

Dec. 15, 2014



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Montana FSA: December eNewsletter

**USDA Montana Farm
Service Agency**

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**Montana FSA & MSU
Extension: SAVE THE DATE –
Another Round of Farm Bill
Meetings Set for January 2015**

Montana USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and

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Montana USDA

Directories:

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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.

Montana State University (MSU) Extension announce another series of agricultural producer meetings that will be held across the state in January 2015 to cover important new programs authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill).

The meetings will involve a more in-depth presentation on the FSA's Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, new 2015 program changes to the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Buy-Up option. MSU Extension will present an analysis of Farm Bill programs and an explanation of several Farm Bill Decision Tools available to producers in understanding options under ARC, PLC, and NAP-Buy-Up.

The 2014 Farm Bill authorizes three FSA program election options: PLC, ARC-County (ARC-CO) and ARC-Individual (ARC-IC). Producers must make a one-time decision to retain or reallocate crop acreage bases, to retain or update program payment yields and elect the type of coverage (price protection, county revenue protection, and/or individual revenue protection) for the 2014-18 crop years.

Below are the dates/towns/times/meeting location and addresses. If you have any questions, please contact your local FSA office.

Date/Town/Time:

- Jan. 13: Deer Lodge, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Powell County Community Center (416 Cottonwood Ave.)
- Jan. 20: Livingston, 2 to 4:30 p.m., MSU Park County Extension Office (119 South 3rd St.)
- Jan. 21: Townsend, 8 to 10:30 a.m., 4-H Building at the Townsend Fairgrounds (189 Hwy 12 East)
- Jan. 21: Dillon, 1:30 to 4 p.m., USDA Service Center Conference Room (420 Barrett Street)
- Jan. 22: Columbus, 8 to 10:30 a.m., Columbus Fire Hall (944 East Pike Ave.)
- Jan. 22: Ryegate, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Ryegate Fire Hall Training Room (105 Kemp Street)
- Jan. 22: Lewistown, 7 to 9:30 p.m., Yogo Inn (211 E. Main)

- Jan. 23: Jordan, 9 to 11:30 a.m., Old Grade School Building (208 Main Street)
- Jan. 26: Kalispell, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Hampton Inn (1140 U.S. 2)
- Jan. 27: Cut Bank, 8 to 10:30 a.m., Cut Bank Elks Lodge (18 S Central)
- Jan. 27: Conrad, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Pondera Golf Course (847 Conrad-Dupuyer Rd.)
- Jan. 27: Fort Benton, 7 to 9:30 p.m., Ag Center (1205 20th St.)
- Jan. 28: Chester, 8 to 10:30 a.m., Our Savior's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall (10 East Madison Ave.)
- Jan. 28: Chinook, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Blaine County Library (94 4th St.)
- Jan. 28: Glasgow, 7 to 9:30 p.m., Cottonwood Inn (45 1st Ave. NE)
- Jan. 29: Scobey, 8 to 10:30 a.m., Scobey Lutheran Education Center (202 Timmons)
- Jan. 29: Culbertson, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Dry Prairie Rural Water Office (5998 Highway 16)
- Jan. 29: Glendive, 7 to 9:30 p.m., Dawson County Courthouse Community Room (207 Bell Street)
- Jan. 30: Forsyth, 8 to 10:30 a.m., Haugo Center (1 Rosebud Drive)
- Jan. 30: Hardin, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Big Horn County Courthouse (121 3rd St. West)

For online farm bill resources, visit MSU Extension's Farm Bill website at <http://www.montana.edu/farmbill>, FSA's ARC-PLC page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc>, FSA's national Farm Bill website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill> and Montana FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

This Week's Local FSA Farm Bill Meetings Scheduled in Plentywood, Froid, Stanford, Havre and Miles City

Producers are invited to attend any of the upcoming Farm Bill public informational meetings hosted by local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices to learn about the PLC and ARC programs. Additional meetings continue to be scheduled. For questions about a meeting in your area, contact your local FSA office.

