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Colorado FSA: August 2015 eNewsletter

USDA Farm Service Agency - Colorado

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State Committee;
Armando Valdez,
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Marsha Daughenbaugh
Anita Nein
Bill Warren
James Hume

Next State Committee Meeting: October 5 - 7, 2015

USDA Announces Conservation Incentives for Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands

Beginning Sept. 1, farmers and ranchers can apply for financial assistance to help conserve working grasslands, rangeland and pastureland while maintaining the areas as livestock grazing lands.

The initiative is part of the voluntary Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally funded program that for 30 years has assisted agricultural producers with the cost of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. In return, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. CRP has helped farmers and ranchers 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 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.

With the publication of the CRP regulation today, the Farm Service Agency will accept applications on an ongoing basis beginning Sept. 1, 2015, 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 Nov. 20, 2015.

[Online directory of FSA Offices](#)

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 1-800-877-8339. Alternatively, you may also contact Colorado FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Patti Finke at (720) 544-2889 or patti.finke@co.usda.gov

To learn more about participating in CRP-Grasslands or SAFE, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp or consult with the local Farm Service Agency county office. To locate a nearby Farm Service Agency office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about the 30th anniversary of CRP, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30 or follow on Twitter using #CRPis30.

USDA Accepting More Farmland for Wildlife Habitat in Colorado

The Colorado Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that an additional 19,000 acres of agricultural land in State is eligible for funding for wildlife habitat restoration.

The initiative, known as State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally-funded voluntary program that for 30 years has assisted agricultural producers with the cost of restoring,

enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. In return, USDA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. CRP has helped farmers and ranchers 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.

In total, up to 400,000 acres of additional agricultural land will be eligible for wildlife habitat restoration funding through this SAFE announcement. The additional acres are part of an [earlier CRP wildlife habitat announcement](#) made by Secretary Vilsack. Currently, more than 1 million acres, representing 98 projects, are enrolled in SAFE nationwide.

Here in Colorado, there is a total of 71,050 acres allocated between four SAFE projects.

- 36,500 acres in the Colorado Lesser Prairie Chicken project is designed specifically to increase Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat. Since it was first established in 2008, farmers and ranchers have enrolled 15,783 acres, resulting in improved habitat area and increased habitat for the Lesser Prairie Chicken in the special designated areas. Colorado FSA is now offering interested farmers and ranchers the opportunity to enroll another 20,716 acres in this project.”
- 8,475 acres in the Colorado Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse project is designed specifically to increase Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse and increase in other grassland bird species included but not limited to Lark Bunting, Cassins Sparrow and Chestnut-collared Longspur. Since it was first established in 2008, farmers and ranchers have enrolled 5,180 acres, resulting in improved habitat area and increased habitat for grassland bird species. Colorado FSA is now offering interested farmers and ranchers the opportunity to enroll another 3,295 acres in this project.”
- 11,475 acres in the Colorado Shortgrass Prairie Buffer programs designed specifically to preserve the integrity of and expand the extent of shortgrass prairie reserves managed for wildlife species in eastern Colorado. The success of this program will provide habitat for numerous wildlife species dependent upon large tracts of intact grassland ecosystems. Since it was first established in 2008, farmers and ranchers have enrolled 1,474 acres, resulting in improved habitat area for numerous wildlife species. Colorado FSA is now offering interested farmers and ranchers the opportunity to enroll another 10,000 acres in this project.”
- 14,600 acres in the Colorado Western Slop Grouse Conservation project is designed specifically to restore and enhance habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, Greater Sage-grouse and Gunnison sage-grouse. Since it was first established in 2008, farmers and ranchers have enrolled 7,965 acres, resulting in improved habitat area and increased habitat for these Colorado State species of concern. Colorado FSA is now offering interested farmers and ranchers the opportunity to enroll another 6,635 acres in this project.”

Interested producers can offer land for enrollment in SAFE and other CRP initiatives by contacting their local FSA county office at <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more the 30th anniversary of CRP and to review 30 success stories throughout the year, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30 or follow Twitter at #CRPis30. And for more information about FSA conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

NAP Deadline Approaching for 2016 Crops

Producers are reminded to apply for 2016 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) benefits by September 1, 2015. The September 1, 2015 deadline includes: Asparagus, Canola, Caneberries, Garlic, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Value-Loss Crops, Aquaculture, Turf Grass, Flowers, and Christmas Trees.

In addition, the deadline to obtain NAP coverage on barley and wheat is September 30, 2015.

Eligible producers can apply for 2016 NAP coverage at their local FSA Office using form CCC-471, Application for Coverage. The service fee for basic NAP coverage is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interest in multiple counties. Producers interested in buy-up coverage must pay a premium, in addition to the service fee. The maximum premium will be \$6,563.

