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Montana FSA: September 2014 eNewsletter

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Livestock Producers Urged to Enroll in Disaster Assistance Program by Oct. 1

Livestock producers who have suffered eligible disaster-related losses are encouraged to act to secure assistance by Sept. 30, 2014, as congressionally mandated payment reductions will take place for producers who have not acted before that date. Livestock producers that have experienced grazing losses since October 2011 and who may be eligible for benefits but have not yet contacted their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office, should do so as soon as possible.

The Budget Control Act passed by Congress in 2011 requires USDA to implement reductions of 7.3 percent to the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) in the new fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, 2014. However, producers seeking LFP support who have scheduled appointments with their local FSA office before Oct. 1, even if the appointment occurs after Oct. 1, will not see reductions in the amount of disaster relief they receive.

USDA is encouraging producers to register, request an appointment, or begin a LFP application with their county FSA office before Oct. 1, 2014, to lock in the current zero percent sequestration rate. As an additional aid to qualified producers applying for LFP, the Farm Service Agency has

[Online Directory of FSA Offices](#)

[PDF of Montana FSA Directory](#)

[PDF of Montana USDA Directory](#)

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 Montana FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Jennifer Cole at (406) 587-6786 or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov.

developed an online registration tool that enables farmers and ranchers to put their names on an electronic list before the deadline to avoid reductions in their disaster assistance. This is an alternative to visiting or contacting the county office. To place a name on the LFP list online, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster-register>.

Producers who already contacted the county office and have an appointment scheduled are not required to do anything further.

The Livestock Indemnity Program, the Tree Assistance Program and the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program Frost Freeze payments will also be cut by 7.3 percent on Oct. 1, 2014. Unlike LFP, applications for these programs must be fully completed by Sept. 30. FSA offices will prioritize these applications, but as the full application process can take several days or more to complete, producers are encouraged to begin the application process as soon as possible.

The Livestock Forage Disaster Program compensates eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses due to a qualifying drought or fire between Oct. 1, 2011 and Dec. 31, 2014. Eligible livestock includes alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland during the applicable year. Producers forced to liquidate their livestock may also be eligible for program benefits.

Additionally, the 2014 Farm Bill eliminated the risk management purchase requirement. Livestock producers are no longer required to purchase coverage under the federal crop insurance program or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program to be eligible for LFP assistance.

To learn more about USDA disaster relief program, producers can review the 2014 Farm Bill fact sheet at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill, the LFP program fact sheet, <http://go.usa.gov/5JTk>, or contact their [local FSA office](#).

Livestock Disaster Assistance

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 an eligible adverse weather event, or 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. 1, 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 November 1, 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.

NAP Disaster Assistance for 2012 Frost or Freeze Fruit Crop Losses Announced

Producers who experienced losses to bush or tree fruit crops due to frost or freeze during the 2012 crop year may be eligible for assistance through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The program, authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides supplemental NAP payments to eligible producers. Producers who did not have access to crop insurance and are in primary and adjacent counties that received a Secretarial disaster designation because of frost or freeze in 2012 are eligible for NAP assistance. Losses due to weather damage or other adverse natural occurrences may also qualify for program assistance.

NAP enrollment began July 22, 2014. Applications must be submitted to FSA county offices by **Sept. 22, 2014**.

To expedite applications, producers who experienced losses are encouraged to collect records documenting these losses in preparation for sign-up. Producers also are encouraged to contact their FSA county office to schedule an appointment. Limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and beginning producers are eligible for premium reductions and also may be eligible for fee reductions.

Interested producers can view the 2012 NAP Coverage for Frost, Freeze or Weather Related Fruit Losses Fact Sheet at <http://go.usa.gov/5kSQ>, or visit a local FSA office. To find out if land is located in an eligible frost/freeze county, visit <http://go.usa.gov/53rz>.

NAP Sales Closing Date of Sept. 30, 2014 for Fall Seeded Annual Crops and Perennial Forage and Grazing Crops

Beginning with the 2015 Crop Year, the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) has a new sales closing date of **Sept. 30, 2014** for fall seeded annual crops and perennial forage and grazing crops. NAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers affected by a natural disaster. The program covers crops for which Federal crop insurance is not available. Previously, the sales closing deadline for all NAP crops except value loss and honey, was March 15 of each year. However, procedure required that the NAP sales closing dates coincide with Risk Management Agency (RMA) sales closing dates for the specific crops. The Montana FSA State Committee changed the annual sales closing date for fall seeded annual crops and perennial forage and perennial grazing crops from March 15 to Sept. 30 of each year. The deadline for 2015 spring planted crops is March 15, 2015.

