

October 2016



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Illinois FSA Newsletter

Illinois Farm Service Agency

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FSA County Committee Election

DON'T MISS OUT ON VOTING

Ballots will be mailed to voters by Nov. 7, 2016, and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by Dec. 5, 2016. Eligible voters must contact their local FSA county office before the final date if they did not receive a ballot.

WHO CAN VOTE

State Executive Director:

Scherrie V. Giamanco

State Committee:

Jill Appell - Chairperson
Brenda Hill - Member
Jerry Jimenez - Member

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. Members of American Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote if

Joyce Matthews - Member
Gordon Stine - Member

Executive Officer:
Rick Graden

Administrative Officer:
Dan Puccetti

Division Chiefs:
Doug Bailey
Jeff Koch
Stan Wilson

voting requirements are met. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member" <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/newsroom/county-committee-elections/index>.

Producers may contact their local FSA county office for more information. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/il

USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Farmers in Response to 2015 Market Downturn

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that beginning today, many of the 1.7 million farms that enrolled in either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs will receive safety-net payments due to market downturns during the 2015 crop year.

This fall, USDA will be making more than \$7 billion in payments under the ARC-County and PLC programs to assist participating producers, which will account for over 10 percent of USDA's projected 2016 net farm income. These payments will help provide reassurance to America's farm families, who are standing strong against low commodity prices compounded by unfavorable growing conditions in many parts of the country.

Unlike the old direct payment program, which issued payments during both weak and strong market conditions, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized the ARC-PLC safety net to trigger and provide financial assistance only when decreases in revenues or crop prices, respectively, occur. The ARC and PLC programs primarily allow producers to continue to produce for the market by making payments on a percentage of historical base production, limiting the impact on production decisions.

Nationwide, producers enrolled 96 percent of soybean base acres, 91 percent of corn base acres and 66 percent of wheat base acres in the ARC-County coverage option. Producers enrolled 99 percent of long grain rice and peanut base acres and 94 percent of medium grain rice base acres in the PLC option. Overall, 76 percent of participating farm base acres are enrolled in ARC-County, 23 percent in PLC and one percent in ARC-Individual. For other program information including frequently asked questions, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Payments are made to producers who enrolled base acres of barley, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, oats, peanuts, dry peas, soybeans, wheat and canola. In the upcoming months, payments will be announced after marketing year average prices are published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for the remaining covered commodities. These include long and medium grain rice (except for temperate

Japonica rice), which will be announced in November, remaining oilseeds and chickpeas, which will be announced in December, and temperate Japonica rice, which will be announced in early February 2017. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

The Budget Control Act of 2011, passed by Congress, requires USDA to reduce 2015 ARC and PLC payments by 6.8 percent. For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment through the Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets. The FSFL program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 95 percent of the net cost of the eligible FSFL equipment. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply for FSFL's.

Larger farming and ranching operations, that may not be able to participate in the new "microloan" option, may apply for the traditional, larger FSFL's with the maximum principal amount for each loan through FSFL of \$500,000.00. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Additional security is required for poured-cement open-bunker silos, renewable biomass facilities, cold storage facilities, hay barns and for all loans exceeding \$100,000.00. FSFL loan terms of 3, 5, 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for FSFL. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. The FSFL application must be approved before: purchasing the FSFL equipment, beginning any excavation or site preparation, accepting delivery of FSFL equipment, beginning installation or construction.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Offers to Re-Enroll CRP Acres Expiring on September 30, 2017 are Being Accepted Now

Participants with CRP contracts expiring on September 30, 2017 are encouraged to contact their local FSA county offices now to determine if all or a portion of their expiring acreage is eligible for re-enrollment in CRP continuous signup 50.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires that beginning October 1, 2016, no more than 24 million acres can be enrolled in CRP. Although the USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA) is close to the 24 million acre national statutory cap, contracts on 2.5 million acres of land previously enrolled in CRP will expire from the program on September 30, 2017.

FSA county offices are continuing to accept offers from producers seeking to enroll lands in the program. In order to manage the record demand for CRP acres, producers submitting CRP offers for any continuous enrollment will have the option to request a contract effective date of October 1, 2017 or pending availability of acres, request a contract with an effective date during fiscal year (FY) 2017.

Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish native plant species on marginal agricultural lands for the primary purpose of preventing soil erosion and improving water quality and related benefits of reducing loss of wildlife habitat.

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

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

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a customer receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the Natural 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. Electronic receipts for acreage reports will begin on August 1, 2016.

A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon.

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method - may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Maintaining the Quality of Loaned Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

Farm Loan Graduation Reminder

FSA Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

FSA periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower's ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower's financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer's operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower's potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower's name, loan type, balance sheet and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower's loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders that are interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA farm loan office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, FSA's intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

Marketing Assistance Loans Available for 2016 Crops

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

MALs provide financing and marketing assistance for 2016 crop wheat, and other commodities such as feed grains, soybeans and other oilseeds, pulse crops, 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.

Illinois FSA county offices are now accepting requests for 2016 crop wheat, oats, barley and honey MALs and LDPs for eligible commodities after harvest. As 2016 crop harvest begins, Illinois FSA county offices are accepting requests for 2016 fall harvested crops; corn and soybeans.

A producer who is eligible to obtain an MAL, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

To be eligible for an MAL or an LDP, producers must have a beneficial interest in the commodity, in addition to other requirements. A producer retains beneficial interest when control of and title to the commodity is maintained. For an LDP, the producer must retain beneficial interest in the commodity from the time of planting through the date the producer filed [Form CCC-633EZ \(page 1\)](#) in the FSA County Office. For more information, producers should contact their local FSA county office or view the [LDP Fact Sheet](#).

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 Reminds Producers of Nov. 1 ELAP Application Deadline

Eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who experienced losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and floods, not covered by other agricultural

disaster assistance programs, have until Nov. 1, 2016, to submit an application and notice of loss under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

Eligible livestock losses include; loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2016
- An application for payment by November 1, 2016

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

USDA Announces Safety Net Assistance for Milk Producers Due to Tightening Dairy Margins

USDA today announced approximately \$11.2 million in financial assistance to American dairy producers enrolled in the 2016 Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). The payment rate for May/June 2016 will be the largest since the program began in 2014. The narrowing margin between milk prices and the cost of feed triggered the payments, as provided for by the 2014 Farm Bill.

Dairy producers should evaluate their enrollment options for 2017, as the enrollment period ends Dec. 16, 2016.

Dairy producers who enrolled at the \$6 through \$8 margin trigger coverage level will receive MPP payments.

MPP-Dairy payments are triggered when the national average margin (the difference between the price of milk and the cost of feed) falls below a level of coverage selected by the dairy producer, ranging from \$4 to \$8, for a specified consecutive two-month period. The national average margin for the May/June 2016 two-month consecutive period is \$5.76277 per hundred weight (cwt.).

To learn more about the Margin Protection Program for dairy, visit the Farm Service Agency (FSA) online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop by a local FSA office. Producers may visit www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. To find an FSA office near you, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

October Interest Rates and Important Dates to Remember

Selected Interest Rates for October 2016	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.250%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years)	.0875%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years)	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	1.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years)	1.750%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.625%

Dates to Remember	
November 1	ELAP application Deadline
November 1	2017 ARC/PLC Enrollment Begins
November 7	COC Election ballots will be mailed
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday – FSA Offices Closed
December 5	COC Election ballots to be returned to County offices – postmarked by Dec. 5, 2016
December 16	Final date to Enroll in 2017 MPP Continuous – FSFL applications

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).