

May 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

*GovDelivery*

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## Indiana Farm Service Agency Program Updates

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### Indiana Farm Service Agency

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### From the Desk of the State Executive Director

After early concerns, the planters started to roll in most counties by mid-April. Warm weather and favorable conditions has given farmers a chance to make significant progress in corn and soybean plantings. For producers who have completed planting, I would encourage you to call your local FSA office to schedule a time to complete this year's crop certification. If you have not completed sign-up in the ARC/PLC program, call your local office and make an appointment as well.

Don't forget signup for the MPP-Dairy program ends June 1. See additional details in the article provided in this newsletter.

Beginning June 15, our annual county committee elections will be underway and we are looking for candidates. Contact your local FSA office for more information.

Steve

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### Secretary Perdue Names FSA Administrator

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the appointment of Richard Fordyce to serve as Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA). In his role, Fordyce will provide leadership for FSA and its mission to support agricultural production across America through a network of over 2,100 county and 50 state offices.

Richard Fordyce, a fourth-generation farmer, most recently served as State Executive Director for FSA in Missouri. Prior to his appointment by the Trump Administration, Fordyce served as the director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture from 2013 to

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2017. In 2015, Fordyce was awarded the Missouri Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award and the Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow Alumnus of the Year. He and his wife, Renee, have two children and grow soybeans, corn and beef cattle on the family farm.

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For more information about the Farm Service Agency, please visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Dairy Farmers Have Until June 1 to Apply for Improved Safety Net under Margin Protection Program

*Many Participants Will Receive Payments Beginning in Early June*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds dairy farmers of the June 1 deadline to enroll in the improved [Margin Protection Program for Dairy \(MPP-Dairy\)](#). Many producers will see payments in early June, depending on the coverage they elect.

The program protects dairy producers by paying them based on the difference between the national all-milk price and the national average feed cost. The 2018 Bipartisan Budget Act made several changes to the safety net program to provide better protections for dairy producers from shifting milk and feed prices.

Updates include:

- Calculation of the margin period is monthly rather than bi-monthly.
- Covered production is increased to 5 million pounds on the Tier 1 premium schedule, and premium rates for Tier 1 are substantially lowered.
- An exemption from paying an administrative fee for limited resource, beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged producers. Dairy operators enrolled in the previous 2018 enrollment period that qualify for this exemption under the new provisions may request a refund.

Signup for 2018 will be retroactive to Jan. 1, of this year. Margins for February and March 2018 have already been announced and payments for those months, along with potential payments for April, will be issued in June based on producer elections.

All dairy operations must make new coverage elections for 2018, even if the operation was enrolled during the previous 2018 signup period. Dairy producers should use the [MPP-Dairy Decision Tool](#) for support in making related enrollment decisions.

All dairy operations interested in MPP-Dairy coverage must sign up during the enrollment period and submit form CCC-782 to FSA to enroll. Dairy operations may still “opt out” by not submitting a form.

For more information, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy). Contact your local FSA county office to enroll in the program. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018

Farmers with base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program may enroll for the 2018 crop year. The enrollment period will end on Aug. 1, 2018.

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

The producers on a farm that are not enrolled for the 2018 enrollment period will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 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 previous years must still enroll during the 2018 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](http://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>.

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## **Farm Service Agency Makes Administrative Change to the Livestock Indemnity Program**

Agricultural producers who have lost livestock to disease, resulting from a weather disaster, have an additional way to become eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#).

In the event of disease, this change by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) authorizes local FSA county committees to accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management. The committees may then use this certification to allow eligibility for producers on a case-by-case basis for LIP.

LIP provides benefits to agricultural producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease or by attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government. Eligible weather events include earthquakes, hail, tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, blizzard and flooding.

Producers interested in LIP or other USDA disaster assistance programs should contact their local [USDA service center](#).