This Week's Meeting Details:

- **Tues., Dec. 16** at 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., **Plentywood**, Sheridan County Courthouse - Jubilee Room (100 E. Laurel)

- **Tues., Dec. 16** at 1 to 4 p.m., **Froid**, Froid Community Center (107 2nd St. N)
- **Weds., Dec. 17** at 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., **Stanford**, Judith Basin Courthouse (91 Third Street North) *Pre-Registration Required. Contact the Stanford FSA office.
- **Weds., Dec. 17** at 1 to 3 p.m., **Stanford**, Judith Basin Courthouse (91 Third Street North) *Pre-Registration Required. Contact the Stanford FSA office.
- **Weds., Dec. 17** at 3 to 5 p.m., **Stanford**, Judith Basin Courthouse (91 Third Street North) *Pre-Registration Required. Contact the Stanford FSA office.
- **Thurs., Dec. 18** at 1 to 3 p.m., **Havre**, USDA Service Center (206 25th Ave. W) *Pre-Registration Required. Contact the Havre FSA office.
- **Thurs., Dec. 18** at 3 p.m., **Miles City**, Miles City Community College Room 106 (2715 Dickinson St.)

Other Upcoming Local Meeting:

- **Mon., Dec. 29** at 1 p.m., **Turner**, Turner School Cafeteria (190 1st St. E)
- **Tues., Dec. 30** at 1 to 3 p.m., **Havre**, USDA Service Center (206 25th Ave. W) *Pre-Registration Required. Contact the Havre FSA office.
- **Tues., Dec. 30** at 1 p.m., **Chinook**, Wallner Hall (11) 4th St.)

This meeting list will be updated regularly as more FSA meetings are scheduled in communities across Montana: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/mt-fb-meetings.pdf. For questions about a meeting in your area, please contact your local FSA office.

2012 Livestock Forage Program – Deadline Jan. 30, 2015

Livestock producers who graze eligible livestock in Beaverhead, Big Horn, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Custer, Fallon, Fergus, Gallatin, Garfield, Golden Valley, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Madison, Meagher, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Powder River, Rosebud, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Wheatland and Yellowstone counties may be eligible for benefits under the 2012 Livestock Forage Program (LFP). The deadline to complete the LFP application is **January 30, 2015**.

2013 Livestock Forage Program – Deadline Jan. 30, 2015

Livestock producers who graze eligible livestock in Beaverhead, Big Horn, Broadwater, Carbon, Gallatin, Jefferson, Madison, Silver Bow, Stillwater and Yellowstone counties may be eligible for benefits under the 2013 Livestock Forage Program (LFP). The deadline to complete the LFP application is **January 30, 2015**.

Livestock Indemnity Program – Jan. 30th Deadlines Nearing

The deadline to file an application for 2011, 2012, 2013 or 2014 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) is January 30, 2015. Producers who suffered livestock deaths due to adverse weather from October 1, 2011 through December 30, 2014 may submit a notice of loss and application for payment with their local FSA County Office by the January 30, 2015 deadline. The late passage of the 2014 Farm Bill allowed FSA to take LIP applications retroactively from October 1, 2011. For 2015 livestock deaths, the notice of loss MUST be filed within 30 calendar days from when the loss was apparent. Livestock producers suffering livestock losses may submit the notice of loss by phone, fax, email or in person.

Jan. 14th Deadline for NAP Buy-Up Expanded Coverage for 2015 Perennial Forage, Fall Seeded Annual Crops, and Honey

Producers who bought the basic NAP CAT level of coverage (50/55) by the fall sales closing deadline (Sept. 30 or Dec. 1) may come in at this time and elect an additional Buy-Up level of coverage, as long as they do so by January 14, 2015.

Producers who did not purchase the basic NAP CAT level of coverage (50/55) by the fall sales closing deadline, may come in at this time and elect a Buy-Up level of coverage only by January 14, 2015. These producers will also be required to either pay the applicable NAP administrative service fee or file a CCC-860 if applicable, for a service fee waiver. *(Additional details in NAP article below.)*

NAP Program: USDA Provides Greater Protection for Grass for Hay and Specialty Crops

NAP Program's New Free Basic Coverage Plans and Premium Discounts Available for New, Underserved and Limited Income Farmers

Greater protection is now available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for crops that traditionally have been ineligible for federal crop insurance. The new options, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, provide greater coverage for losses when natural disasters affect specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, grass intended for hay, and energy crops.

Previously, the program offered coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Producers can now choose higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price.

The expanded protection will be especially helpful to beginning and traditionally underserved producers, as well as farmers with limited resources, who will receive fee waivers and premium reductions for expanded coverage. More crops are now eligible for the program, including expanded aquaculture production practices, and sweet and biomass sorghum. For the first time, a range of crops used to produce bioenergy will be eligible as well.

