

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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ADJUSTMENT IN AGRICULTURE—III
ADMINISTRATIVE RULINGS AMENDED

A. Use of Rented Acres Under The Cotton Contract

What shall I do with the cotton land I am renting to the government? This question is in the mind of every cotton grower who has signed the cotton acreage reduction contract.

The majority of cotton growers are anxious to use the rented acres in accordance with the wishes of the government. A few are trying to find some way to use the rented acres to make an additional profit. Certain growers are attempting to utilize the rented acreage for the production of feed under the guise of "feed for home use" when such a use is quite unwarranted under the conditions.

In planning the use of the rented acres, the cotton grower should keep in mind that he is receiving cash rent for the land which is being retired from cotton production and the government reserves the right to determine how these rented acres shall be used. Before deciding definitely what to do, every cooperating cotton grower should study carefully the provisions of the contract and the administrative rulings which relate in any way to the use of land which is being rented by the government.

Many of the questions often asked by cotton growers regarding use of rented acres involve the possibility of using this land which has been rented by the government for making an additional profit, or for the production of food and feed contrary to the spirit of the contract. A study of the contract and of administrative rulings will quickly show that any use of the rented acres for additional profit is not permissible, and opposed to the intent and the spirit of the contract. A few typical questions are given below together with the answers obtained so far as possible from the contract itself or from the administrative rulings.

TO THE COTTON FARMER; These questions and answers on crops for the rented cotton acres were approved by the Replacement Crops section of the Agricultural Adjustment administration. This circular should be used in connection with others in the Adjustment in Agriculture series listed below.

- I. The Live at Home Plan for Oklahoma.
- II. Crop Adjustment—Oklahoma's Opportunity for Soil Improvement.
- III. Administrative Rulings Amended.

Question 1: I have signed the cotton contract and have rented to the government a certain number of acres of my cotton land. Will the government permit me to use these rented acres for any particular purpose?

Answer: The purpose of the government in renting this land from you and paying you a cash rental per acre is to take the land out of production. You can readily see that it would quickly defeat the intent of the entire crop adjustment program of the government if the rented acres should be used to produce other crops than cotton to be harvested and the crops or any products obtained from feeding such crops placed upon the market. Certainly such a practice would be unwise because it would add to existing surpluses of these crops, thus creating an additional burden to other farmers who have been growing these crops. Consequently, the government has approved certain definite uses of the rented acreage so that the use of the land retired from production will benefit the cotton grower and not handicap other groups of farmers. The government makes a single exception of this general policy in the case of cotton growers who do not have other available land upon which they can grow sufficient food and feed for home consumption.

Question 2. What different uses of the rented acres will the government approve?

Answer: The government encourages every cotton grower to make use of the rented acreage as a part of a constructive farm improvement program. The following different uses of the land are recommended:

(1) Plant soil improvement crops, such as cowpeas, soybeans, mungbeans, lespedeza, hairy vetch, Austrian winter peas, bur clover, sweet clover, which shall not be pastured or otherwise harvested, and which shall be turned under to add to the nitrogen and organic matter content of the soil.

(2) Plant erosion resistant crops, such as a small grain or any grain or forage sorghum including Sudan grass, when sown broadcast, or any legume when sown broadcast. Again, the government insists that you must not pasture or otherwise harvest the crop but must use same for erosion prevention and building up soil fertility.

(3) Allow the land to remain idle until terraced, and afterwards plant to a soil-improving or erosion-preventing crop, not to be pastured or otherwise harvested, but to be turned under for soil improvement. If you wish to begin terracing on comparatively large fields, you can rent the land to the government in strips which are to be planted to soil-improving and erosion-preventing crops and terraced where needed. The acres allotted to cotton production under the terms of the contract will be planted in strips between the erosion-preventing crop strips. You can rent 40 percent of a cotton field to the government under this plan.

(4) Establish a tame permanent pasture, using pasture grass mixtures, recommended by the Oklahoma A. & M. College. During the first year the pasture should not be grazed by livestock when the livestock or livestock products are to be sold.

(5) Permit the land to lie unplanted, especially for weed control or for summer fallow. There are many patches of the field bindweed in western Oklahoma and of Johnson grass and certain other weed pests in different sections. It is possible to eradicate the different weed pests by approved methods of control. Frequent cultivations during the growing season in which all weed growth is prevented will accomplish this end. Intensive cultivation during periods of summer drouth is often effective. The use of chlorates for weed control is often practicable when undertaken under careful supervision.

(6) Set out a farm wood lot to provide fuel or fence posts. Using the rented acres for this purpose is particularly feasible on many central and western Oklahoma farms where timber growth is scarce. Forest tree planting on land removed from cotton production is practicable under favorable conditions.

(7) Establish a shelter belt of timber around the farmstead to provide protection during the windy seasons of the year. This practice would certainly add to home comforts on many western Oklahoma farms.

Question 3: Does the government grant permission to the cotton grower to use the rented acres for growing food and feed crops for home use?

Answer: Many cotton growers fail to produce enough food for family use, or an adequate supply of feed for their farm livestock. Many farmers dependent upon cotton do not have a home garden. Many are without a milk cow, a flock of chickens or a brood sow. A surprisingly large number of cotton growers do not raise enough feed for the work stock on the farm. Each year an enormous amount of cotton money is spent to buy food and feed which could easily have been raised on the farm. It has been a common practice for the cotton farmer to mortgage his cotton crop and many of his belongings to get cash and credit to buy food and feed in order to grow more cotton. Consequently, the government has made a special concession to the cotton growers who have been planting mostly cotton and who do not have sufficient additional land to grow food and feed for home use so that they can produce food and feed needed for actual home use on the rented acres.

