



# NEWSLETTER



**November 2014**

**Nebraska Farm Service Agency**

7131 A Street  
Lincoln, NE 68510

[www.fsa.usda.gov/ne](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ne)

**State Committee:**

Bill Armbrust  
Fred Christensen  
Susan Frazier, Chairperson  
Leo Hoehn  
Linda Kleinschmit

**Executive Director:**

Dan Steinkruger

**Administrative Officer:**

Mike Sander

**Division Chiefs:**

Cathy Anderson  
Doug Klein  
Greg Reisdorff  
Mark Wilke

**Next State Committee**

**Meeting:** December 8-10,  
2014

Please contact your local FSA  
Office for questions specific  
to your operation or county

## Nebraska FSA Updates

### USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Began Monday, Nov. 3

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to make their voices heard by voting in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections. On November 3, 2014, USDA mailed ballots 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 and ranchers 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 and ranchers 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.

## **Dates to Remember**

**December 1, 2014** - Last day to return/postmark COC election ballots

**December 5, 2014** - 2014 and 2015 MPP-Dairy registration and election deadline

**January 30, 2015** - 2012, 2013, and 2014 LFP and LIP application deadline

**February 27, 2015** - Deadline for producers to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres

**March 16, 2015** - Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Sales Closing Dates for Alfalfa, Mixed Forage, Spring Seeded Annual Crops (Barley, Oats), Grass, Spring Seeded Annual Crops (Vegetables), and Sorghum Forage  
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**March 31, 2015** - Deadline for producers to make one-time election of either ARC or PLC for 2014 through 2018 crop years

## **November FSA Interest Rates**

Farm Operating: 2.75%  
Microloan: 2.75%  
Farm Ownership: 4.125%  
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.500%  
Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.500%  
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.75%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 2.125%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 2.375%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 2.500%  
Commodity Loan: 1.125%

## **USDA Issues Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Payments for Certain 2013 Crops in Nebraska**

USDA has started distributing Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for revenue losses associated with certain crops in Nebraska, when state and farm level triggers were met. Discontinued by the 2014 Farm Bill, the ACRE program provided producers with protection from revenue losses for crops grown in 2009-2013. The ACRE program was discontinued by the 2014 Farm Bill.

Crops eligible for October payments in Nebraska include wheat, grain sorghum, irrigated barley and dry peas grown in the 2013 crop year. Approximately 17,000 farms in Nebraska were enrolled 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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## **Microloan Cap Grew to \$50,000 on Nov. 7**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000 on November 7. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

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 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.

Since 2010, FSA has made a record amount of farm loans — more than 165,000 loans totaling nearly \$23 billion. More than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers. In addition, FSA has increased its lending to socially-disadvantaged producers by nearly 50 percent since 2010.

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

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

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

USDA is extending 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.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (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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## **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 is 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](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>.

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## **NAP Coverage NOT Available for Annually Planted Crops Used for Mechanically Harvested Livestock Feed**

Producers are reminded that NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annually planted forage crops used for mechanically harvested livestock feed that includes, but is not limited to: small grains, forage sorghums, mixed forages, turnips and other annually planted crops with the following intended uses: "fg," "gc," "Hy," and "sg." The Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced a pilot program last year that offers a CAT level Rainfall Index-Annual Forage Insurance Plan to producers in Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Producers were allowed to use NAP coverage for 2014 annual forage crops because there was limited time for producers in the pilot states to transition from NAP to the new RMA pilot program. However, NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annual forage crops used for mechanically harvested livestock feeds.

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## **NAP Coverage Available for 2015 Crops for Livestock Feed Intended for Grazing**

It is important that producers note that NAP coverage WILL be available for annually planted crops for livestock feed intended for grazing because RMA is not offering CAT level coverage under the Rainfall Index-Annual Forage Insurance Plan. The NAP sales closing date for this insurance is March 15th for crops planted in the spring.

Please contact your local FSA office for questions concerning NAP or your crop insurance agent for questions concerning RMA crop insurance. A list of agents can be found at [www.rma.usda.gov/](http://www.rma.usda.gov/).

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## **Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL)**

The FSFL program provides low-interest financing to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store and handle commodities. Recent program enhancements include 22 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers. Specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers, now have access to needed capital for sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety-related equipment. A new more flexible alternative is also provided for determining storage needs for fruit and vegetable producers. Additionally, FSFL security requirements have been eased for loans in the amount of \$100,000 and less. Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Qualified facilities include grain bins, grain handling and drying equipment, hay storage sheds, cold storage facilities and handling equipment for fruits and vegetables. The maximum FSFL loan amount is \$500,000 per loan. For more information about the FSFL loan program, please review the FSFL Fact Sheet by clicking [here](#) or contact your local FSA office.

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## **Farm Loan Information Chart**

A Farm Loan Information Chart Fact Sheet containing information on maximum loan amounts, loan terms, and use of proceeds is available. The fact sheet can be accessed by clicking [here](#). Additional details on available Farm Loan Programs can be obtained at local FSA offices and on FSA's website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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