NAP covers losses greater than 50 percent of your expected production, based upon your approved yield and reported acreage. To apply for 2015 crop coverage, producers must complete an FSA CCC-471 application for coverage form and pay the applicable NAP service fee by the sales closing date for the specific crop. The service fee is \$250 per crop per administrative county, up to \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed \$1875 per producer in all counties. The administrative service fee for NAP coverage will be waived for producers who meet the definitions for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers and ranchers.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to purchase NAP policies for all fall seeded annual crops and perennial forage and grazing crops by the 2015 sales closing date of Sept. 30, 2014.

Filing for NAP Losses

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) and crop insurance, 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.

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.

USDA and Montana State University Extension announce 2014

Farm Bill meetings in 28 Montana communities

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Bruce Nelson and USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) Regional Director Eric Bashore and Montana State University (MSU) Extension Director Jeff Bader announced the schedule of 28 informational agricultural producer meetings in communities across Montana.

USDA and MSU Extension are conducting the meetings in October and November 2014 to inform Montana producers about important new programs authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill). These meetings will focus on the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) that will be administered by FSA and the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) administered by RMA through federal crop insurance providers. MSU Extension will explain the new online Farm Bill Decision Tool that will be available this fall to assist producers in understanding their options for their operations.

A printable Montana schedule, with local contact information, is available at:
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/2014mtusdamsufarmbillmtgs.pdf.

For more information, visit MSU Extension's Farm Bill website at <http://www.montana.edu/farmbill>, FSA's national Farm Bill website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill>, Montana FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt and RMA's national Farm Bill website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/currentissues/farmbill/>.

CRP Continuous Signup – Sept. 30th Deadline to Submit Offers

FSA County Offices began accepting new offers under Signup 46 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) - Montana/Missouri-Madison, and Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) signup types on June 9, 2014. The deadline for Signup 46 offers expires September 30, 2014. Producers interested in offering land for enrollment in CRP should contact their local FSA Office.

Farm Bill Allows Early Termination for Certain CRP Contracts

Montana FSA reminds producers that as of Aug. 6, producers with acres under contract through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 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. The effective date for early termination is no earlier than October 1, 2014. The CRP contract must be in effect for at least five years and other conditions must be met. The 2014 Farm Bill identifies 10 exceptions whereby land will not be eligible for the early-out 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 cannot be reversed and the contract cannot be reinstated. Producers must meet conservation compliance provisions for all land that will be returned to production. For more information on or to determine eligibility for early termination of 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>.

Registration Still Open for Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium in Billings Sept. 23-25

Registration continues for the 14th annual Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium in Billings on Sept. 23-25. Topics for discussion include Farm & Ranch Transition, Soil Health Record Management, Technology in Ag-Apps, Key Agriculture & Inspiring Speakers, Local & Fresh Food Preparation, Farm Bill Updates & much more. Registration cost \$75. A registration form is available at any USDA Service Center office and online the Montana FSA Website at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/2014_wsfa_registration.pdf. To help sponsor the event, contact Nikki Rife at nakaya.rife@mt.usda.gov or (406) 429-6646. The symposium is hosted by: USDA Food and Agriculture and state agricultural organizations. For more information, contact Nikki Rife at nakaya.rife@mt.usda.gov or (406) 429-6646.

Enrollment for New Dairy Farm Risk Management Program

Began Sept. 2

USDA Launches New Web Tool to Help Producers Manage Unforeseen Economic Challenges

Starting Sept. 2, 2014, farmers can enroll in the new Dairy Margin Protection Program. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, 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. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also launched a new Web tool to help producers determine the level of coverage under the Margin Protection Program that will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The online resource, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine unique operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs based on price projections.