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## **USDA to Immediately Assist Producers for Qualifying Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program Losses**

*\$34 Million in Payments for 2017 Losses Part of Broad Suite of Programs Aiding Ag Operations*

USDA will issue \$34 million to help agricultural producers recover from 2017 natural disasters through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP), which covers losses not covered by certain other USDA disaster assistance programs. These payments are being made available today, and they are part of a broader USDA effort to help producers recover from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, wildfires and drought. A large portion of this assistance will be made available in [federally designated disaster areas](#).

ELAP aims to help eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs such as the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) and the [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#).

The increased amount of assistance through ELAP was made possible by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, signed earlier this year. The Act amended the 2014 Farm Bill to enable USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) to provide assistance to producers without an annual funding cap and immediately for 2017. It also enables FSA to pay ELAP applications as they are filed for 2018 and subsequent program years.

### **Other USDA Disaster Assistance Programs**

The Act removed program year payment limitations and increased the acreage cap for the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP), a nationwide program that provides owners of orchards, vineyards and nurseries with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster. For example, the program will help owners of citrus groves in Florida, avocado trees in California, coffee plantations in Puerto Rico and vineyards reduce the cost of replanting, and speed recovery from the loss of fruit and nut trees, bushes, and vines.

Prior to the Act, there was a combined program year payment limitation of \$125,000 for ELAP, LIP and LFP per person or legal entity. The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) had its own \$125,000 payment limitation. The Act removed the program year per person and legal entity payment limitation for LIP and TAP. As a result of the Act, a \$125,000 per person and legal entity single payment limitation applies to the total amount of program year payments received under both ELAP and the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) and program payments under LIP and TAP no longer have payment limits.

Under the updated program, as amended by the Act, growers are eligible to be partly reimbursed for losses on up to 1,000 acres per program year, double the previous acreage limit of 500 acres.

In total, it is estimated that the Act will enable USDA to provide more than \$3 billion in disaster assistance, including the \$2.36 billion announced last week to be made available through FSA's new [2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program](#). This includes \$400 million made available for the [Emergency Conservation Program](#), which helps farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters. As signups across the country are completed, additional applications will be funded.

According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States was impacted by 16 separate billion-dollar disaster events in 2017 including: three tropical cyclones, eight severe storms, two inland floods, a crop freeze, drought and wildfire. More than 25 million people – almost eight percent of the population – were affected by major disasters. From severe flooding in Puerto Rico and Texas to mudslides and wildfires in California, major natural disasters caused catastrophic damages, with an economic impact totaling more than \$300 billion.

### **For Assistance**

Producers with operations impacted by natural disasters and diseases in 2018 are encouraged to contact their local [USDA service center](#) to apply for assistance through ELAP, TAP, LIP and LFP. Producers with 2017 ELAP claims need to take no action as FSA will begin paying those claims today.

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## **FSA Releases Signup Information for Tree Assistance Program**

USDA's Farm Service Agency recently released signup information for the [Tree Assistance Program](#), a nationwide program that provides orchardists and nursery tree growers with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 prescribed several changes to the program, including the removal of the \$125,000 per person and legal entity payment limitation. The [notice](#) outlined when producers should file applications for any recent losses, given the changes to the program.

Eligible producers should file for TAP assistance by the later of these two dates:

- 90 days of the disaster or when damages from the disaster are noticed; or
- 60 days after the regulation is published on the Federal Register later this summer.

The following producers can file applications:

- Producers who did not previously apply for TAP for 2017 or 2018 losses; and
- Producers who had applied and received an adverse determination that their 2017 or 2018 TAP application was filed late.

Additionally, producers with 2017 losses can also file an application or revise an original application because of the changes made through the Act.

For more information on TAP, producers should contact their local [USDA service center](#).

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## **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.

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## **Clearing Wooded Areas, Draining, or Bringing New Land Into Production**

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

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## **2018 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.
- 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.

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## **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 is June 5th and the final planting date for soybeans and June 20th (for both initial and double crop).

The final planting date for 2018 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 2018. 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.

