

October 2014



Indiana Farm Service Agency Program Updates

Indiana State Farm Service Agency

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From the FSA Farm Fields

"When the frost is on the punkin' and the fodder's in the shock ..."

Oh yes, that famous poem by Indiana's own Hancock County poet James Whitcomb Riley rings true this harvest season.

As October comes to an end, so are many of you nearing the end of combining corn and soybeans on your farms. While this fall has proven to be a difficult year of getting the crop out of the field, it also has demonstrated excellent yields for Hoosier farmers. Congratulations on a great bounty and for the work you do every day to feed, clothe and fuel the world. Thank you for your stewardship of the land and for preparing it for the next growing season.

Indiana FSA has been in high gear this fall with learning the new programs of the 2014 Farm Bill. Our goal is to have a well-educated and trained workforce who can answer your questions when you come to your county offices. During the week of November 17th, we will be conducting statewide training for all Indiana FSA employees. We look forward to sharing our information with each of you in our county offices across the Hoosier state.

Also this fall and winter, Indiana FSA is partnering with Purdue Extension and agricultural commodity groups to deliver several producer meetings in your area of the state. We begin with a series of dairy meetings in November, and then will transition to the ARC/PLC meetings in December and January, respectively. The dairy meeting dates and locations are included in this newsletter. Watch for the other meeting dates and locations in future publications.

As always, feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance to your operation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Wishing you a beautiful fall.

In Indiana Agriculture,

Julia A. Wickard

Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers – Meetings Set; Deadline Extended

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy) for dairy producers. The new, voluntary risk management program replaces the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which expired on Sept. 1, 2014.

MPP-Dairy offers protection to dairy producers when the difference (the margin) between the all-milk price and national average feed cost falls below a certain producer selected amount.

The deadline has been extended and farmers now have until Dec. 5, 2014 to enroll in this voluntary program.

Eligible producers may purchase coverage for their dairy operation by paying an annual administrative fee of \$100 and a premium, as applicable, for higher levels of coverage. Producers in the dairy operation will have to select a desired coverage level ranging from \$4.00 to \$8.00, in \$0.50 increments and a desired coverage percentage level ranging from 25 to 90 percent, in 5 percent increments. Producers will also have to decide whether or not to participate in the MPP-Dairy Program or the Livestock Gross Margin program administered by the Risk Management Agency (RMA), but they will not be allowed to participate in both.

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.

Purdue Extension will conduct a series of MPP training sessions beginning Nov. 3. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency and Indiana Dairy Producers will contribute to the MPP training sessions, which will help producers understand the details of the program and how to enroll, and demonstrate the tools available to help dairy producers make decisions about participation, percentage of production to protect and margin levels.

Training schedule:

- Nov. 3: 9:30 a.m. to noon, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds Ag Hall, 17746-D County Road 34, Goshen.
- Nov. 3 6-8:30 p.m., Hancock County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall, 620 Apple St. Greenfield.
- Nov. 4: 9:30 a.m. to noon, Jackson County Learning Center, 323 Dupont Circle, Seymour.
- Nov. 4: 6-8:30 p.m., 4-H Community Building, 547 S. Briant St., Huntington.
- Nov. 18: 1-3:30 p.m., Dubois County 4-H Fairgrounds, 4157 S. State Route 162, Huntingburg.
- Nov. 19: 9-11:30 a.m., Beck Agricultural Center, 4540 U.S. 52 W, West Lafayette.

Registration will be during the first half hour of each event.

USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Key Dates for New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs

USDA announced key dates for farm owners and producers regarding the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). 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.

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

- Sept. 29, 2014 to Feb. 27, 2015: Land 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 of either ARC or 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 for 2014 crop year, if needed.

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. The new tools are now available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources 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.

A series of producer Farm Bill meetings on this program are scheduled for Dec. 2014 and Jan. 2015 - watch for more details soon!

Producers can contact their local FSA office for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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.

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 Natural Resources Conservation Service (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 administered by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs implemented by NRCS.

Many FSA and 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 <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

USDA Farm Service Agency Reminds Producers Farm Bill Allows Early Termination for Certain CRP Contracts

The Farm Service Agency reminds producers with acres under contract through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that they can apply for early contract termination, as required by the 2014 Farm Bill. The deadline to request early CRP contract termination is Jan. 30, 2015.

This is a unique opportunity to request early termination afforded by the 2014 Farm Bill. The earliest effective date for this early termination was October 1, 2014. The requesting CRP contract must have been in effect for at least five years and additional eligibility conditions must be met to qualify. The 2014 Farm Bill identifies a list of 10 exceptions whereby land will not be eligible for the early termination provisions. For a complete list of these exceptions, please view the program fact sheet online at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp_opt_out_fact_sht.pdf

Once a CRP contract termination request is approved by the FSA County Committee, the decision may not be reversed and the terminated contract will not be reinstated. Once the land is no longer considered under the CRP contract all participants must meet HEL/WC and other conservation compliance provisions for all associated lands.

For more information or to verify eligibility for early termination (opt-out) for existing CRP contracts, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

NAP Coverage Available for 2015 Crops

The deadline for Application for Coverage for the 2015 crop year for perennial fruit crops is November 20, 2014.

NAP producers are required to annually report production from all planted crops covered by NAP. Also, the producers requesting assistance under NAP are encouraged to file their application for payment as early as possible but no later than the deadline for the crop. All production of the crop is required to be accounted for.

Livestock Disaster Assistance Sign-up Underway - ELAP Enrollment Closes Nov. 3

Livestock disaster program enrollment opened on April 15, 2014. These disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

Eligible producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation by January 30, 2015.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered 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. Producers who suffered livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

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

The enrollment deadline for the 2014 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) is Nov. 3, 2014. The deadline for 2012 and 2013 ELAP has already passed.

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by LFP and LIP. For 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by Nov. 3, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

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.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. 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 \$35,000 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.

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.

Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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> .

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).