The Margin Protection Program, which replaces the Milk Income Loss Contract program, gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation. Enrollment begins Sept. 2 and ends on Nov. 28, 2014, for 2014 and 2015. Participating dairy farmers must remain in the program through 2018 and pay a minimum \$100 administrative fee each year. Producers have the option of selecting a different coverage level during open enrollment each year. Dairy operations enrolling in the new program must comply with conservation compliance provisions and cannot participate in the Livestock Gross Margin dairy insurance program. Farmers already participating in the Livestock Gross Margin program may register for the Margin Protection Program, but the new margin program will only begin once their Livestock Gross Margin coverage has ended.

The 2014 Farm Bill also established the Dairy Product Donation Program. The program authorizes USDA to purchase and donate dairy products to nonprofit organizations that provide nutrition assistance to low-income families. Purchases only occur during periods of low dairy margins. Dairy operators do not need to enroll to benefit from the Dairy Product Donation Program.

Visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets, or stop by a local FSA office to learn more about the Margin Protection Program or the Dairy Product Donation Program.

2014 MAL and LDP Requests

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting requests for marketing assistance loans (MALs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) for eligible 2014 commodities. MALs and LDPs for the 2014 crop year become available to eligible producers beginning with harvest/shearing season and extending through a specific commodity's final loan availability date. Sugar commodity loans for the 2014 crop will be available to sugar processors beginning Oct. 1, 2014.

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, wool, mohair and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar.

The 2014 Farm Bill also establishes payment limitations per individual or entity not to exceed \$125,000 annually on certain commodities for the following program benefits: price loss coverage payments, agriculture risk coverage payments, marketing loan gains (MLGs) and LDPs. These payment limitations do not apply to MAL loan disbursements.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions were modified by the 2014 Farm Bill, which states that a producer whose total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds \$900,000 is not eligible to receive an MLG or LDP.

National and county loans rates for 2014 crops are posted on the FSA website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport.

For more information, please visit a nearby USDA Service Center or FSA's website www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS: Applying for Loans when

commodities have one or more of the following conditions: Low Quality, Contaminated, High Moisture, Harvested as other grain, and Cracked, Rolled and Crimped Corn

Local FSA Offices may require producers to submit sample tests to ensure the commodity is not considered low quality or has exceeded the maximum acceptable moisture level in cases where a county has been directly affected by excessive moisture and/or there is a concern the commodity is of low quality. Test sample results will determine the type of the loan the producer is eligible for. Commodities that exceed the maximum acceptable moisture levels will only qualify for recourse loans and the quantity of the commodity will be reduced for excess moisture.

The maximum moisture level for wheat is set at 14.5 percent and the maximum moisture level for Barley is set at 15.5 percent.

NONRECOURSE LOANS:

Explanation of Nonrecourse Loans: For nonrecourse loans, producers can settle their loan during the 9-month period by selling the commodity and repaying the principal plus accrued interest or by forfeiting the commodity to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

Nonrecourse loans for Commodities of low quality conditions, including sprouting will be made at 20 percent of the applicable loan rate. (Applies to all commodities). The loan quantity can be certified by the producer, measured or documentation from a warehouse receipt can be provided.

Nonrecourse loans for Commodities that have been contaminated will be made at 10 percent of the applicable loan rate. (Applies to all commodities). The loan quantity can be certified or measured. Commodities that have been harvested as other than grain are **only** eligible for a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP). The loan quantity can be certified by the producer or measured. (Applies to all commodities except – Wool, Mohair, Honey, and Sugar).

RECOURSE LOANS:

Explanation of Recourse Loan: If the commodity is eligible for a nonrecourse loan at a reduced loan rate or is ineligible for a nonrecourse loan, producers also have the option of taking a recourse loan. On or before the maturity date, recourse loans must be repaid at principal and charges plus interest. Commodities pledged as collateral for recourse loans cannot be delivered or forfeited to CCC in settlement of the loan maturity. If a recourse loan is not repaid by the maturity date, loan collateral must be disposed of under provisions for local sale and proceeds will be applied to the balance of the loan.

Recourse loans for Commodities of low quality, including sprouting that are measureable, will receive 100 percent of the applicable loan rate and may be reduced for moisture if applicable. Non-measurable recourse loans of low quality commodities will be made at 75 percent of the applicable loan rate and excess moisture reductions may be applied if applicable. (Applies to all commodities).

Commodities exceeding the maximum acceptable moisture levels (14.5 percent for wheat and 15.5 percent for barley) are only eligible for recourse loans and the quantity of the commodity will be reduced for excess moisture.

