

Farm Bill extension may make ACRE program a viable option for some area farmers

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Three programs set May 28-29 to help producers decide

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SAN ANGELO – The federally funded ACRE program might be a viable option for West Texas producers seeking to recoup drought-related losses to this year's crop, said an economist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. But decisions must be made quickly with June 3 the sign-up deadline.

Bill Thompson, AgriLife Extension economist at San Angelo, said AgriLife Extension will partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Farm Service Agency to conduct three educational meetings on May 28-29 to help producers decide whether ACRE, the acronym for the Average Crop Revenue Election program, is right for them.

The meetings, all with a similar format tailored to the specific site, will be:

- May 28, noon “brown bag” seminar at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Lubbock located on U.S. Highway 1294 about a half mile east of Interstate 27 just north of the Lubbock Airport.
- May 29 at 8 a.m. at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at San Angelo, 7887 N. U.S. Highway 87.
- May 29 at 1 p.m. at the Roscoe Co-Op Gin, Roscoe.

“I have received numerous calls and emailed questions about ACRE,” Thompson said. “While ACRE may not have appealed to many cotton producers in the past, the relatively low cost of signing up for this single crop year may make it worth looking into for both cotton and wheat producers this time around.”

Thompson said there is a lot of speculation and some confusion regarding the program.

“Most of our producers have not been involved with ACRE, but the recent extension of parts of the 2008 Farm Bill through September 2013 has given them the opportunity to again consider signing up for the program,” he said.

Thompson said the program provides payments when the state revenue and individual farm revenue drop below calculated guarantee levels. He said relatively few farmers participated in ACRE because the sign-up was binding for the remainder of the 2008 farm bill. This year there is a higher probability of an ACRE payment, and “we won't be tied to the program past the 2013 crop year.”

“This rare late sign-up due to the Farm Bill extension, gives wheat producers a pretty good idea as to whether or not their own revenue will fall below ACRE's benchmark, which would leave just the statewide estimates in question,” Thompson said.

“Because the June 3 sign-up deadline is almost upon us, we as agencies want to do everything we can to help educate producers, so they can make the most informed decisions possible as it pertains to their specific operation and crop.”

There will be no charge for the meetings, and Thompson said the formal trainings will be short. He added that agency personnel will stay as long as possible to run the numbers for anyone interested.

To learn more about ACRE and to view spreadsheets and hypothetical calculations, go to:

<http://sanangelo.tamu.edu/extension/west-central-agricultural-economics/recent-programs-handouts-other-materials/> .