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WASHINGTON – JUNE 9, 2010 - Chuck Grassley today asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to consider a late fee for agriculture producers who missed a sign up deadline for the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program and the Average Crop Revenue Election Program.

Grassley said the different sign up deadlines for the farm programs have caused some confusion among producers. Under the 2002 farm bill, farmers who missed the filing deadline were given the opportunity to sign up for the program with payment of a late filing fee. This year, there is no such option.

“Several farmers contacted my office when they learned of the earlier sign up deadline. Unfortunately, they learned too late and instead are shut out of the program,” Grassley said. “The FSA might be able to help a number of producers if it would consider allowing a late filing fee for family farmers who have missed this year’s sign up.”

Here is a copy of the text of Grassley's letter to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

June 9, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack

Secretary

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave SW

Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I understand that the Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently conducted its annual Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) signup. This year's signup concluded on June 1, 2010, which tracks the 2002-2007 signups for DCP which also closed on June 1st of each of those respective years.

Because of the late passage of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill), signup for DCP was extended until September 1, 2008. In 2009, because of the introduction of ACRE, an August 14, 2009 deadline was set.

2010 marks the first time FSA has returned to a June 1st deadline. I believe a June 1, 2010 deadline is fully appropriate. However, under the Farm Security and Rural investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill), farmers who missed the deadline but chose to pay a $100 per farm late filing fee were given until September 30th to do so. This late filing fee option is no longer offered by FSA.

I am concerned that since this is the first year that FSA is again using the earlier deadline of June 1, not all eligible producers have had an opportunity to visit their county office and signup for the two programs. Producers in my state who missed the June 1, 2010 deadline have contacted my office about their inability to signup this year, many of whom are willing to pay a

late fee to do so.

I respectfully ask that FSA reconsider its decision not to allow a late filing fee for family farmers who have missed this year's signup deadline.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley

United States Senator