

July 2015



Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [USDA Energy Biomass Retrieval Incentives Started June 30](#)
- [Enrollment for 2016 Dairy Margin Protection Program Started July 1](#)
- [MAL and LDP Policy Changes for Crop Years 2015-2018](#)
- [Reporting Organic Crops](#)
- [County Committee Nomination Period Ends Aug. 3rd](#)
- [Agricultural Producers in Colorado Still Have Time to Apply for Direct Farm Ownership Loan Program](#)
- [Beginning Farmer Loans](#)
- [USDA Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) Online Hay and Grazing Acres Locator Tool](#)
- [Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services](#)
- [Important FSA Dates to Remember](#)

Colorado FSA: July 2015 eNewsletter

USDA Colorado Farm Service Agency

P.O. Box 25426
Denver, CO 80225

www.fsa.usda.gov/co

State Executive Director:
Leland Swenson

State Committee:
Armando Valdez, Chair
Marsha Daughenbaugh
Anita Nein
Bill Warren
James Hume

[Online Directory of FSA Offices](#)

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 Colorado FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Patti Finke at (720) 944-2889 or patti.finke@co.usda.gov.

USDA Energy Biomass Retrieval Incentives Started June 30

Owners of Forestry and Farm Residues Can Apply for Biomass Crop Assistance Program

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) began accepting applications on June 30, 2015, from foresters and farmers seeking financial assistance to harvest and deliver biomass to generate clean energy. The support comes through the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), which was re-authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

For 2015, USDA has reserved up to \$11.5 million to assist with the cost of removing woody or herbaceous residues from farm fields or national forests and woodlands for delivery to energy generation facilities. A majority of the funds are expected to support the removal of dead or diseased trees from National Forest and Bureau of Land Management public lands. Orchard wastes, and agriculture residues such as corn cobs and stalks, also qualify as energy-producing feedstock.

To be eligible for the retrieval incentives, the biomass must be delivered to FSA-approved biomass conversion facilities. For a list of approved facilities, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap.

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) also provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who produce new sources of energy biomass by growing eligible crops on contract acres within approved BCAP project areas. Funding for this portion of the program, known as Project Areas, will be announced later this summer. In addition, FSA is preparing an environmental review of BCAP and has proposed improvements to Project Area requirements, including crop eligibility, contract duration, and processes to offset the lack of biomass insurance. Interested stakeholders may attend the public education meetings at the locations listed below.

July 15, 2015 - Honolulu, Hawaii
August 3, 2015 - Raleigh, North Carolina
August 4, 2015 - Orlando, Florida
August 5, 2015 - Sioux City, Iowa

For more details on the environmental review, proposed changes to BCAP, and meeting locations, visit www.bcappeis.com, www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Enrollment for 2016 Dairy Margin Protection Program Started July 1

FSA today announced that as of July 1, 2015, dairy farmers can enroll in [Margin Protection Program for coverage in 2016](#). The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy operations when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

The Margin Protection Program gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation. Enrollment begins July 1 and ends on Sept. 30, 2015, for coverage in 2016. Participating farmers will remain in the program through 2018 and pay a \$100 administrative fee each year. Producers also have the option of selecting a different coverage level during open enrollment each year. Margin Protection Program payments are based on an operation's historical production. An operation's historical production will increase by 2.61 percent in 2016 if the operation participated in 2015, providing a stronger safety net.

USDA also has an online resource available to help dairy producers decide which level of coverage will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The enhanced Web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine their unique operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs based on price projections. Producers can also review historical data or estimate future coverage based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, mobile phone, or tablet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Dairy operations enrolling in the program must meet conservation compliance provisions. Producers participating in the Livestock Gross Margin insurance program may register for the Margin Protection Program, but this new margin program will only begin once their livestock dairy insurance coverage has ended. Producers must also submit form CCC-782 for 2016, confirming their Margin Protection Program coverage level selection, to the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. If electing higher coverage for 2016, dairy producers can either pay the premium in full at the time of enrollment or pay a minimum of 25 percent of the premium by Feb. 1, 2016.

For more information, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy, or stop by a local FSA office to learn more about the Margin Protection Program. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

MAL and LDP Policy Changes for Crop Years 2015-2018

The Agricultural Act of 2014 authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), with a few minor policy changes.

Among the changes, farm-stored MAL collateral transferred to warehouse storage will retain the original loan rate, be allowed to transfer only the outstanding farm-stored quantity with no additional quantity allowed and will no longer require producers to have paid for measurement service when moving or commingling loan collateral.

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool 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 and extra-long staple cotton.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2015 MALs and LDPs for wool as well as LDPs for unshorn pelts. MAL and LDP requests for all other eligible commodities will be accepted after harvest. FSA continues to accept MAL and LDP requests for 2014 crops with upcoming deadlines.

Before MAL repayments and LDP disbursements can be made, producers must meet the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash rent tenant and member contribution.

Additionally, form CCC-902 and CCC-901 must be submitted for the 2014 crop year, if applicable, with a county committee determination and updated subsidiary files.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, producers must have form [CCC-633EZ](#), Page 1 on file at their local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested.

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.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, please visit a nearby USDA Service Center or FSA's website www.fsa.usda.gov.

