

October 2015



NEWSLETTER



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Wisconsin State FSA Newsletter

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

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Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions.

Important Dates to Remember

- Nov. 1.....2015 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Application for Payment Deadline
- Nov. 9.....County Committee Election Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters
- Nov. 12.....Deadline for Removing hay Bales from CRP fields
- Nov. 16.....2016 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage, Pasture, Rangeland & Forage (PRF) including Native Grass, Fall Wheat and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains
- Nov. 16.....Deadline for 2015 NAP Production Reports for Annual Fall-Seeded Crops, Perennial Forage, Mixed Forage Crops, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Garlic
- Nov. 20.....EXTENDED! Last day of the Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 MPP-Dairy Program
- Nov. 20.....Application Deadline for CRP Working Grass, Range & Pasture Lands Initiative

- Nov. 20.....2016 NAP Application Closing Date for fruit and other crops such as apples, pears, blueberries, grapes, strawberries, honey, maple sap,

asparagus and other perennial fruits
Dec. 1.....CRP General Signup Begins
Dec. 1.....2016 ARCPLC Signup Begins
Dec. 7.....Last Day to Return Voted County
Committee Election Ballots to FSA
at the local USDA Service Center.

USDA Extends Dairy Margin Protection Program Deadline

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced the deadline to enroll in the dairy Margin Protection Program for coverage in 2016 has been extended until Nov. 20, 2015. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating farmers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

Producers are encouraged to use the online Web resource at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. The secure website can be accessed via computer, smartphone or tablet.

Producers who were enrolled in 2015 will need to make a coverage election for 2016 and pay the \$100 administration fee. To remain eligible for higher coverage levels any 2015 unpaid premium balances must be made by the Nov. 20, 2015 deadline. Premiums for 2016 are not due until Sept. 1, 2016. Also, producers can work with milk marketing companies to remit premiums on their behalf.

To enroll in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Payments under the program may be reduced by a certain percentage due to a sequester order required by Congress and issued pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Should a payment reduction be necessary, FSA will reduce the payment by the required amount.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Fall Crop Sales Deadlines

Disaster Loss Coverage is Available for Crops that are Ineligible for Federal Insurance

Producers are encouraged to examine the available U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the sales deadline for fall crops.

Deadlines are quickly approaching to purchase coverage for fall-seeded crops. Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap that allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for their operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

The cost of basic coverage (55% of price and 50% of expected production) is a \$250 service fee per crop. However, a producer never has to pay more than \$750 in service fees per county and no more than \$1875 for the basic coverage if producing in three or more counties

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator:

<http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

Nov. 20th Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) Deadline for Perennial Crops

Producers interested in participating in the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) need to be aware of the upcoming Nov. 20th application deadline for fruit and other crops such as apples, pears, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, honey, maple sap, asparagus and other perennial fruits.

NAP was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause catastrophic losses of production or prevented planting of eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance.

Contact your [local FSA office](#) for more details or to make your appointment before the Nov. 20th deadline.

General CRP Signup Begins December 1

Local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices will accept new offers to participate in the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#) under a general signup to be held Dec. 1, 2015, through Feb. 26, 2016. Farmers interested in removing sensitive land from agricultural production and planting grasses or trees to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and restore wildlife habitat are encouraged to enroll.

For 30 years, CRP has helped farmers prevent more than 8 billion tons of soil from eroding, reduce nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively, and even sequester 43 million tons of greenhouse gases annually, equal to taking 8 million cars off the road.

The voluntary program allows USDA to contract with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive land is conserved. Participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

CRP protects water quality and restores significant habitat for ducks, pheasants, turkey, quail, deer and other important wildlife which spurs economic development like hunting and fishing, outdoor recreation and tourism across rural America. An additional 800,000 acres for duck nesting habitat and other wetland and wildlife habitat initiatives can now be enrolled in the program.

Farmers should consider the various CRP continuous sign-up initiatives that may help target specific resource concerns. Financial assistance is offered for many practices including conservation buffers and pollinator habitat plantings, and initiatives such as the highly erodible lands.

For additional information farmers should contact their [local FSA county office](#). For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

CRP Grasslands Initiative for Livestock Grazing Lands

First Ranking Period Ends November 20

Farmers can now apply for financial assistance to help conserve working grasslands and pastureland while maintaining the areas as livestock grazing lands under the CRP-Grasslands initiative.

The CRP-Grasslands initiative will provide participants who establish long-term, resource-conserving covers with annual rental payments up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land. Cost-share assistance also is available for up to 50 percent of the covers and other practices, such as cross fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife.

Participants may still conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production, conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences. FSA will accept applications on an ongoing basis with those applications scored against published ranking criteria, and approved based on the competitiveness of the offer. The ranking period will occur at least once per year and be announced at least 30 days prior to its start. The end of the first ranking period will be November 20, 2015.

To learn more about CRP-Grasslands, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp or contact your [local County FSA Office](#).

Guaranteed Loan Program

FSA [guaranteed loans](#) allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender. The lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and pay for other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$1,399,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your lender or [local FSA farm loan office](#) for more information on guaranteed loans.

Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans (including Microloans) to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

[Direct farm operating loans](#) can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and cover other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate. Microloans are loans up to \$50,000 for beginning, small and mid-sized farmers. They have a simplified application process and can have a repayment of up to 7 years. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to small and midsized farming operations.

Direct [farm ownership loans](#) can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000. A down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years. The October interest rate for direct operating loans is 2.625% and for direct ownership loans it is 3.75%.

Please contact your [local FSA office](#) for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

Consider Storing Your Harvested Grain and Obtain a Crop Loan with FSA

FSA is now accepting requests for 2015 [Marketing Assistance Loans \(MALs\)](#) for all eligible commodities after harvest. Marketing Assistance Crop Loans provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows.

Eligible crops include wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, wool and honey.

Interest rates for 9-month 2015 crop year crop loans are announced monthly. The interest rate is 1.375% for loans disbursed in October. The national loan rates for 2015 crops are \$1.95/bu for corn, \$5.00/ bu for soybeans, and \$1.94/bu for winter wheat. Local loan rates vary by county.

Producers will need to certify or provide evidence of their harvested production. Loans are calculated using the certified bushels, not to exceed the county committee established maximum yields per acre, times the local county loan rate. Monthly spot-checks are conducted to ensure the quantity and quality of the crop being stored.

For more details contact your [local FSA office](#).

Maintain Quantity and Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

Breaking New Ground? Notify FSA Before Starting!

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet [Highly Erodible Land \(HEL\) and Wetland Conservation \(WC\) provisions](#).

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland. These areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).