

What you should know about:

ACREAGE ALLOTMENT PROGRAMS
(for cotton, rice, and peanuts)

This fact sheet tells how the acreage that you can plant in cotton, rice, and peanuts is determined, when it is determined, and what you can do if you think that you are not being fairly treated. It does not try to tell everything about how acreage allotments, along with marketing quotas, operate as a part of the overall price support program.

Market quota, referendum, and acreage allotment

Your local or county ASC committee* each year holds a referendum called by the Secretary of Agriculture to approve the marketing quota for each of these crops for the coming year. This referendum is held not later than December 15 (except for rice, which may be held in the following January). Before the referendum is conducted, your ASC county committee has made the acreage allotment for each farm in your county, and the notice of your allotment (if you are entitled to one) should have been mailed to you. If you hear that a marketing quota referendum is going to be conducted and you have not yet received your notice of acreage allotment, check at once with your county agent or at your local ASC office.

Who takes part in the referendum, the ASC committees, and the acreage allotments

You are entitled to participate in the referendum (and in the election of your ASC committee) if you operate a farm as a sharecropper, tenant, or owner and are entitled to an acreage allotment. You must have an acreage allotment if you produce cotton, rice, or peanuts for market (if two-thirds of the producers of the country who vote in the referendum approve the marketing quota for the crop).

How big an acreage allotment should you get?

The acreage allotted to you should be your fair share of the acreage allotted to the county for the crop. Generally, your fair share is based upon the past history of your farm and of the other farms producing the crop. (Abnormal growing conditions, the land, crop rotation, and your own experience are sometimes considered.) The allotments for all the farms in your county are listed at the ASC county office. Examine this list right away if you do not think your allotment is fair. Even if you have a small farm or a new farm you are entitled to some allotment for the crop. Ask the ASC office or your county agent to explain your allotment to you.

What to do if you don't get your notice on time or think your allotment is unfair

If you do not get a notice of your allotment in the mail at the same time that your neighbors get theirs and before the marketing quota referendum, inquire at once at your local ASC office and write a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, 25, D. C. telling him what happened.

* The ASC committees are committees elected by the local farmers to help carry out the programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. (More information on ASCS on pages 23-29)

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When you get a notice of your allotment in the mail, read it carefully right away and save it. If you do not understand it, ask your local ASC office or your county agent to explain it to you. If you are not satisfied with the acreage allotted to you (or your farm marketing quota upon which it is based), file a written application for review with your local ASC committee within fifteen days of the postmark on your notice. Keep a copy of the application for yourself.

If you apply for a review of your allotment in time, it will be reviewed by an ASC review committee of three farmers who have been appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and who are different from your local ASC committee. This committee will change your allotment if it decides, after considering all aspects of your case, that you did not get a fair share of the crop acreage allotted to your county.

If you still do not think that you are being treated fairly after the review committee has made its findings, you can appeal to the United States District Court or to the State Court of your county for further review. This is likely to be expensive, however, and you should get legal advice before you try to do this.

How to get an extra allotment

If you want to put more acres in the crop than you were first allotted, apply to the ASC committee. The county committee has held in reserve part of the allotted land to take care of the adjustment of any claims made, and sometimes growers do not want to plant all the acreage given them. This excess is divided among all those who apply for it.

The measurement of your land

The correct measurement of your farm is important to you and to the government. If your fields are measured too big, you will not be planting all the acres to which you are entitled. If they are measured too small, you may be planting more than you were allotted and have to plow up some of it or be subject to other penalties. Regularly — at least once every three years — the local ASC committee is supposed to measure all the lands you cultivate without cost to you and can, at any time, check by measuring to be sure you are not planting an excess of the crop. If you request it, the ASC committee must measure your fields before you plant them or will re-measure them later. But you must pay for the cost of this special measurement, so be sure you find out how much it is going to cost you before you ask the committee to do it. If you don't ask for prior measurement or re-measurement, you are bound by the ASC committee's determination of your acreage.

If your ASC committee office does not treat you with fairness and with courtesy, or if it segregates you or discriminates against you in any other way, get all the facts you can, including what happened and when and where it happened. Get the names of the persons involved and of witnesses if you can. Send a full report of it to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.