

November 4, 2014



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Colorado FSA: November 2014 eNewsletter

USDA Colorado Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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Armando Valdez, Chair
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Next State Committee

Meeting: November 17, 2014

Reasonable Accommodations: People with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs should contact the County Executive Director in the FSA Office in your area or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8330. Alternatively, you may also contact Colorado FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Patti Finke at 720-544-2889 or patti.finke@co.usda.gov

USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections to Begin Monday, Nov. 3

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to make their voices heard by voting in the upcoming Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections. Beginning Monday, Nov. 3, 2014, USDA will mail ballots for the 2014 elections to eligible producers across the country. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA offices by the Dec. 1, 2014, deadline to ensure that their vote is counted.

FSA County Committee members provide an important link between the local agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity support programs; conservation programs; indemnity and disaster programs; emergency programs and eligibility. County committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week may pick one up at their local USDA Service Center or FSA office. The deadline to submit ballots is Dec. 1, 2014. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than Dec. 1, 2014. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office Jan. 1, 2015.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2014 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. You may also contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA office. Visit <http://go.usa.gov/pYV3> to find an FSA office near you.

Colorado agricultural producers invited to USDA-CSU Farm Bill Meetings

USDA Farm Service Agency, in partnership with Colorado State University, will be traveling the state to discuss important new programs authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 with Colorado producers. A series of 4 joint meetings will begin held on November 18th and 19th to focus on the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) administered by FSA. CSU Extension will explain the new online Farm Bill Decision Tool that is available to assist producers in understanding their options. The 2014 Farm Bill authorizes three FSA program election options: PLC, ARC-County (ARC-CO) and ARC-Individual (ARC-IC). Producers must make a one-time decision to retain or reallocate crop bases, to retain or update program payment yields and select the type of coverage (price protection, county revenue protection, and/or individual revenue protection) for the 2014-18 crop years.

The public can attend any of the upcoming joint meetings:

- Nov. 18: Sterling, 8-11 a.m., Northeast Junior College (Hays Student Center Ballroom)
- Nov. 18: Burlington, 2:30 - 5:30 p.m., Community Center (340 S. 14th St.)
- Nov. 19: Lamar, 8 - 11 a.m., Community College Auditorium (2401 S. Main St.)
- Nov. 19: Limon 2:30 - 5:30 p.m., Community Building (477 D Avenue)

The December Colorado FSA enewletter will provide meeting dates for December.

Nov. 17 Deadline for Reporting Fall Crops: 2015 Crop Acreage Reporting Dates for Colorado

Producers are reminded to file their 2015 acreage reports with their local FSA county office by the common acreage reporting deadlines of:

- Nov. 17 - 2015 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Perennial forage, Pasture, Rangeland & Forage (PRF) including Native grass, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter - HRW), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains
- Jan 2, 2015 - (or 30 days after placement of colonies) Honey covered under Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)
- Jan. 15 - Apples, Grapes, Peaches
- June 15 - Onions
- July 15 - Spring Alfalfa Seed, Barley, Canola, corn, Dry Beans, Dry Peas, Flax, forage Seeding, Mustard, spring Oats, Potatoes, Safflower, Sugar Beets, sunflowers, spring Wheat, conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and all other crops.

Please contact your local FSA office to obtain a copy of your 2015 acreage compliance maps or schedule an appointment to complete your crop certification. In order for your fall acreage report to be considered timely filed, and

USDA Extends Dairy Margin Protection Program Deadlines

Enrollment Continues Through Dec. 5; Comments Accepted Until Dec. 15

USDA is extending the deadlines for the Dairy Margin Protection Program. Farmers now have until Dec. 5, 2014, to enroll in the voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill. The program 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.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also extended the opportunity for public comments on both the Margin Protection Program and the Dairy Product Donation Program until Dec. 15, 2014.

Comments can be submitted to USDA via the regulations.gov website at <http://go.usa.gov/GJSA>.

USDA Issues Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Payments for Certain 2013 Crops in Colorado

USDA has started distributing Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for revenue losses associated with certain crops in Colorado, when triggers were met. Discontinued by the 2014 Farm Bill, the ACRE program provided producers with protection from revenue losses for crops grown in 2009-2013.

Crops eligible for October payments in Colorado include corn, grain sorghum and wheat grown in the 2013 crop year. Producers who participated in the 2013 ACRE program should contact their local offices for more information. The Budget Control Act passed by Congress in 2011 requires these payments to be reduced by 5.1 percent.

For more information on ACRE, producers should contact their local FSA office or visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

The 2014 Farm Bill implements a change that requires farmers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file.

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 certification form must be on file with the FSA. The Risk Management Agency (RMA), through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers and ranchers.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues the requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA and NRCS. This includes most financial assistance such as the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans and most programs implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs implemented by NRCS.

Many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) programs already have implemented this requirement and therefore most producers should already have an AD-1026 form on file for their associated lands. If however an AD-1026 form has not been filed or is incomplete then farmers are reminded of the deadline of June 1, 2015.

When a farmer completes and submits the AD-1026 certification form, FSA and NRCS staff will review the associated farm records and outline any additional actions that may be required to meet the required compliance with the conservation compliance provisions.

FSA recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: www.fsa.usda.gov. USDA will publish a rule later this year that will provide details outlining the connection of conservation compliance with crop insurance premium support. Producers can also contact their local USDA Service Center for information. A listing of service center locations is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/local/.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

USDA is raising the borrowing limit for the microloan program from \$35,000 to \$50,000, effective Nov. 7, 2014. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$50,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Operating loans are available for operating farms or to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> .

Important FSA Dates to Remember

- **Nov. 3:** FSA County Committee Election ballots mailed to eligible voters
- **Nov. 17:** 2015 Crop Year FSA Acreage Reporting Deadline for Fall Seeded: Grass, Mixed Forage, Alfalfa, Clover, the year of seeding (annual and perennial types), Established Grass, Mixed Forage, Alfalfa, Clover in years subsequent to the year of seeding (perennial types), Apiculture, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains crops with sales closing date of Sept. 1.
- **Nov 20:** 2015 Crop Year NAP Sales closing for Apples, Apricots, Cherries, Grapes, Hops, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums and Prunes
- **Nov. 28** - Dairy Margin Protection Program Enrollment Deadline for 2014 and 2015
- **Dec. 1:** Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA County Office
- **Dec. 1:** 2015 Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Sales Closing Date for 2015 Honey, Alfalfa, Grass, Mixed Forages, Clover, Mustard and Vetch
- **Jan. 1:** Newly elected County Committee Members take office
- **Jan 15:** Acreage report Date for Crops with Sales Closing date of November 20.
- **Jan. 30:** 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014 LFP, LIP Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Deadline
- **Jan 30:** Deadline to submit Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation for Loss for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 (or 90 days after disaster event or loss was apparent)
- **Jan. 30:** Deadline to request early CRP contract termination
- **Sept. 29, 2014 to Feb. 27, 2015:** Land owners may visit their local FSA office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- **Nov. 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015:** Producers make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- **Mid-April 2015 through summer 2014:** Producers sign ARC or PLC contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.

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).