2015. NFU is concerned about the way the U.S. Department of Agriculture determined the yields for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) County-payment. Where possible, USDA requires that National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) data be used to determine county yields but when NASS is unable to obtain enough information from producers in a county to make the number statistically accurate, Risk Management Agency (RMA) data is then used to determine yields. In counties where RMA data was used, the number was high enough to stop the county's producers from receiving payments. NFU believes that USDA should be more consistent in how they determine yields for payments and calls on USDA to allow the State FSA Committee to adjust yields in counties that are unable to use NASS data by looking at surrounding county yields, as the use of RMA data will directly impact farmers for five years.

Because of lower commodity prices in the 2015 crop year, many producers, especially young and beginning farmers, were anticipating an ARC County payment to help pay for the high cost of production. NFU calls on USDA to update the regulations for the yield determination process and allow the State FSA Committee to review and adjust those county yields where RMA data was used so that all producers are treated fairly.

NFU also encourages producers to recognize the importance of filling out NASS survey data because this data is used throughout USDA to determine price and yield information in various USDA programs.