BOTH NONRECOURSE AND RECOURSE: Please remember that when you fill out your Farm Stored Loan Quantity Certification (CCC-666) for a Marketing Assistance Loan that you are certifying to both the quality and quantity of the commodity. Premiums and discounts are not applied at loan time, but will be calculated for nonrecourse loans at the time of settlement if the commodity is forfeited to CCC. These quality adjustments may result in a loan deficiency and a debt due to CCC.

Contact your local FSA office for more information.

2015 Crop Acreage Reporting Dates for Montana Nov. 17th Deadline for Reporting Fall Crops

Producers are reminded to file their acreage reports with their local FSA county office by the common acreage reporting deadlines of:

- **Nov. 17:** 2015 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
- **Jan. 2, 2015** – (or 30 days after placement of colonies) Honey covered under Non-Insured Crop Disaster

Assistance Program (NAP)

- **Jan. 15, 2015** – Cherries, Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed
- **July 15, 2015** – Spring Alfalfa Seed, Barley, Canola, Corn, Dry Beans, Dry Peas, Flax, Forage Seeding, Mustard, Spring Oats, Potatoes, Safflower, Sugar Beets, Sunflowers, Spring Wheat, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and all other crops

County offices have been in the process of preparing the compliance maps for the 2015 acreage reporting process. Please contact your FSA office to obtain a copy of your maps or schedule an appointment to complete your crop certification. In order for your fall acreage report to be considered timely filed, and avoid possible late file fees, you must contact the office by Nov. 17, 2014.

Emergency Loan Program available in Montana disaster counties

FSA's Emergency Loan Program is available for agricultural producers in counties designated as primary or contiguous natural disaster areas. Contact your local FSA office for specific designations in your area and time frames to apply. Eligible producers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to apply for low-interest emergency loans to 1.) restore or replace essential property; 2.) pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; 3.) pay essential family living expenses; or 4.) refinance certain debts, excluding real estate. Producers interested in applying for an emergency loan, or other FLP loans, should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with the Farm Loan Program staff serving your area. [Click here for 2014 Montana Disaster Designations To Date.](#)

NEWS FROM USDA RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY (RMA):

Winter Wheat Insurance Coverage Now Available in Daniels and Sheridan Counties

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is extending winter wheat coverage into Daniels and Sheridan counties in Montana. The addition of the winter wheat type in these counties is a result of a cooperative effort between RMA, producers, Montana State University Extension, and grower groups. The sales closing date for winter wheat in Sheridan and Daniels counties is September 30, and the final planting date is October 5. Winter coverage is now available through the Winter Coverage Endorsement option. Producers in these counties who have previously planted winter wheat and insured winter wheat as spring wheat will need to re-certify their actual production history databases to separate the acreage and production by type. Winter wheat can no longer be insured as spring wheat in these counties.

Eric Bashore, Billings Regional Office director, reminds producers to contact their crop insurance agent for more information on winter wheat coverage. For more information on how to find a crop insurance agent, go to www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html.

Important Montana FSA Dates/Deadlines:

- **Sept. 22:** Deadline for 2012 NAP Application for Frost or Freeze Fruit Crop Losses
- **Sept. 26:** Deadline to Request a Reconstitution for 2014
- **Sept. 30:** 2015 Crop Year NAP Sales Closing Date for Fall Seeded Annual Crops and Perennial Forage Crops Intended for Hay and Grazing
- **Sept. 30:** 2014 CRP Continuous Signup Deadline
- **Sept. 30:** 2014 CRP Summer/Fall Managed Haying Ends
- **Nov. 1:** 2014 ELAP Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Deadline
- **Nov. 3:** FSA County Committee Election ballots mailed to eligible voters
- **Nov. 12:** All Hay Bales Must be Removed from CRP Acres
- **Nov. 17:** 2015 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
- **Dec. 1:** Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA County Office
- **Dec. 1:** 2015 Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Sales Closing Date for 2015 Honey Producers
- **Jan. 1:** Newly elected county committee members take office
- **Jan. 30:** 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014 LFP, LIP Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Deadline
- **Jan 30:** Deadline to submit Tree Assistance Program Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation for Loss for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 (or 90 days after disaster event or loss was apparent)

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