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Colorado FSA: March 2016 eNewsletter

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March 15 Deadline to Obtain NAP Coverage on 2016 Crops

FSA reminds Colorado farmers and ranchers that **March 15** is the sales closing deadline for 2016 spring crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

NAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers when natural disasters cause catastrophic loss of production (low yield) or prevented planting of an eligible noninsurable crop by providing coverage equivalent to the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance. In the event of a natural disaster, NAP provides catastrophic level (CAT) coverage based on the amount of loss that exceeds 50 percent of expected production at 55 percent of the average market price for the crop. The 2014 Farm Bill authorized additional coverage levels ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. This additional "buy-up" coverage must be elected by a producer by the application closing date. Producers who elect additional coverage must pay a premium in addition to the service fee. Crops intended for grazing are not eligible for additional coverage.

Marsha Daughenbaugh
Anita Nein
Bill Warren
James Hume

Next Meeting: May 17 &
18

[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

Eligible producers can apply for coverage at their local FSA office using form CCC-471, Application for Coverage. Producers must file the application and pay the applicable service fee on or before the application closing date for the applicable crop. The service fee 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 interests in multiple counties.

Beginning farmers or ranchers, limited resource producers, and underserved farmers, including minorities and women, are eligible for a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification." If you have questions regarding beginning, limited resource, and underserved producer definitions and eligibility, please contact your local FSA office.

NAP is available on commercially-produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available. If the Risk Management Agency (RMA) offers coverage for a specific crop and intended use in the county, then NAP coverage is not available for that crop.

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.

USDA Accepting More Farmland for Wildlife Habitat in Colorado

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.

Colorado has 4 SAFE projects totaling 71,050 acres that are dedicated to these 4 projects. Each project has a different acre allocation, targets different areas of the state and emphasis's of the protection and enhancement of different wildlife. Colorado's projects and approved allocated acres are:

- Colorado Shortgrass Prairie Buffer - 11,475 acres allocated
- Colorado Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse - 8,475 acres allocate
- Colorado Western Slope Grouse Conservation - 14,600 acres allocated
- Lesser Prairie Chicken Habitat - 36,500 acres allocated

Colorado FSA is now accepting applications for all 4 SAFE projects. Please contact your local FSA office to see if you and your land are eligible for one of these projects.

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.

USDA Expands Microloans to Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Producers, Including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans will be especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program, which celebrates its third anniversary this week, has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

This microloan announcement is another USDA resource for America's farmers and ranchers to utilize, especially as [new and beginning farmers and ranchers](#) look for the assistance they need to get started. To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office. To find your nearest office location, please visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

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

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

A targeted underserved 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, targeted underserved 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.

Microloans for Land and Equipment

Watch FSA Administrator Val Dolcini describe how microloans can help you!

<http://fsa.blogs.govdelivery.com/2016/03/04/microloan-message-from-administrator/>

New USDA Commitments to Help Build Up Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a commitment by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prioritize \$5.6 billion over the next two years within USDA programs and services that serve new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Deputy Secretary Harden also announced a new, tailored web tool designed to connect burgeoning farm entrepreneurs with

programs and resources available to help them get started.

The new web tool is available at www.usda.gov/newfarmers. The site was designed based on feedback from new and beginning farmers and ranchers around the country, who cited unfamiliarity with programs and resources as a challenge to starting and expanding their operations. The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to grow their business, to filing taxes as a new small business owner. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the site's Discovery Tool to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs.

Using the new web tool and other outreach activities, and operating within its existing resources, USDA has set a new goal of increasing beginning farmer and rancher participation by an additional 6.6 percent across key USDA programs, which were established or strengthened by the 2014 Farm Bill, for a total investment value of approximately \$5.6 billion. Programs were targeted for expanded outreach and commitment based on their impact on expanding opportunity for new and beginning farmers and ranchers, including starting or expanding an operation, developing new markets, supporting more effective farming and conservation practices, and having access to relevant training and education opportunities. USDA will provide quarterly updates on its progress towards meeting its goal. A full explanation of the investment targets, benchmarks and outcomes is available at: [BFR-Commitment-Factsheet](#).