Reporting Organic Crops

Producers who want to use the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) organic price and selected the "organic" option on their NAP application must report their crops as organic.

When certifying organic acres, the buffer zone acreage must be included in the organic acreage.

Producers must also provide a current organic plan, organic certificate or documentation from a certifying agent indicating an organic plan is in effect. Documentation must include:

- name of certified individuals
- address
- telephone number
- effective date of certification
- certificate number
- list of commodities certified
- name and address of certifying agent
- a map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, including the buffer zone acreage

Certification exemptions are available for producers whose annual gross agricultural income from organic sales totals \$5,000 or less. Although exempt growers are not required to provide a written certificate, they are still required to provide a map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, transitional and buffer zone acreage.

For questions about reporting organic crops, contact your local FSA office. To find your local office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

County Committee Nomination Period Ends Aug. 3rd

The nomination period for local FSA county committees began on June 15 and will end on Aug. 3, 2015.

It is important for county committees to reflect America's diversity. All eligible farmers and ranchers, including beginning farmers are encouraged to get involved in this year's elections. FSA has seen an increase in the number of nominations for qualified candidates, especially among women and minorities – a trend the Agency would like to see continue.

To be eligible to serve on a FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area where they are nominated.

Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations representing minorities and women also may nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. **Nomination forms for the 2015 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2015.**

FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 9, 2015. Ballots will be due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by Dec. 7, 2015. Newly elected committee members and alternates will take office on Jan. 1, 2016.

While FSA county committees do not approve or deny farm ownership or operating loans, they make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are about 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees.

Committees consist of 3 to 11 members that are elected by eligible producers.

Agricultural Producers in Colorado Still Have Time to Apply for Direct Farm Ownership Loan Program

Low-Interest Loans Can Help Producers Start or Expand Farms

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Colorado Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced that farmers and ranchers still have time to apply for low interest loans available through the FSA direct farm ownership program. Applications must be approved by Sept. 30, 2015, to take advantage of the funding available.

Eligible farmers and ranchers can borrow up to \$300,000 to buy farmland, construct or repair buildings, pay closing costs, or promote soil and water conservation. The interest rate can be as low as 1.5 percent with up to 40 years to repay.

New farmers and ranchers, military veterans, and underserved farmers and ranchers also are encouraged to apply. Each year Congress targets 80 percent of available loan funds to beginning and targeted underserved farmers and ranchers. Targeted underserved groups include American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians, or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and Women.

For more information about farm loan, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans, or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <https://offices.usda.gov>.

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.

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

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Online Hay and Grazing Acres Locator Tool

FSA's **Hay Net** website www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet is the "go to" online resource for agricultural producers to list information concerning the need for hay and grazing acres or the availability of hay and grazing acres.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, producers are in need of hay and/or grazing acres to support livestock, please use **Hay Net** to post an advertisement seeking these resources. Likewise, landowners who have hay and/or grazing acres available for livestock producers should post a Hay Net advertisement as well.

A few things to remember when using the **Hay Net** website:

- There is a one-time registration process that should be completed by all users who want to post an ad online.
- Users who just want to browse ads DO NOT NEED to have an eAuthentication user id.
- Hay and grazing acre ads will be automatically removed after a period of 13 months.
- Please help your fellow farmer and rancher by keeping ads current and up to date and remove ads you no longer need or want advertised on **Hay Net**. Please, no corporate advertisements on this site.

Hay Net is brought to you by FSA as a public service. The sole purpose of this online resource is to provide a site for the exchange of information. FSA does not endorse, guarantee, or otherwise make representations of any kind regarding any user of this site and FSA is not responsible for defining the terms of grazing agreements or lease contracts.

For more information about **Hay Net** and other FSA services and programs, please contact your local FSA office. For local

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

Local Offices Issue Receipts for Services Provided

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

To learn more about FSA, visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Important FSA Dates to Remember

- **June 15 to Sept. 30:** 2014 & 2015 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) enrollment Period
- **June 15 to Aug. 3:** Nomination Period for County Committee Elections. Request Nomination Forms from FSA at the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>
- **June 22 to Aug. 28:** Request one-year extension for CRP contracts expiring Sept. 30, 2015
- **June 30 to Sept. 4:** 2015 BCAP Application Period for eligible material owners to harvest and deliver Biomass
- **July 1 to Sept. 30:** Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 Margin Protection Program - Dairy (MPP-Dairy)
- **July 15:** Final 2014 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Production Reports are due
- **July 15:** 2015 Acreage Reporting Deadline for All Other Crops Not Required to Be Reported Earlier (call your local office for a listing of crops) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- **July 16:** CRP Summer/Fall Managed Haying and Grazing begins (with County Committee Approval of Request)
- **August 1:** Deadline to Request a Reconstitution or Farm Transfer for 2015
- **August 3:** Deadline to Submit County Committee Election Nomination Form (FSA-669A) to FSA (or postmarked) at the local USDA Service Center
- **Aug. 28:** Deadline to request a one-year extension for CRP contracts expiring Sept. 30, 2015
- **September 1:** 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Asparagus, Canola, Caneberries, Garlic, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Value-Loss Crops, Aquaculture, Turf Grass, Flowers, and Christmas Trees.
- **September 30:** 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Barley and Wheat
- **September 30:** Last day of the Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 MPP-Dairy Program

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).