

November 2014



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## Indiana Farm Service Agency Program Updates

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### Indiana State Farm Service Agency

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Harry Pearson, Member  
Wayne Vance, Member  
Kristin Whittington, Member

**Administrative Officer:**  
Nancy Best

**Production Adjustment Chief:**  
Carl Schweikhardt

**Price Support/Disaster Chief:**  
Steve Brown

**Conservation/Compliance Chief:**  
Susan Hovermale

**Farm Loan Chief:**  
Greg Foulke

**Communications Coordinator:**  
Donna Ferguson

### From the FSA Farm Fields

*To be successful, the first thing to do is to fall in love with your work.*

This is so true.

As farmers, we have passion for the land and all that it represents. From generation to generation, the land is a constant. It is the reliable foundation for the greatest industry ever – Agriculture.

As the Thanksgiving holiday is upon us, so is the time to say thank YOU to the American farmer. This fall has been a busy one for many of you – and many may still be laboring in farm fields across the Hoosier state. To all of you, I salute the work you do in providing food for 155 people in addition to yourself.

You do it every day with careful stewardship of the soil, air and water quality. You do it every day with the production of alternative energy sources such as ethanol and biodiesel. You do it every day producing over 260% more food with 2% fewer inputs (labor, seed, feed, fertilizer, etc.). You do it every day receiving only 16 cents out of every dollar spent on food at home and away from home. And, you do it every day affording Americans the opportunity to enjoy a food supply that is abundant, overall affordable and among the world's safest.

Over 2.2 million farms dot America's rural landscape. You are one of those important dots in our economy. Thanks for all you do – everyday, and for falling in love with your work.

Happy Thanksgiving.

In Indiana Agriculture,

Julia A. Wickard

## Coverage Selection for New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs

Farm owners and producers are reminded that the opportunity to choose between the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), began Nov. 17, 2014, and continues through March 31, 2015. The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

USDA helped create online tools to assist in the decision process, allowing farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources, available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc), from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Covered commodities 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 rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

Now through Feb. 27, 2015: Farm owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.

Nov. 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.

Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015: Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.

October 2015: Payments issued for 2014 crop year, if needed.

To learn more about which safety net options are most appropriate for specific farming operations, farmers can use new Web tools at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc), which can be accessed from the convenience of a home computer or a mobile device at any time. To learn more about upcoming educational meetings, farmers can contact their local Farm Service Agency county office at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

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## Purdue and FSA Team up for Farm Bill Workshops

Purdue Extension and the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture have partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) of Indiana to host a series of seven free informational meetings on the 2014 Farm Bill.

To register for the meetings, visit the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture's web site at [www.agecon.purdue.edu/commercialag](http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/commercialag) or just type Center for Commercial Ag into your favorite search engine.

Discussion will focus on Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs authorized by the Farm Bill. Crop producers must select one of the new programs, which will replace the direct program payments of previous years.

During the workshops farmers, lenders, and landowners will learn how the new program works and also have a chance to work through some examples so they will better understand how to make program decisions that are best for their individual circumstances. Experts will also explain the process for base reallocation, updating program yields, and program election.

Each session will run from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Refreshments will be provided.

The schedule:

Dec. 8: [Hamilton County Fairgrounds and Exposition Center](#); 2003 Pleasant St., Noblesville.

Dec. 9: [Huntingburg Event Center](#); 200 E. 14th St., Huntingburg.

Dec. 10: [Indiana Grand Racing and Casino Trackside](#); 4300 N. Michigan Road, Shelbyville.

Jan. 6, 2015: [Honeywell Center](#); 275 W. Market St., Wabash.  
Jan. 8, 2015: [Knights of Columbus](#); 624 Delaware Road, Batesville.  
Jan. 9, 2015: [Beck Agricultural Center](#); 4540 U.S. 52 W, West Lafayette  
Jan. 15, 2015: [Allen County War Memorial Coliseum](#) (Ft. Wayne Farm Show); 4000 Parnell Ave., Fort Wayne.

Prior to the start of each Farm Bill Producer Meeting, Indiana Farm Bureau will sponsor a State Ag Policy Lunch program; beginning at 11:30 a.m. Registration information for the lunch is also available at the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture's web site.

Co-sponsors of the Farm Bill Producer Meetings also include Indiana Farm Bureau, Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Corn Marketing Council and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture.

*Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings should contact Nancy Best at 317-295-5902 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, 3 days prior to each meeting.*

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## **USDA Extends Dairy Margin Protection Program Deadlines**

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

USDA extended 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](http://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.

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>.

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## **USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections - Vote by Dec. 1, 2014**

USDA encourages farmers to make their voices heard by voting in the upcoming Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections. USDA mailed ballots on Nov. 3 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 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 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](http://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.

## USDA Approves 9,600 More Acres in Indiana for Wildlife Habitat

The Indiana Farm Service Agency (FSA) now has 9,600 acres available for wildlife habitat improvement incentives. This is in addition to the nearly 14,000 acres currently committed to wildlife habitat practices.

FSA is accepting applications to enroll more acres in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program, part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) whereby FSA enters into contracts with participants so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed, but instead used for conservation. Targeted wildlife species in Indiana is Indiana Bat, Northern Bobwhite Quail, Sedge Wren Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow Sparrow, Ringneck Pheasant, and the American Woodcock.

Program participants establish long-term plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality, or strengthen declining wildlife populations. In return, participants receive annual rental payments between 10 and 15 years.

The SAFE program allows state fish and wildlife agencies, non-profit organizations and other conservation partners to target the Conservation Reserve Program within distinct geographic areas to help wildlife. SAFE is limited to 1.35 million acres nationally, with 97 projects in 36 states and Puerto Rico.

Interested landowners can enroll acres in a designated wildlife project in their state 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](mailto:offices.usda.gov) or visit the website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

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## Microloan Program - Cap Grows to \$50,000

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 raised the borrowing limit for the microloan program from \$35,000 to \$50,000, on 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). The microloan change allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to small and midsized farming operations.

To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers' access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans.

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.

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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).