



NEWSLETTER



September 2015

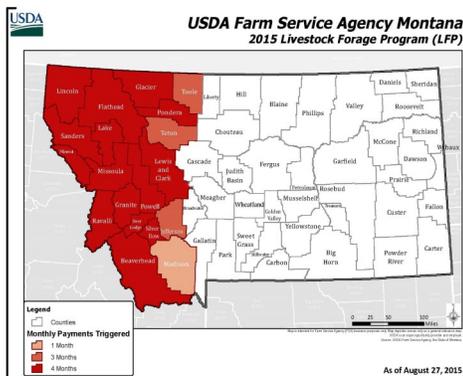
USDA Farm Service Agency - Montana Updates

We are pleased to bring you a special statewide newsletter from USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) to notify you of important programs and deadlines. Call and/or visit your local FSA office for more information about FSA's farm programs and farm loans.

2014 and 2015 ARC-PLC Enrollment: Enrollment into the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2014 and 2015 began June 17, 2015, and will end Sept. 30, 2015. For ARC-CO and PLC, the contract enrollment must be completed by those producers with an interest in the base acres of the farm. For ARC-IC farms, the contract enrollment must be completed by producers who have an interest in the planted acres of the covered commodities on the farm. Contract enrollment is a separate process from program election which was completed earlier this year. Contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll your farms into ARC or PLC by the deadline of **Sept. 30, 2015**.

2016 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs as the result of natural disasters. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include buy-up coverage levels, similar to buy-up provisions offered by crop insurance. Producers may elect additional coverage levels ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. 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. Beginning, limited resource and underserved producers are eligible for a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction. *2016 NAP Coverage Continued on Pg. 2*

2015 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP): LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses due to a qualifying drought or fire on federally managed land. Eligible livestock producers must own or lease grazing land or pastureland physically located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. The following counties met the drought criteria; as of Aug. 27th qualifying producers with land in these counties are eligible for four monthly payments: **Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Flathead, Glacier, Granite, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Pondera, Powell, Ravalli, Sanders and Silver Bow**. Qualifying livestock producers in **Jefferson, Teton and Toole** are eligible for three monthly payments and producers in **Madison** County are eligible for one monthly payment. Producers must complete an application and provide supporting documentation for 2015 losses by **Feb. 1, 2016**. Please contact the local FSA office ASAP to schedule an appointment to begin the application process.



Map of Montana 2015 LFP counties as of Aug. 27.

USDA Montana Farm Service Agency (FSA)

P.O. Box 670
Bozeman, MT
59771

Phone:
406.587.6872

Fax:
855.546.0264

Web:
www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

State Executive Director:
Bruce Nelson

State Committee:
Steve Carney, Chair
Floyd Dahlman
Kelly Flaherty-Settle
Anita Matt
Patricia Quisno

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup: USDA has announced that FSA will conduct a CRP General Signup from Dec 1, 2015 to Feb. 26, 2016. Producers can submit general signup offers to FSA during that time period. Continuous CRP applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. For questions about CRP and any FSA program contact your local FSA office and visit Montana FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

2016 NAP Coverage *Continued* Applying for Coverage

Eligible producers must apply for coverage on eligible non-insurable crops using form CCC-471, "NAP Application for Coverage," and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. The application and service fee must be filed by the application closing date. Application closing dates vary by crop and are established by the FSA State Committee. Producers who apply for NAP coverage acknowledge that they have received the NAP Basic Provisions, available at local FSA offices and at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap>.

2016 Crop Year Sales Closing Dates

Sept. 1, 2015: 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Value-Loss Crops

Sept. 30, 2015: 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Annual Fall-Seeded Crops, Perennial Forage and Grazing, Mixed Forage Crops, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Garlic

Dec. 1, 2015: 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Honey Producers

March 15, 2016: 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for All Other Crops

Service Fees and Premiums

For all coverage levels, eligible NAP producers must pay a service fee of 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. Producers who elect additional coverage must also pay a premium equal to:

Producer's Share
× the number of eligible acres of the NAP crop
× producer's NAP approved yield
× coverage level (50%, 55%, 60%, or 65%)
× 100% of the applicable NAP price
× 5.25% percent factor

For value loss crops, premiums will be calculated using the maximum dollar value selected by the producer on form CCC 471, "NAP Application for Coverage." The maximum premium for a producer is \$6,563 (the maximum payment limitation times a 5.25 percent premium fee).

Beginning, limited resource, and underserved producers 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. For more information and to obtain NAP coverage, contact your local FSA office and or visit: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap>.

Coverage Levels

Basic CAT Coverage: 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.

Additional Buy-Up Coverage: 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. Additional 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.