To help producers learn more about NAP and how it can help them, USDA, in partnership with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, created an online resource. The Web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, allows producers to determine whether their crops may be eligible for coverage. It also gives them an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

If the application deadline for an eligible crop has already passed, producers will have until Jan. 14, 2015, to choose expanded coverage through NAP. To learn more, visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local FSA office at offices.usda.gov. FSA, which administers the program, also wants to hear from producers and other interested stakeholders who may have suggestions or recommendations on the program. Written comments will be accepted until Feb. 13, 2015 and can be submitted through www.regulations.gov.

Application Deadline for Dairy Margin Protection Program Extended to Dec. 19

The application deadline for the Fiscal Year 2014 and 2015 Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP) was extended until Dec. 19, 2014.

For just \$100, a farmer can cover 90 percent of production at \$4 margin swings, and with affordable incremental premiums, dairy farmers can cover up to \$8 margin swings. Those who apply this year will receive a slight increase in production protection that will not be available in the future. Farmers who do not sign up for the Margin Protection Program for 2015 will forfeit the 1 percent base production increase.

Coverage Selection for New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs Began Nov. 17

Producers have Until March 31, 2015, to Choose the Program Best for their Operation

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, 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. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

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, 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>.

ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES: 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/>.

Late-filed Acreage Reports for Base Reallocation

Owners and operators will be given an opportunity to request corrections to acreage history for crop years 2009 through 2012 providing supporting documentation is available. Further, producers will be given an opportunity to submit late-filed acreage reports of P&CP (planted and considered planted) or subsequently planted crop acreage.

Additionally, owners and operators will be able to submit a request for prevented planting credit for 2009 through 2012 providing the prevented planting request for the crop had not been previously processed and acted upon by FSA.

Since physical evidence will likely be absent, producers will be required to prove existence and disposition of the crop. However, if evidence accepted and approved by RMA or any other USDA agency is provided in support of crop existence, proof of crop disposition will not be required.

If a late-filed acreage report or revision changes what FSA will recognize as initial crop acreage for any program purpose, the revised acreage will be used for all program purposes without any exception and without regard to who requested the late-filed acreage report or revision.

Late-Filed Acreage Reports

Acreage reports must be filed for all cropland on the farm before any 2014 ARC/PLC payments can be made or before eligibility can be established for marketing assistance loans and LDP's. Additionally, participants of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) must report the specific acreage for which benefits are being requested.

Although the 2014 reporting deadline (July 15, 2014) and the 2015 fall crop reporting deadline (Nov. 17, 2014) have passed, county offices will accept late-filed acreage reports providing certain criteria are met. Contact your local county office for additional information relative to late-filed acreage reports.

USDA Disaster Assistance to Help Thousands of Honeybee, Livestock and Farm-Raised Fish Producers

2014 Farm Bill Program Offers Producers in Over 40 States Relief for 2012 and 2013 Losses

Nearly 2,500 applicants will receive disaster assistance through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) for losses suffered from Oct. 1, 2011, through Sept. 30, 2013.

The program, re-authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides disaster relief to livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs. Examples include eligible losses to grazing land, purchased forage or feed stuff and mechanically harvested forage and feed stuff, additional cost of purchasing livestock feed above normal quantities, certain costs associated with transporting livestock feed to eligible livestock, and additional cost of transporting water to eligible livestock caused as a result of excessive heat or winds, flooding, blizzards, hail, wildfires, lightning strikes, and diseases, or in the case of honeybees, losses due to colony collapse disorder. Beekeepers, most of whom suffered honeybee colony losses, represent more than half of ELAP recipients. The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year. To accommodate the number of requests, which exceeded funds available for each of the affected years, payments will be reduced to ensure that all eligible applicants receive a prorated share of assistance.

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. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

2015 ELAP PROGRAM:

FSA reminds producers they can file a notice of loss for 2015 losses the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or no later than November 2, 2015. An application for payment must also be filed no later than November 2, 2015.

Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Payments for 2013 Non-Irrigated Canola in Montana

FSA has begun distributing Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for revenue losses associated with non-irrigated canola in Montana. Discontinued by the 2014 Farm Bill, the ACRE program provided producers with protection from revenue losses for crops grown in 2009-2013. Non-Irrigated Canola and Corn are the only Crops that triggered a 2013 payment in Montana as of Dec. 12, 2014. Producers on 78 farms in Montana enrolled 72,000 acres in ACRE. The Budget Control Act passed by Congress in 2011 requires these payments to be reduced by 5.1 percent. For more information on ACRE, producers should contact their local FSA office or visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Average AGI Limitation

With the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill, a new AGI limitation has been established for program eligibility purposes. If the participant's average AGI exceeds \$900,000 (farm and nonfarm), the person or legal entity will be ineligible for payments and benefits as follows for the respective programs/years:

- October 2, 2011, and subsequent years – LIP, LFP, ELAP, and TAP
- 2014 and subsequent years – NAP
- 2014 through 2018 – ARC, PLC, LDP, and MLG
- 2015 and subsequent years – Conservation-related programs.

