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Important Dates Near for Expanded Crop Insurance Options for Organic Producers

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WASHINGTON, D.C., February 5, 2014 – The United States Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency (RMA) today reminded producers of recent changes to the organic farm safety net and key dates for producers to know for their 2014 crops.

In its support for the continued growth of organic agriculture, RMA expanded the coverage options for producers through Federal crop insurance. Through efforts to better collect and evaluate price and yield data, RMA has worked with other USDA agencies over the past several years to develop new policies, expanding the options for organic producers. The agency added organic price elections for 2014 for eight additional crops (oats, peppermint, apricots, apples, blueberries, almonds, pears, and grapes for juice) bringing the total number of crops with organic price elections to sixteen.

"RMA is committed to offering a modern and effective safety net to ensure organic farmers have what they need to put seed in the ground and food on our tables, even after a difficult production year," said Brandon Willis, RMA Administrator.

Starting with the 2014 crop year, the 5 percent surcharge for all crops insured under organic farming practices has been removed; a new contract price option will be available to organic producers who grow crops under guaranteed contracts and will be available for 62 different organic crops; and changes to organic transitional yields

(t-yields) will be phased in so they will be more reflective of actual organic farming experience.

Organic producers should be aware of the final sales closing date to apply for insurance for the 2014 crop year. For most crops, that date is March 15. The sales closing date is the last day to buy a new policy or change an existing policy's coverage level. Producers can find sales closing dates for the crops in their states by referring to RMA's Regional Office State Directory at: www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/fields/rsos.html. Current policyholders also have until the sales closing date to make any changes to their existing contracts.

More information on risk management tools available for organic farmers can be found on the RMA Organic Crops website at: www.rma.usda.gov/news/currentissues/organics/.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. Contact a local crop insurance agent for more information about the program. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers or on the RMA website at: www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/.

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