Producer meeting the definition of a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, beginning farmer or rancher or limited resource farmer or rancher will have service fees waived. Producers meeting this definition that choose to purchase buy-up coverage will also have service fees waived and the premium will be capped at \$3,282.

USDA Opens Enrollment Period for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Safety-Net Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that eligible producers may now formally enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2014 and 2015. The enrollment period began June 17, 2015, and will end Sept. 30, 2015.

The new programs, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, trigger financial protections for agricultural producers when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices or revenues. More than 1.76 million farmers have elected ARC or PLC. Previously, 1.7 million producers had enrolled to receive direct payments (the program replaced with ARC and PLC by the 2014 Farm Bill). This means more farms have elected ARC or PLC than previously enrolled under previously administered programs.

Nationwide, 96 percent of soybean farms, 91 percent of corn farms, and 66 percent of wheat farms elected ARC. 99 percent of long grain rice farms, 99 percent of peanut farms, and 94 percent of medium grain rice farms elected PLC. For data about other crops and state-by-state program election results go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Covered commodities under ARC and PLC include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

For more information please contact your local FSA office <https://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Creates More Bird Habitat Opportunities on Irrigated Farmland

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces more bird habitats to be established in irrigated farmland regions through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Declines in upland bird populations, such as the northern bobwhite, pheasant, and prairie chicken, led to the creation of new Conservation Reserve Program features to help restore habitats for these species in these agricultural areas. Since the program's creation in 2004, more than 240,000 acres of marginal cropland has been converted to native grasslands, spurring an increase in upland bird populations.

In recent years, however, applications for this type of habitat creation have slowed. To encourage more participation, USDA's new policy focuses on farmland with center-pivot irrigation systems where there are circular areas of cropland with patches of land beyond the reach of irrigation. Until now, these patches – known as pivot corners – were only eligible for habitat creation when connected by a linear strip of grassland also enrolled in the program. The new policy allows producers interested in habitat creation to use disconnected pivot corners to help increase the population of upland birds.

Other species that can benefit from today's change include the mourning dove, wild turkey, several sparrows, meadowlark and bobolinks.

The Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary program. FSA contracts with agricultural landowners so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed but instead used for conservation. Participants establish long-term plant species that control soil erosion, sequester carbon, improve water quality, and strengthen declining wildlife populations. In return, participants receive annual rental payments between 10 and 15 years.

Interested landowners can enroll pivot corners in the Conservation Reserve Program at any time. Participants and land must meet certain eligibility requirements. Other restrictions may apply. For additional details, contact your local Farm Service Agency office at offices.usda.gov or visit the website at www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

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>.

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.

Multiple Colorado Counties Eligible for Emergency Loans Following Presidential Disaster Declaration

Multiple Colorado Counties was declared a primary or contiguous disaster due to either severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds or flooding that occurred. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans. Listed are the counties that are declared either contiguous or primary county.

Primary Colorado Counties:

Adams, Baca, Boulder, Denver, Elbert, El Paso, Fremont, Logan, Morgan, Park, Pueblo, Saguache, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma.

Contiguous Counties:

Alamosa, Arapahoe, Bent, Broomfield, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Crowley, Custer, Douglas, Gilpin, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Jackson, Jefferson, Kit Carson, Lake, Larimer, Las Animas, Lincoln, Mineral, Morgan, Otero, Phillips, Prowers, Rio Grande, Summit, Teller and Weld.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Important FSA Dates to Remember

- **August 28** - Deadline for 1 Year Extensions on Expiring CRP
- **Sept. 1**- 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Asparagus, Canola, Caneberries, Garlic, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Value-Loss Crops, Aquaculture, Turf Grass, Flowers, and Christmas Trees.
- **Sept. 1 - Nov. 20** - Conservation Sign-Up for Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands (Details to be announced in a separate bulletin)
- **Sept. 30**- 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Barley and Wheat
- **Sept. 30**- Last Day of the Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 MPP-Dairy Program
- **Sept. 30**- 2014 and 2015 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Enrollment Deadline
- **Sept. 30**- Deadline for 2014 Certification of Benchmark and Actual Year Yields for ARC-IC Farms
- **Sept. 30**- Last Day of the Registration/coverage Election Period for 2016 MPP-Dairy Program
- **Nov. 2**- 2015 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Application for Payment Deadline
- **Nov. 9**- County Committee Election Ballots will be Mailed to Eligible Voters
- **Nov. 12**- All Hay Bales Must be Removed from CRP
- **Nov. 16**- 2016 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, 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** - 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Apples, Apricots, Cherries, Grapes, Hops, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums and Prunes
- **Dec. 1**- 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Honey, Alfalfa, Mixed Forage and Grass
- **Dec. 1 - Feb. 26, 2016** - CRP General signup
- **Dec. 7**- Last Day to Return Voted County Committee Election Ballots to FSA at the Local USDA Service Center

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).