Question 4: When is it permissible for me to use the rented acres to grow the food and feed for home use?

Answer: Ask yourself the following question: "Do I have other land than the rented acreage which I can use for the growing of feed and food crops for home use?" If you do not have enough additional land to grow food and feed for your actual home needs, then you are entitled to use the rented acres or any part of the rented acres for this purpose, according to your probable needs. Keep in mind that if you produce a surplus of food and feed on the rented acres, you are not entitled to sell or exchange it for anything else.

If you are merely diverting feed crops, normally grown on other acres, to the rented acres so that you can grow more feed on the other acres to be sold, or to be fed to livestock so that you can sell the livestock or livestock products, then you are not abiding by the intent of the contract. If you are in any doubt as to whether you are entitled to use the rented acres for growing food and feed for home use it will be well for you to obtain the approval of your county cotton committee before doing so.

Question 5: Can I grow all the feed I will need on the rented acres for home use, and continue to plant other fields on the farm to corn, oats, or kafir for sale?

Answer: No. Feed crops that would normally be grown on other land of the farm for the feeding of the farm livestock shall not be diverted to the rented acres, thereby releasing acreage for the production of some crop or crops for sale.

Question 6: Can the rented acres be used for growing watermelons or garden vegetables to be sold or exchanged, or to be canned and the canned goods to be sold or exchanged?

Answer: No. The rented acres cannot be made a source of profit by the sale or exchange of products produced thereon.

Question 7: Can oats, wheat, or any other feed crop be grown on the rented acres to be fed to young mules or to young beef animals that will not be sold until after the expiration of the cotton contract?

Answer: No. The rented acres cannot be made a source of profit by selling directly or indirectly the products produced thereon.

Question 8: Most of my farm is infested with Johnson grass, and the land which I am renting to the government has a lot of Johnson grass on it. Can I allow this land to lie idle and keep the Johnson grass down by pasturing with livestock when I expect to sell the livestock or livestock products?

Answer: No. Pasturing with livestock cannot be looked upon as a means of control of Johnson grass. If the producer has been attempting to control Johnson grass by cultivation when growing cotton, certainly he should expect to intensify these efforts during the year the land remains out of production. Pasturing land infested with Johnson grass with livestock is simply another plan of using the rented acres as a source of profit.

Question 9: My landlord is willing to furnish cowpea seed to be planted on the rented acres, with the understanding that I shall be entitled to harvest the seed, but leaving the vines to be turned under for soil improvement. Does the government grant me the privilege to harvest all of the cowpea seed I need to be used mostly for planting next year and a portion to be used for food for home use by my family? Also, do I have the right to harvest the entire seed crop, and offer same for sale to help pay the expenses of preparing the seed bed and planting the crop?

Answer: You are entitled to use any part of the cowpea seed you need for home use provided you do not have other land upon which you can grow cowpeas for this purpose. Likewise, you are entitled to harvest cowpea seed to be used for planting next year, provided you do not have other acreage upon which such seed can be produced. You do not have the right to harvest the seed crop and offer any part of it for sale on the market to help pay the expense of producing the crop.

In the case of a landlord who has made a partnership arrangement with the tenant for planting the rented acres into a soil-improving crop, it is permissible for the landlord to harvest a proportionate share of the seed crop to be used for planting the following year on that farm, provided there is no additional acreage on the farm upon which such seed can be produced. This practice is permissible only when the vines remain on the ground to be turned under.

Question 10: I am operating a farm, and use my work stock for doing a certain amount of contract work on the side. I find it necessary to buy additional feed each year. Is it permissible for me to use the rented acres for raising feed needed for my work stock?

Answer. No. You have more work stock now than is needed for conducting your regular farm operations. You admit that it has not been your policy to produce the feed you needed for your work stock in the past. If you had so desired, you could have reduced your acreage of cotton in previous years and produced the amount of feed you needed. Certainly you are not entitled to use the rented acres for producing such feed at the present time.

Question 11: I have a few cows which I milk regularly and sell cream. I have never produced enough feed to supply the needs of my farm. I can do so this year if I can use the rented acres. Is this permissible?

Answer: Certainly not. One of the primary objectives of the Agricultural Adjustment act is that the cotton grower who agrees to curtail production shall not use the land taken out of cotton production for the production, directly or indirectly, for sale of any other nationally produced agricultural commodity or product. It is evident that you have been producing too much cotton in the past and not enough feed.

Question 12: Can new land be put into cultivation on a farm for the raising of crops?

Answer: No. In the contract, the cotton grower agrees not to increase on this farm in 1934 above 1932 or 1933, the total acreage planted to crops, including the rented acres. This eliminates the possibility of increasing the number of acres in cultivation on the farm.

Question 13.: Does the government reserve the right to check up and determine whether I am making legitimate use of my rented acres?

Answer: The following statement found in administrative ruling No. 12, final paragraph, should be kept in mind. "If rented acres are used contrary to the terms of the 1934 and 1935 cotton acreage reduction contract or of these rulings, the secretary may, through any agency designated by him, take such action as he may see fit to control the use of such acres, the cultivation thereof, and the disposition of crops thereon, in order to effectuate the purpose and intent of the contract. Any expense incurred under the terms of this ruling in the cultivation or disposition of crops on the rented acres shall be deducted from any sums which may be due or become due to the producer under the terms of the contract."