From the State Executive Director

I recently toured the 416 Burn Scar area and Isgar Ranch. At each stop I had the opportunity to visit with ranchers and producers about the devastation from the drought. Many areas around the state have been very dry. As a reminder, FSA has disaster assistance programs that can help producers recover from drought and wildfire losses. The Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) has triggered in several counties around the state. LFP compensates eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses. Additional programs are available for producers who experienced fencing, livestock or pasture losses due to wildfire. Please report losses to your local FSA office.

For information about any FSA program, contact your local FSA office for assistance.

Sincerely,

Clarice Navarro
State Executive Director
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 Jenny Peterson at 720-544-2895 or jenny.peterson@co.usda.gov.

Keeping Track of Dates and Deadlines

August 17: Last day of Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Signup Period and 1-year Extensions on contracts expiring September 30, 2018.


September 30th: 2018 CRP 2nd Grazing Period (with prior written approval)

September 30th: 2018 CRP Managed Harvesting Period (with prior written approval)


August 17 Deadline Approaches for Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment

Producers Must File by August 17, One-Year Extension Available to Holders of Many Expiring Contracts

The deadline to sign up for enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is Friday, Aug. 17, 2018.

In return for enrolling land in CRP, FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years.

For this year’s signup, limited priority practices are available for continuous enrollment. These include grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others. View a full list of practices.

FSA will use updated soil rental rates to make annual rental payments, reflecting current values. It will not offer incentive payments as part of the new signup.

USDA will not open a general signup this year, however, a one-year extension will be offered to existing CRP participants with expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less.

Additionally, FSA established new ranking criteria for CRP grasslands. To guarantee all CRP grasslands offers are treated equally, applicants who previously applied (prior to the current sign-up period) will be asked to reapply using the new ranking criteria.

Producers wanting to apply for the CRP continuous signup or CRP grasslands should contact their USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit https://www.farmers.gov. More information on CRP can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.
USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to http://offices.usda.gov.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA’s online Agent Locator: http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx, to predict insurance premium costs.

Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2018 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program
The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2017, through Sept. 30, 2018, not to exceed $750 per certification scope.

Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certification fees, late fees and inspections necessary to address National Organic Program regulatory violations.

Producers and handlers may submit OCCSP applications to FSA county offices or they may apply through participating State Agencies, which will be listed at https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index as their agreements to administer the program are finalized.

The FSA OCCSP application form is available at USDA's eForms site, by selecting "Browse forms" and entering "OCCSP" in the "title or keywords" field on the search page.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact a local FSA office by visiting http://offices.usda.gov.

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**USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators**

Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers. The program, called EZ Guarantee Loans, uses a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to $100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

A new category of lenders will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to $50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to $100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

More information about the available types of FSA farm loans can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or by contacting your local FSA office.

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**Farm Service Agency Selected Interest Rates for August 2018**

Commodity Loan – 3.375%

Farm Storage Facility Loans

- 3 year loan – 2.625%
- 5 year loan – 2.750%
- 7 year loan – 2.875%
- 10 year loan – 2.875%
Farm Loans

- 12 year loan – 2.875%
- 15 year loan – 2.875%

Farm Loans

- Farm Operating Direct – 3.750%
- Farm Operating Microloan – 3.750%
- Farm Ownership Direct – 4.125%
- Farm Ownership Microloan – 4.125%
- Emergency Loan (Actual Loss) – 3.750%

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**Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations**

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger.

FSA administers four types of disaster designations:

**USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation**

- The designation process can be initiated by individual farmers, local government officials, State governors, State agriculture commissions, tribal councils or the FSA State Executive Director.
- This designation is triggered by a 30-percent or greater production loss to at least one crop because of a natural disaster, or at least 1 producer who sustained individual losses because of a natural disaster and is unable to obtain commercial financing to cover those losses.
- In 2012, USDA developed a fast-track process for disaster declarations for severe drought. This provides for a nearly automatic designation when, during the growing season, any portion of a county meets the D2 (Severe Drought) drought intensity value for eight consecutive weeks or a higher drought intensity value for any length of time as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor ([http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)) Administrator’s Physical Loss Notification.

- This designation is initiated by the FSA State Executive Director.
- The designation is triggered by physical damage and losses because of a natural disaster, including but not limited to dead livestock, collapsed buildings, and destroyed farm structures. **Presidential Designation**

- A Presidential major disaster designation and emergency declaration is initiated by the Governor of the impacted state through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- This designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the State and local governments. **Quarantine Designation**

- This designation is requested of the Secretary of Agriculture by the FSA State Executive Director.
- A quarantine designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by the effects of a plant or animal quarantine approved by the Secretary under the Plant Protection Act or animal quarantine laws. All four types of designations immediately trigger the availability of low-interest Emergency loans to eligible producers in all primary and contiguous counties. FSA borrowers in these counties who are unable to make their scheduled payments on any debt may be authorized to have certain set asides. Additional disaster assistance requiring a designation may also be provided by new programs in the future. For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster).
Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) Program

FSA borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment/s needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale.

Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

For more information, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).