The average AGI is based on the average of adjusted gross income for the 3 taxable years preceding the most immediately preceding complete taxable year. For the 2014 program year, for example, the 3 taxable years for AGI purposes would include 2010, 2011, and 2012.

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

The 2014 Farm Bill implements a change that requires farmers with Federal Crop Insurance (FCIC) that are new to conservation compliance or "first time filers" to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file with FSA no later than **June 1, 2015**.

USDA Announces New Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

USDA has announced the implementation of new Farm Bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA also unveiled www.USDA.gov/newfarmers, a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

The policy announcements in support of beginning farmers and ranchers include:

- Refunding service fees for new and beginning farmers or ranchers to enroll in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the 2014 crop year.
- Eliminating payment reductions under the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans.
- Increasing payment rates to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for [Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#). Under this provision, beginning farmers can claim up to 90 percent of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a fifty percent increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

Microloan Cap Grows to \$50,000

FSA reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000, effective Nov. 7. 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. To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers and ranchers 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.

Please review the FSA [Microloan Program Fact Sheet](#) for program application, eligibility and related information.

Montana's Next Generation Conference Jan. 30 and 31 in Shelby, MT

There is still time to register for Montana's Next Generation Conference Friday and Saturday, January 30 and 31, 2015, in Shelby, Montana! Hosted by the Glacier and Toole County Farm Service Agency, local MSU Extension, Marias River Livestock Association and the Front Range Counties Farm Bureau, this comprehensive conference including succession planning and production workshops is one you won't want to miss.

Friday's events will feature Kevin Spafford of Legacy by Design, LLC. Spafford will lead participants through the succession planning process with hands-on activities for all generations as they learn how to make a successful transition of the farming or ranching operation. The evening's keynote

address will be Sandra Hare, "Understanding the Personalities of the Generations." Hare, a talented human resources executive, has provided expertise to companies such as Wheat Montana and Kalispell Regional Healthcare and comes with a wealth of experience. The evening will conclude with entertainment by the talented Halladay Quist. Saturday's events feature an outstanding lineup of industry speakers and professionals offering a total of 36 workshops for attendees to select from. Each hour will have workshops for crop and livestock producers with a portion of workshops aimed each towards beginning producers and for those who have been involved in agriculture for many years and want to learn about what's new in the industry.

Registration forms are available online at http://www.mariasriverlivestock.com/next_generation_conference.html or by calling the Glacier County Extension office at 406-873-2239. Conference updates will be available via the Facebook page, Montana's Next Generation Conference. Cost is \$20/individual/day, or \$30/couple/day, and registrations are due by January 23. Participants are encouraged to bring the entire family as daycare is available and additional family members will be eligible for the couple discount. Discounted motel rates of \$75/night are available at the Best Western Shelby Inn & Suites (406-424-4560) or the Comfort Inn (406-434-2212) at \$70/night for a single room or \$75/night for a double room if booked in advance of the conference.

If you have any questions, please contact Lacy Roberts at 406-873-5618 or Kari Lewis at 406-873-2239. Don't miss this great opportunity to plan for the future and learn from some outstanding professionals!

Important FSA Dates to Remember

- **Dec. 19:** Dairy Margin Protection Program Enrollment Deadline for 2014 and 2015
- **Jan. 1:** Newly elected county committee members take office
- **Jan. 2:** 2015 Acreage Reporting Deadline (or 30 days after placement of colonies) Honey covered under NAP
- **Jan. 14:** Deadline for NAP Buy-Up Expanded Coverage for 2015 Perennial Forage, Fall Seeded Annual Crops, and Honey
- **Jan. 15:** 2015 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Cherries, Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed
- **Jan. 30:** 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014 Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Deadline
- **Jan 30:** Deadline to submit Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation for Loss for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 (or 90 days after disaster event or loss was apparent)
- **Jan. 30:** Deadline to request early CRP contract termination
- **Feb. 2:** Final Loan/LDP Availability Date for Wool, Mohair and Loan Deficiency Payment only for unshorn pelts
- **Feb. 27:** Deadline for land owners to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- **March 16:** Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Sales Closing Date for 2015 Spring Seeded Crops
- **March 31:** Deadline for producers to make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- **March 31:** Final Loan/LDP Availability Dates for Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Sesame seed and Wheat

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