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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Indiana Farm Service Agency Program Updates

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2017 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit your local county FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed below or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Indiana:

January 2 - Honey
January 15 - Apples
June 15 - Cucumbers (Planted 5/1-5/31 in Knox County)
July 15 - Cucumbers (Planted 5/10-6/15 in all counties), all other crops
August 15 - Cucumbers (Planted 6/16-8/5 in Fulton, LaPorte, Porter, and St. Joseph Counties)
September 15 - Cucumbers (Planted 6/1-8/15 in Knox County)
September 30 - Value Loss and Controlled Environment Crop (for the coming program year)
November 15 - Perennial Grazing and Forage Crops (alfalfa, grass, mixed forages, clover, etc.)
December 15 - Fall Mint, Fall-Seeded Small Grains

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

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- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.
- Cucumbers and crops for NAP coverage may have dates not included on the chart above. Visit your local county office for details.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local county FSA office.

Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

Producers who wish to receive history credit for either prevented planting or failed acreage must file a Notice of Loss with the Farm Service Agency.

Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

The final planting date for corn in Indiana was June 5th and the final planting date for soybeans was June 20th (for both initial and double crop).

The final planting date for 2017 wheat was either October 20 or October 30 in Indiana depending on location. Producers should contact their local office if they are unaware of the final planting date in their county. The date to timely file a prevented planting request for wheat in Indiana has passed for 2016. However, producers may submit a late filed report. FSA will accept the report as timely if it was filed timely with crop insurance. If not producers will be assessed a measurement service fee per farm and FSA will consider late filed requests dependent upon the assessment of the disaster condition during a farm visit.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should file form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report acreage destroyed or damaged by disaster. This must be filed prior to destruction of the crop to provide FSA with an opportunity to inspect the acreage.

For losses on crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Additionally, many crops covered by NAP require an initial notification of loss be made to the FSA administrative office within 72 hours of loss occurrence or loss becoming apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses to ensure the opportunity to receive acreage reporting history credit for the crop as well as potential program benefits.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local county FSA office.

Required Management on CRP Acres

Participants in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are responsible for maintaining the acreage under contract to the minimum specifications and acreages as required by their conservation plan and supporting documents. This includes not only controlling excessive weeds, invasive species, and trees in grass practices, but completing required management on CRP practices as scheduled in conservation plans as well.

The purpose of required management activities, commonly referred to as mid contract management (MCM), is to enhance the wildlife habitat value of the enrolled acres for species such as Northern Bobwhite, pollinators, and others. In grass practices, the perennial grasses tend to crowd out the desired broadleaf plants, litter accumulates and plant diversity declines. In tree practices, thinning or pruning may be needed to improve tree growth or enhancements needed in open areas to encourage plant diversity for wildlife. MCM is now required on all new practices and if not already required, is optional on all older contracts.

These activities (as well as any treatment for weed control or maintenance) must be completed outside of the primary nesting season. In Indiana, the primary nesting season for a contract that was approved for enrollment prior to February 8, 2007 is from March 1 through July 15th. For newer contracts, the primary nesting season is April 1 through August 1st. Any activities completed during this time period may result in a contract violation and payment reduction.

Required management activities include: prescribed burning, strip disking, strip spraying, inter-seeding forbs/legumes/pollinators, pruning/thinning, inner seedling or shrub planting for diversity. Cost Share is available for eligible practices up to a maximum of \$100 per acre for a 10-year contract or up to \$125 per acre for a 15-year contract over the duration of the contract.

ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

Nominations Open for the 2017 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in their local County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year. County committees may have one or more appointed advisors to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and land owners and/or operators who have limited resources.

Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

All nomination forms for the 2017 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2017. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Enrollment Period Continues for Safety Net Coverage in 2017

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can now visit FSA county offices to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Reconstitutions

To be effective for the current Fiscal Year (FY), farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the FY** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. A reconstitution is considered to be requested when all:

- of the required signatures are on form FSA-155
- other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

USDA Approves Modifications to Margin Protection Plan of Insurance

Crop Insurance Program Expands Options for America's Farmers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced greater crop insurance options for farmers against unexpected decreases in their operating margin. Offered through the federal crop insurance program, margin protection insurance for corn, wheat, rice and soybeans will

be available in more states and have updates designed to better clarify the real input costs covered beginning in 2018.

The RMA is expanding margin protection for corn and soybeans to Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The RMA also reevaluated how the liabilities and deductibles were identified and has increased the maximum coverage level available to 95 percent. In addition, the program was updated to add a harvest price option for all margin protection crops, which will allow farmers to get the greater of the projected price or the harvest price to further result in a more effective safety net for farmers.

Margin protection insurance is a privately-developed product and first became available in 2016 to provide coverage based on an expected margin, which is the expected area revenue minus the expected area operating costs, for each applicable crop, type and practice. Margin protection is area-based coverage and may not necessarily reflect individual experience. The margin protection plan can be purchased by itself, or in conjunction with a Yield Protection or Revenue Protection policy.

A producer may choose coverage from 70 percent to 95 percent of their expected margin. A higher level of coverage will have a higher premium rate. The last day to purchase a margin protection policy for corn, soybeans, and spring wheat is Sept. 30, 2017. The last day to purchase margin protection for rice is the same as the sales closing date for the underlying rice insurance policy, which varies by county. Maps of eligible counties and other resources can be found on the margin protection webpage.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator.

Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at www.rma.usda.gov.

Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide you with a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts.

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Census of Agriculture Countdown Begins for America's Farmers and Ranchers

America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them.

The Census of Agriculture highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and other topics. The 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that over three million farmers operated more than two million farms, spanning over 914 million acres. This was a four percent decrease in the number of U.S. farms from the previous census in 2007. However, agriculture sales, income, and expenses increased between 2007 and 2012. This telling information and thousands of other agriculture statistics are a direct result of responses to the Census of Agriculture.

Producers who are new to farming or did not receive a Census of Agriculture in 2012 still have time to sign up to receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture report form by visiting www.agcensus.usda.gov and clicking on the 'Make Sure You Are Counted' button through June. NASS defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

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 and ranchers 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.

Seeking Nominations for USDA Advisory Committees

The USDA Secretary of Agriculture is soliciting nominations for membership for the Advisory Committees and Boards listed below. For more information, click on the individual links to be directed to the website.

An organization may nominate individuals from within or outside its membership. Alternatively, an individual may nominate herself or himself. Nomination packages should include a nomination form along with a cover letter or resume that documents the nominee's background and experience. Nomination forms are available on the Internet at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-755>.

- [Nomination Deadline: June 30, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominations for National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee](#)

- [Nomination Deadline: June 30, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for the National Watermelon Promotion Board](#)
 - [Nomination Deadline: July 1, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for the U.S. Potato Board](#)
 - [Nomination Deadline: July 14, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for American Egg Board](#)
 - [Nomination Deadline: August 7, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for National Organic Standards Board \(NOSB\)](#)
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Dates to Remember

July 1: MPP-Dairy 2018 registration and election begins

July 4: Offices closed in observance of Independence Day

July 5: Final date to submit a prevented planting claim for soybeans

July 15: Reporting date for all other crops (including cucumbers planted 5/10-6/15) in all other counties in Indiana

August 1: Deadline to enroll in 2017 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs

August 1: Deadline to request farm reconstitutions and transfers for 2017

August 1: Deadline for 2017 County Committee election nomination forms - postmarked or delivered to the local FSA office

August 15: Reporting date for cucumbers (planted 6/16-8/5 in Fulton, LaPorte, Porter and St. Joseph Counties)

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).