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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

WOW, what a last 2 weeks it has been, completion of 2018 crop certification, ARC/PLC sign up ending August 1 and the announcement of a trade program to assist farmers in a response to trade damage from unjustified retaliation.

America's ag producers feed, fuel and clothe the world. Lately, there's been concern about how trade tariffs may affect their ability to do right and feed everyone.

Last week, President Trump directed Secretary Perdue to craft a short-term relief strategy to protect agricultural producers while the Administration works for free and fair trade deals. Secretary Perdue announced that USDA, with Farm Service Agency help, will take action to protect farmers facing potential trade implications. Specifically, USDA will authorize up to \$12 billion in programs, in line with the nearly \$11 billion impact of the tariffs on U.S. agricultural goods, allowing producers to meet the costs of disrupted markets.

In conversations around setting up and staffing these programs, there were multiple options as to who would lead them. Secretary Perdue expressed confidence that FSA is the right agency to lead the largest of the three programs, the Market Facilitation Program (MFP). MFP, authorized under The Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act and administered by FSA, will provide payments incrementally to producers of soybeans, sorghum, corn, wheat, cotton, dairy and hogs.

Additionally, a Food Purchase and Distribution Program, administered through USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, will purchase unexpected surplus of affected commodities such as fruits, nuts, rice, legumes, beef, pork and milk for distribution to food banks and other nutrition programs.

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And lastly, a Trade Promotion Program, administered by the USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service in conjunction with the private sector, will assist in developing new export markets for our farm products.

Putting a program like MFP together won't be simple, but we can do it because of dedicated employees on the front lines.

It is with stalwart determination and admiration that we stand beside America's agricultural community and offer them our full support and encouragement as they work to feed the world, despite facing monumental challenges.

Market dynamics within the farm economy are challenging right now, so this is going to be a particularly impactful program across the country as Secretary Perdue has stated.

Steve

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## August 1 Deadline: Enrollment 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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## August 1 Deadline: Eligibility for Nominations for the 2018 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) 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. To be eligible for nomination and hold office as a

committee member or alternate, a person must fulfill each of the following requirements: (1) be a producer with an interest in farming or ranching operations, (2) participate or cooperate in any FSA program provided for by law, (3) be a U.S. citizen, (4) be of legal voting age, (5) meet the basic eligibility requirements, and (6) reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in which they will be serving. Contact your local FSA office to find out if your LAA is up for an election.

**All nomination forms for the 2018 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2018.** 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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

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## August 17 Deadline: USDA Resumes Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment

*One-Year Extension Available to Holders of Many Expiring Contracts through Continuous Signup*

As part of a 33-year effort to protect sensitive lands and improve water quality and wildlife habitat on private lands, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has resumed accepting applications for the voluntary [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP). **Eligible farmers and private landowners can sign up at their local [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) office through Aug. 17, 2018.**

FSA stopped accepting applications last fall for the CRP continuous signup (excluding applications for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP grasslands). This pause allowed USDA to review available acres and avoid exceeding the 24 million-acre CRP cap set by the 2014 Farm Bill. New limited practice availability and short sign up period helps ensure that landowners with the most sensitive acreage will enroll in the program and avoid unintended competition with new and beginning farmers seeking leases. CRP enrollment currently is about 22.7 million acres.

### 2018 Signup for CRP

For this year's signup, limited priority practices are available for continuous enrollment. They 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. Producers eligible for an extension will receive a letter with more information.

### CRP Grasslands

Additionally, FSA established new [ranking criteria](#) for [CRP Grasslands](#). To guarantee all CRP grasslands offers are treated equally, applicants who previously applied will be asked to reapply using the new ranking criteria. Producers with pending applications will receive a letter providing the options.

### About CRP

In return for enrolling land in CRP, USDA, through FSA on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP pays producers who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.

The new changes to CRP do not impact the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a related program offered by CCC and state partners.

Producers wanting to apply for the CRP continuous signup or CRP grasslands should contact their [USDA service center](#). More information on CRP can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

## **CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and the Farm Programs**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Indiana is April 1 through August 1 each year for contracts which started in 2008. If your contract was approved prior to 2008, then the primary nesting season is March 1 through July 15. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

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## **Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan 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.

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## **Livestock Inventory Records**

Producers are reminded to keep updated livestock inventory records. These records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can assist producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. For grazing or feed losses, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your local FSA office.

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## **Payments to Deceased Producers**

In order to claim a Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment on behalf of a deceased producer, all program conditions for the payment must have been met before the applicable producer's date of death.

If a producer earned a FSA payment prior to becoming deceased, the following is the order of precedence of the representatives of the producer:

- administrator or executor of the estate
- the surviving spouse
- surviving sons and daughters, including adopted children
- surviving father and mother
- surviving brothers and sisters
- heirs of the deceased person who would be entitled to payment according to the State law

In order for FSA to release the payment, the legal representative of the deceased producer must file a form FSA-325, to claim the payment for themselves or an estate. The county office will verify and determine that the application, contract, loan agreement, or other similar form requesting payment issuance, was signed by the applicable deadline for such form, by the deceased or a person legally authorized to act on their behalf at that time of application.

If the application, contract or loan agreement form was signed by someone other than the participant who is deceased, FSA will determine whether the person submitting the form has the legal authority to submit the form to compel FSA to pay the deceased participant.

Payments will be issued to the respective representative's name using the deceased program participant's tax identification number. Payments made to representatives are subject to offset regulations for debts owed by the deceased.

FSA is not responsible for advising persons in obtaining legal advice on how to obtain program benefits that may be due to a participant who has died, disappeared or who has been declared incompetent.

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## Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful for borrowers who use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines>. Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a "filter" on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three month period, the preauthorized debt agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

For more information about PAD, contact your local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

## Supervised Credit

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, it is our goal to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will advise borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation's goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA's staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## July 31 Deadline: Complete the 2017 Census of Agriculture

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) officially ends data collection for the 2017 Census of Agriculture on July 31. Farmers and ranchers, every response is important – even if it's just to say that you are no longer involved in farming. The Census of Agriculture, conducted once every five years, provides the only source of comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation. The stronger the data, the better informed future decisions can be. Each response is a representation of not only your individual farm or ranch but your industry and community, too. Remember, NASS is required by law – Federal law, Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113 – to keep all information confidential, to use the data only for statistical purposes, and to only publish data in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation. Though the deadline for the paper questionnaire has passed, you can still complete the census questionnaire securely online at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) or by calling toll-free (888) 424-7828 through July 31. Data release is planned for February 2019.

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## Dates to Remember

**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 1:** Deadline to file COC 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)

**August 17:** Deadline to apply for voluntary Conservation Reserve Program

**September 1:** 2018 MPP-Dairy premiums due

**September 1:** NAP application closing date for value loss crops for the following year (flowers for fresh cut, onion sets, turfgrass sod, Christmas trees, aquaculture, ginseng, mushrooms, etc.)

**September 3:** Offices closed in observance of Labor Day

**September 15:** Reporting date for cucumbers (planted 6/1-8/15 in Knox County)

**September 30:** Reporting date for value loss and controlled environment crop (for the coming program year)

**September 30:** Deadline to report changes in interest on ARC or PLC contracts

**September 30:** NAP application closing date for garlic, wheat, barley, rye and mint for the following year's crop

**October 8:** Offices closed in observance of Columbus Day

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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).