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## **USDA Microloans 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 and ranchers 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 and ranchers to utilize, especially as [new and beginning farmers and ranchers](#) look for the assistance they need to get started. To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans), or contact your local FSA office.

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## **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.

# Still Time to be Counted in the 2017 Census of Agriculture

## *NASS to follow-up with producers who have not yet responded*

Indiana farmers still have time to be counted in the 2017 Census of Agriculture, according to Greg Matli, State Statistician of the USDA, NASS, Indiana Field Office. Although the first deadline has just passed, NASS will continue to accept Census information through the spring to get a complete and accurate picture of American agriculture that represents all farmers.

"We thank everyone who has completed their Census to date and ask those that have not yet returned their Census to please take the time to do it," said Matli. "A lot is at stake if producers are not represented in this data. Census data have and will continue to influence important decisions for American agriculture. The data will affect every operation and every farming community at some point, whether it be through farm policy, disaster relief, insurance or loan programs, infrastructure improvements, or agribusiness setup. There is accuracy and strength in numbers, which is why NASS is committed to giving producers every opportunity to respond."

Federal law mandates that everyone who received the 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire complete it and return it even if not currently farming. NASS will continue to follow-up with producers through the spring with mailings, phone calls, and personal visits. To avoid these additional contacts, farmers are encouraged to complete their Census either online at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov) or by mail as soon as possible. Responding online saves time by skipping sections that do not apply and automatically calculating totals. The online questionnaire is accessible on desktops, laptops, and mobile devices.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov). For questions or assistance filling out the Census, call toll-free (888) 424-7828.

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## **USDA Seeks Feedback from Growers About 2018 Crops, Stocks, Inventories, Values**

During the first two weeks of June, U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct two major mid-year surveys, the June Agricultural Survey and the June Area Survey. The agency will survey over 2,500 farmers across Indiana to determine crop production and supplies levels in 2018.

"Due to the widespread and significant impact of its results, the June Agricultural Survey and the June Area Survey are two of the most important and well-known surveys NASS conducts," explained Greg Matli, State Statistician of the USDA, NASS, Indiana Field Office. "When growers respond to these surveys, they provide essential information that helps us determine the prospective production and supply of major commodities in the United States for the 2018 crop year. Everyone who relies on agriculture for their livelihoods is interested in the results."

NASS gathers the data for the June Agricultural Survey online, by mail, phone and in-person interview. For the June Area Survey, agency representatives visit randomly selected tracts of land and interview the operators of any farm or ranch on that land. Growers provide information on crop acreage – including biotech crops—as well as grain stocks, livestock inventory, cash rents, land values, and value of sales.

NASS will compile and analyze the survey information and publish the results in a series of USDA reports, including the annual *Acreage* report and quarterly *Grain Stocks* report, both to be released June 29, 2018. Survey data contribute to NASS's monthly and annual *Crop Production* reports, as well as the annual *Small Grains Summary* and USDA's monthly *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates*.

“NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes only state- and national-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified,” stated Matli. “We recognize this is a hectic time for farmers, but the information they provide helps U.S. agriculture remain viable and capable. I urge them to respond to these surveys and thank them for their cooperation,” said Matli.

All reports are available on the NASS website: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications>.

For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Great Lakes Regional Field Office at (800) 453-7501.

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## Dates to Remember

**Continuing through August 1, 2018:** Enrollment for 2018 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Programs

**May 28:** Offices closed in observance of Memorial Day

**May 31:** Final date to obtain loans or LDP's on 2017 harvested feed grains and soybeans

**June 1:** Date used to establish ownership interest for person or legal entity for program purposes

**June 1:** Date used for the determination of minor child for program purposes

**June 1:** Deadline to enroll for 2018 Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy)

**June 15:** Reporting date for cucumbers (Planted 5/1 to 5/31) in Knox County

**June 15:** Nominations open for the 2018 County Committee (COC) Election

**June 20:** Final date to submit a prevented planting claim for corn

**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 2018 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Programs

**August 1:** Deadline to request farm reconstitutions and transfers for 2018

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

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