As the average age of the American farmer now exceeds 58 years, and data shows that almost 10 percent of farmland in the continental United States will change hands in the next five years, we have no time to lose in getting more new farmers and ranchers established. Equally important is encouraging young people to pursue careers in industries that support American agriculture. According to [an employment outlook report](#) released by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Purdue University, one of the best fields for new college graduates is agriculture. Nearly 60,000 high-skilled agriculture job openings are expected annually in the United States for the next five years, yet only 35,000 graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher in agriculture related fields are expected to be available to fill them. The report also shows that women make up more than half of the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and environment higher education graduates in the United States. USDA recently released a [series of fact sheets](#) showcasing the impact of women in agriculture nationwide.

Today's announcement builds on USDA's ongoing work to engage its resources to inspire a strong next generation of farmers and ranchers by improving access to land and capital; building market opportunities; extending conservation opportunities; offering appropriate risk management tools; and increasing outreach and technical support. To learn more about USDA's efforts, visit the [Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Results Page](#).

Filing a Notice of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

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.

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address or zip code or an incorrect

name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon.

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Online Hay and Grazing Acres Locator Tool

FSA's **Hay Net** website www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet is the "go to" online resource for agricultural producers to list information concerning the need for hay and grazing acres or the availability of hay and grazing acres.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, producers are in need of hay and/or grazing acres to support livestock, please use **Hay Net** to post an advertisement seeking these resources. Likewise, landowners who have hay and/or grazing acres available for livestock producers should post a Hay Net advertisement as well.

A few things to remember when using the **Hay Net** website:

- There is a one-time registration process that should be completed by all users who want to post an ad online.
- Users who just want to browse ads DO NOT NEED to have an eAuthentication user id.
- Hay and grazing acre ads will be automatically removed after a period of 13 months.
- Please help your fellow farmer and rancher by keeping ads current and up to date and remove ads you no longer need or want advertised on **Hay Net**. Please, no corporate advertisements on this site.

Hay Net is brought to you by FSA as a public service. The sole purpose of this online resource is to provide a site for the exchange of information. FSA does not endorse, guarantee, or otherwise make representations of any kind regarding any user of this site and FSA is not responsible for defining the terms of grazing agreements or lease contracts.

For more information about **Hay Net** and other FSA services and programs, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: offices.usda.gov.

FSA Issues Fiscal Year 2015 Impacts Report

2015 marks the 20th anniversary of USDA's Farm Service Agency, but FSA's roots date back nearly 80 years, to the days of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, when the rural economy was in crisis and America's farmers and ranchers needed

assistance. At that time, Congress empowered USDA to provide a strong safety-net for farm families, helping them navigate the unpredictability of natural disasters and volatile market conditions.

Today, technological advancements in equipment, crop and veterinary sciences, soil and water conservation, and pest and nutrient management, all have resulted in agriculture becoming stronger than we've ever known - - certainly far stronger than the days of our grandparents and great-grandparents. But the unpredictability of weather and markets remain. That means the FSA mission is as important as it's ever been to ensure the domestic agriculture sector continues to deliver an abundant, safe, and affordable food and fiber supply for the American people.

The [FSA Impacts Report](#) shows selected highlights for fiscal year 2015. This report highlights the achievements of FSA and will ensure that the path forward continues to demonstrate our commitment to rural America.

What Are Playas

We grew up on the High Plains thinking of those occasionally muddy pasture depressions as “buffalo wallows” or “mud holes.” Turns out, scientists are learning those playas play a significant role in recharging the Ogallala aquifer. They are the most numerous wetland in the region, more than 75,000 of them, and they're an important source of water — both for people and wildlife. Learn more in this short radio spot by Playa Lakes Joint Venture. Audio: http://pljv.org/radio_episodes/what-are-playas/

***These spotlights are brought to you through USDA's partnership with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture— The mission of Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) is to conserve the playas, prairies and landscapes of the western Great Plains — including portions of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. <http://pljv.org/>

Important FSA Dates to Remember and 2016 Loan and Interest Rates

Upcoming FSA Program Deadlines:

- **March 15:** 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Spring Crops

March 2016 Loan and Interest Rates

Commodity Loans - 1.500%
Operating Loans - 2.625%
Farm Ownership Loans - 3.750%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment Loans - 1.50%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss - 3.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7-Year - 1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10-Year - 1.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12-Year - 2.000%

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