

November 2016



Indiana Farm Service Agency Program Updates

Indiana State FSA Office From the FSA Farm Fields

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As we embark upon the winter months, we need to all be prepared to endure a cold winter. But those cold winters prepare the Hoosier landscape for the next growing season. The corn and soybean harvests have all but come to an end. The hay and silage is in storage in anticipation of when it will be needed most this winter.

During these winter months, use this time to check in with your local office about any updates you need to make to your farm records. Remember, you will need to enroll in the ARC-PLC program for the 2017 crop. We look forward to seeing you in our offices!

Also, please remember, that these electronic newsletters is how we communicate with you about the latest information. In order to help communicate FSA news and updates, I ask you to help us by asking your friends and neighbors to see if they are receiving this electronic newsletter. If they don't, please help us in getting them signed up or maybe share yours with them. You can check with your county office for more information about GovDelivery.

I wish you all a Wonderful Holiday Season!

Sincerely In Indiana Agriculture,

Julia

Farm Service Agency Extends Voting Deadline for County Committee Elections

Producers Now Have Until Dec. 13 to Submit Ballots

The deadline to submit ballots for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) 2016 County Committee Elections has been extended to ensure farmers have sufficient time to vote. Eligible voters now have until Dec. 13, 2016 to return ballots to their local FSA offices. Producers who have not received their ballot should pick one up at their local FSA office.

FSA has modified the ballot, making it easily identifiable and less likely to be overlooked. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than Dec. 13, 2016. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2017.

Nearly 7,700 FSA County Committee members serve FSA offices nationwide, with nearly 300 serving in Indiana. Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office. One-third of County Committee seats are up for election each year. County Committee members apply their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support, conservation, indemnity, disaster and emergency programs.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the County Committee election. Approximately 1.5 million producers are currently eligible to vote. Farmers and ranchers who supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, but are not of legal voting age, also may be eligible to vote.

For more information, visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. You may also contact your local USDA service center or FSA office. Visit <http://offices.usda.gov> to find an FSA office near you.

Margin Protection Program for Dairy Enrollment Deadline is Dec. 16

The deadline for dairy producers to enroll in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for Dairy is Dec. 16, 2016. This voluntary dairy safety net program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer. A USDA web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy producers to calculate levels of coverage available from MPP based on price projections.

USDA Expands Microloans to Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Producers, Including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program, which celebrates its third anniversary this year, has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

This microloan announcement is another USDA resource for America's farmers to utilize, especially as [new and beginning farmers](#) look for the assistance they need to get started. To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office. To find your nearest office location, please visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

Guaranteed Loan Program

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$1,399,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your lender or local FSA farm loan office for more information on guaranteed loans.

USDA Resumes Incentives to Grow the Bioeconomy and Improve Forest Health

USDA announced that \$1.5 million will be available in fiscal year 2017 for farmers and foresters who harvest and deliver biomass for renewable energy. The funds are from the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), which was reauthorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

In fiscal year 2017, there is \$3 million total available for BCAP, half of which is for harvesting and delivering forest or agricultural residues to a USDA-approved energy facility. BCAP also provides financial assistance to farmers who establish and maintain new crops of biomass for energy or biobased products; additional information on the resumption of those funds will be announced at a later date.

Facilities seeking to be qualified by USDA to accept BCAP-funded biomass can begin enrollment Nov. 14 through Dec. 5, 2016. Also, between Jan. 9, 2017, through March 15, 2017, USDA will accept applications from foresters and farmers seeking incentives to remove biomass residues from fields or national forests for delivery to energy generation facilities. The retrieval payments are provided at match of \$1 for \$1, up to \$20 per dry ton. Eligible crops include corn residue, orchard waste or diseased or insect-infested wood materials.

To learn more about BCAP or to enroll in updates, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap or contact your local FSA county office.

USDA Climate Hub Building Block: Nitrogen Stewardship

USDA Climate Hubs are working with farmers, livestock producers, pasture and forest landowners to effectively partner in ways to help mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. Next in our series on the 10 Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry is Nitrogen Stewardship.

Within the United States, agriculture is a significant source of nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions—a greenhouse gas (GHG) that has a global warming potential 250 times more than carbon dioxide (CO₂). In 2013, cropland agriculture released approximately 136 MMTCO₂e (Million Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide-Equivalent) in direct N₂O emissions. More than half of these N₂O emissions are from synthetic fertilizers and organic amendments. Improved nitrogen management practices can reduce emissions from these sources.

The primary practice used in the Nitrogen Stewardship Building Block to reduce GHG emissions involves the 4Rs: right source, right rate, right time, and right place. The 4Rs come from the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Nutrient Management (590). To read more about Nitrogen Stewardship click the following link or copy and paste the link into your web browser:

http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/building_blocks/2_NitrogenStewardship.pdf.

For more information about the USDA Climate Hubs click here: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Surveys Determine 2016 Crop Yields

As farmers wrap up the 2016 growing season, the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct three major surveys to determine final 2016 crop acreage and yields, as well as, hog inventories. These three surveys, the 2016 Row Crops County Agricultural Production Survey, the December Agricultural Survey, and the December Hog Report, will also be used to establish winter wheat seedings, grain stocks, and hog farrowings. County level acreage and yield estimates for corn and soybeans will also be set using the data farmers provide on these surveys. USDA's Risk Management Agency will use the NASS county yields to determine federal crop insurance payments.

The USDA will contact approximately 11,100 Indiana farmers and ask them to provide their 2016 acreage and crop or hog production data. Each report is critical to ensure data reliability.

Most selected farmers will receive a questionnaire in the mail. Those not responding by mail will receive a follow up telephone call or personal visit. Producers receiving questionnaires in the mail are encouraged to complete and return them promptly. Completing the surveys on the internet is also an option for all three surveys. Individual reports from farmers are kept confidential and are summarized to set county, state, and national estimates.

The Hogs and Pigs report based on the December Hog survey will be released Friday, December 23 at 12:00 pm Eastern. The Crop Production, Grain Stocks, and Winter Wheat Seedings reports based on the December Agricultural Survey will be released Thursday, January 12 at 12:00 pm Eastern. County level estimates for oats and wheat will be available in the Quick Stats database on December 15 at 3:00 pm Eastern. County level estimates for corn and soybeans will be available in the Quick Stats database on February 23 at 3:00 pm Eastern. County level estimates for dry beans will be available in the Quick Stats database on January 12 at 12:00 pm Eastern.

If you have questions about the surveys or releases, please contact the USDA, NASS, Great Lakes Regional Office at 800-453-7501.

Dates to Remember

December 1: NAP application closing date for honey for the following year

December 15: Reporting date for 2016 fall mint, fall-seeded small grains

December 16: Deadline Extended: MPP-Dairy 2017 registration and election ends

December 26: Offices closed in observance of Christmas Day

January 2: Offices closed in observance of New Year's Day

January 15: Reporting date for 2016 acreage for apples

January 16: Offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday

January 30: Deadline to apply for 2016 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and 2016 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

January 31: Deadline to file Tree Assistance Program (TAP) application

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).