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Colorado FSA: April 2016 eNewsletter

Colorado State FSA Office
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State Executive Director:
Leland Swenson

State Committee:
Armando Valdez, Chairman
Members:
Marsha Daughenbaugh
Anita Nein
Bill Warren
James Hume

Next Meeting: May 16 & 17

[Online directory of FSA Offices](#)

USDA Financial Assistance Available to Help Organic Farmers Create Conservation Buffers

USDA is assisting organic farmers with the cost of establishing up to 20,000 acres of new conservation buffers and other practices on and near farms that produce organic crops.

The financial assistance is available from the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) 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.

For conservation buffers, funds are available for establishing shrubs and trees, or supporting pollinating species, and can be planted in blocks or strips. Interested organic producers can offer eligible land for enrollment in this initiative at any time.

Other USDA FSA programs that assist organic farmers include:

- The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program that provides financial assistance for 55 to 100 percent of the average market price for organic crop losses between 50 to 65 percent of expected production due to a natural disaster.
- Marketing assistance loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell crops during harvest when market prices are low, and deficiency payments to producers who forgo the loan in return for a payment on the

eligible commodity.

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

- A variety of loans for operating expenses, ownership or guarantees with outside lenders, including streamlined microloans that have a lower amount of paperwork.
- Farm Storage Facility Loans for that provide low-interest financing to build or upgrade storage facilities for organic commodities, including cold storage, grain bins, bulk tanks and drying and handling equipment.
- Services such as mapping farm and field boundaries and reporting organic acreage that can be provided to a farm's organic certifier or crop insurance agent.

Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic to learn more about how FSA can help organic farmers. For an interactive tour of CRP success stories, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30 or follow #CRPis30 on Twitter. To learn more about FSA programs visit a local FSA office or www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Reporting Organic Crops

Producers who want to use the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) organic price and selected the "organic" option on their NAP application must report their crops as organic.

When certifying organic acres, the buffer zone acreage must be included in the organic acreage.

Producers must also provide a current organic plan, organic certificate or documentation from a certifying agent indicating an organic plan is in effect. Documentation must include:

- name of certified individuals
- address
- telephone number
- effective date of certification
- certificate number
- list of commodities certified
- name and address of certifying agent
- a map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, including the buffer zone acreage

Certification exemptions are available for producers whose annual gross agricultural income from organic sales totals \$5,000 or less. Although exempt growers are not required to provide a written certificate, they are still required to provide a map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, transitional and buffer zone acreage.

For questions about reporting organic crops, contact your local FSA office. To find your local office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) to get a list of the final planting dates for your county.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible

disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

2016 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the their [local FSA office](#) to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Name County:

January 15:	Apples, Grapes, Peaches
June 15, 2016:	Onions and Shallots
July 15, 2016:	All other Crops and CRP
November 15:	Apiculture, PRF/Perennial Forage, Fall Seeded Small Grains

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Name County FSA office at Phone.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2016
- An application for payment by November 1, 2016

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets.

Report Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2016, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2016, and before December 31, 2016. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year for which benefits are requested:

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2016 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or by January 30, 2017
- An application for payment by January 30, 2017.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and some loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will no longer require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

Ag News from USDA Rural Development - July 1st Deadline to Apply for Value-Added Producer Grant

Do you have a commodity that you raise or grow that you are turning into a value added product and need to expand your market or customer base and do not have the resources to do so? Or do you have a value added product, that you could use assistance in the processing activities? If so, IJSDA Rural Development's Value Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) may fit your needs.

What is the VAPG Program? The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the goals of this program. You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain. Grants are awarded through a national competition. Each fiscal year, applications are requested through a notice published in the Federal Register and through an announcement posted on Grants.gov.

Who can apply? Independent Agricultural Producers, Agricultural Producer Groups, Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

What grant funds available? There are grant funds available in the form of a planning grant or working capital grant. Grant amounts requested can be up to 50% of the total eligible project costs. The maximum amounts for the planning grants are \$75,000 and working capital grant are \$250,000 as published in the Federal Register on April 8, 2016.

Are matching funds required? Yes, the applicant must evidence their ability to provide 50% of the total project costs at the time of the application. Applicant's Match can consist of 25% cash match and 25% in-kind match.

What can the funds be used for? Planning grant funds can be used for planning activities such as conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans for processing and marketing the proposed value-added product. Working capital grant funds can be used for such things as processing costs associated with the value added process, marketing and advertising expenses, and salary expenses for employees (however, grant or matching funds cannot be used to pay owner's or owner's family member's salaries). One of our recent successful recipients was Sweetgrass cooperative in the San Luis Valley. They received a \$226,000 working capital grant to expand their market of natural meat products for their members. This cooperative was organized to help producers in the San Luis Valley enter into a new emerging markets for their natural and organic grass-

fed beef.

When and where do you apply? Application deadlines are announced annually in the Federal Register. The application deadlines for this program are Electronic submissions through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) are due June 24, 2016 and paper applications must be received by 4:30 PM local time on July 1, 2016. Applications may be mailed or hand delivered to USDA Rural Development Attn: VAPG Coordinator, Denver Federal Center, Building 56, Room 2300, PO Box 25426 Denver, CO 80225-0426 or submitted via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Potential applicants are highly encouraged to start the application process early by contacting Donald Nunn at 720-544- 2907 or donald.nunn@co.usda.gov

Who to contact about program questions and or to receive an application? You may contact Donald Nunn at 720-554-2907 or donald.nunn@co.usda.gov

Important FSA Dates to Remember

- **May 31:** Final Availability Date for Loans and LDPs for Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower Seed
- **June 15** 2016 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification Deadline for Onions and Shallot
- **July 15:** 2016 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification Deadline **for** CRP and all other crops not required to be reported by previously announced deadlines. Please contact your [County Office](#) if you have questions on a specific crop.
- **July 15:** Final 2015 NAP Final Production Reports are due for certain NAP crops
- **July 15:** The nomination period begins for County Committee Elections across Montana.
- **July 16:** CRP 2016 Summer/Fall Managed Harvesting and Routine Grazing Begins (with prior County Committee Approval of Request)
- **Aug. 1:** Deadline for 2016 ARC and PLC Enrollment
- **Aug. 1:** Deadline to request farm transfers for FY' 2016
- **Aug. 1:** Last day to file nomination forms at the local USDA Service center
- **Nov. 15** Deadline to report Apiculture, PRF/Perennial Forage, Fall-Seeded Small Grain Acreage

For more information about FSA programs, contact your [local FSA office](#).

Ongoing Notice of Loss Requirements:

- **NAP:** Submit Notice of Loss within 15 calendar days of the earlier of a natural disaster occurrence, the final planting date if planting is prevented by a natural disaster, the date that damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent; or the normal harvest date.
- **ELAP:** Submit Notice of Loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or Nov. 1st after the end of the program year in which the loss occurred.
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):** Submit Notice of Loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).