Eligible Causes of Loss

Eligible causes of loss include the following natural disasters:

- Damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture or wind;
- Adverse natural occurrences, such as earthquake or flood; and
- Conditions related to damaging weather or adverse natural occurrences, such as excessive heat, plant disease, volcanic smog (VOG) or insect infestation.

The natural disaster must occur during the coverage period, before or during harvest, and must directly affect the eligible non-insurable crop.

Organic Option for NAP

Beginning in crop year 2016, Montana producers may elect an Organic Option for some crops that qualify as "organic" according to the National Organic Program regulations and for which FSA has established a separate organic average market price. NAP coverage based on organic average market prices is available under both basic 50/55 coverage and buy-up coverage for eligible crops. For more information regarding the organic option and a list of crops, please contact your local FSA office.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Operations and NAP

With the passing of the 2014 Farm Bill, certain Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations are now eligible to obtain NAP coverage. Subscription Community Supported Agriculture Operations are eligible to obtain NAP coverage. These operations are farmer-driven operations where the farmer owns or leases the farm, organizes the CSA, produces the farm products, and recruits the customer members or subscribers. For more info, contact your local FSA office.

Important FSA Program Dates and Deadlines

June 15 to Sept. 30: 2014 & 2015 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Enrollment
July 1 to Sept. 30: Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 Margin Protection Program – Dairy (MPP-Dairy)
Sept. 1 to Nov. 20: Application Period for CRP’s Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands Initiative
Dec 1 to Feb. 26, 2016: CRP General Signup Period

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: 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Annual Fall-Seeded Crops, Perennial Forage and Grazing, Mixed Forage Crops, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Garlic.
Sept. 30: Last day of the Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 MPP-Dairy Program
Nov. 2: 2015 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees & 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 (Hard Red Winter – HRW), 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: Application Deadline for CRP’s Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands Incentives
Dec. 1: 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Honey Producers
Dec. 1: General CRP Signup Begins
Dec. 7: Last Day to Return Voted County Committee Election Ballots to FSA at the local USDA Service Center

Ongoing Notice of Loss Requirements:

NAP: Submit Notice of Loss with FSA 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.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP): Final Date to Submit an Application and Supporting Documentation is the later of 90 calendar days of the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.

Montana FSA Service Centers

Our primary mission at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency is to assist Montana farmers and ranchers secure the greatest possible benefit from programs administered by FSA such as farm loans, commodity price support, disaster relief and conservation. The hard-working men and women of Montana FSA’s local offices are at the forefront of our efforts and remain the primary contact for program participation. We encourage you to speak with the staff at your local FSA office on how we can be of service. Our user friendly web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt can help you learn more about FSA programs and services and help you locate your local FSA Service Center.

Be sure to VOTE in your County Committee Election

Farm Service Agency’s 2015 County Committee Elections will begin across Montana in early November with election ballots being mailed to eligible voters. Ballots are due back to the local FSA office either via mail or in person by Dec. 7, 2015. Newly elected committee members and alternates will take office on Jan. 1, 2016.

FSA Payments in Montana - FY 2014

In fiscal year 2014 (Oct. 1, 2013 to Sept. 30, 2014), Montana FSA administered \$316.5 million in federal program payments and loans to Montana farmers and ranchers. That figure includes \$126.6 million in commodity loan and program payments, \$71.4 million conservation payments, \$30.7 million in disaster assistance and \$87.9 million in farm loans. So far in fiscal year 2015, FSA in Montana has funded 162 loans to beginning producers for more than \$14.2 million. Visit us online for the FY’14 report summary.

Montana FSA online: www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

Signup for Montana FSA eNews: USDA Farm Service Agency has been using an electronic news service for FSA customers and stakeholders since 2012. If you're not already subscribed to Montana FSA eNews, you can get connected by either providing your email address to your local FSA office or you may subscribe on your own by logging onto: www.fsa.usda.gov/ subscribe and checking the following recommended Montana FSA eNews subscriptions: *Updates by State and County (Select Montana State Office Newsletter and Updates & Your Specific County Office Newsletter and Updates) & *News and Events (Select MT - Press Releases). If your email address has changed, be sure to update your email with FSA. If you need subscription assistance, please contact your local FSA office.

Was this Newsletter Mailed to the Wrong Address?: If your mailing address has changed please notify your local administrative FSA office to update your mailing records with FSA. If you're not the intended recipient of this newsletter and you're unsure who to contact you may mail the address portion of the newsletter to FSA State Office, P.O. Box 670, Bozeman, MT 59771 or email the address portion to jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov with a note that the intended recipient is no longer at that address. To locate a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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 the agency's Civil Rights Coordinator Jennifer Cole at (406) 587-6786 or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement/Complaint Process: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at: program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech difficulties and you wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means for communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.