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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Indiana Farm Service Agency Program Updates

Indiana Farm Service Agency

5981 Lakeside Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46278

Phone: 317-290-3315
Fax: 855-374-4066
www.fsa.usda.gov/in

State Executive Director:
Steven E. Brown
steven.brown2@in.usda.gov

State Committee Members:
Ken Rulon, Chairperson
Allen Buchanan, Member
Bill Gelfius, Member
Clint Orr, Member
Kirk Perkins, Member

Administrative Officer:
Pauletta Dusterberg
pauletta.dusterberg@in.usda.gov

Production Adjustment Chief:
Carl Schweikhardt
carl.schweikhardt@in.usda.gov

Price Support/Disaster Chief:
Susan Houston
susan.houston@in.usda.gov

Conservation/Compliance Chief:
Susan Hovermale
susan.hovermale@in.usda.gov

From the Desk of the State Executive Director

Greetings!

It's been a hectic start to the 2019-year - government shutdown, MAL repayments and completion of the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

I would like to take this time to thank Indiana producers for their kind responses to our employees and patience during the shutdown. Our employees greatly appreciated the comments. Indiana FSA Offices have worked hard to deliver programs and process payments to our valued customers.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill), signed by President Trump on December 20, 2018, reauthorizes all programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and makes modifications to most of them. Most of the programs are authorized through 2023. A select few are authorized and funded indefinitely. We continue to get information on the new Farm Bill and are preparing for implementation of its programs. Our outreach efforts will play a very important role to provide details of the new legislation. More to come.

Thanks, Steve

Market Facilitation Program (MFP) – Certify 2018 Production by May 1, 2019

The final day to certify 2018 production for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) is **May 1, 2019**. Payments will not be issued without certification, which must be provided to your local FSA county office.

Farm Loan Chief:
Greg Foulke
greg.foulke@in.usda.gov

**Public Affairs/Outreach
Coordinator:**
Donna Ferguson
donna.ferguson@in.usda.gov

Producers of corn (fresh and processed), cotton, sorghum, soybeans (fresh and processed), wheat, dairy, hogs, fresh sweet cherries and shelled almonds were eligible to sign up for an MFP payment by February 14, 2019. MFP is designed to help producers significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Contact your local FSA county office for more information.

Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

For 2019 livestock losses, eligible livestock owners must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.

Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- [Proof of death documentation](#)
- [Copy of growers contracts](#)
- [Proof of normal mortality documentation](#)

For 2018 livestock losses, in addition to filing a notice of loss, producers must also submit an application for payment by **March 1, 2019**.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Producers Urged to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to review available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

The NAP application closing date for annual spring/summer planted crops not limited to: beans, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, canola, cantaloupes, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, greens, herbs, honeydew, lettuce, oats, okra, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, sorghum, squash, tomatillos, tomatoes, and watermelon is **March 15**.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx>.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

For more information on NAP, service fees, premiums and sales deadlines, contact your local FSA county office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

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.

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.

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

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.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

Farm Service Agency Farm Loan teams are already working on operating loans for spring 2019 so it is important that potential borrowers submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, or for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

For more information on loans contact your local county office. To find your local FSA county office 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.

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address or zip code or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

Changing Bank Accounts

FSA program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for whatever reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2017 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2018. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

Sign in/Sign up!

Farmers and agricultural producers have new online options to access U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. Through USDA's new streamlined process, producers doing business **as an individual** can now apply for programs, process transactions and manage your USDA accounts on the secure and convenient www.farmers.gov. Producers doing business as an individual first need to sign up for the Level 2 eAuthentication access. Currently USDA

eAuthentication does not have the mechanism to issue accounts to businesses, corporations, other entities or for anyone acting on behalf of another individual or entity.

- Step 1: Create an online account at www.eauth.usda.gov
- Step 2: Complete identity verification by either using the online self-service identity verification method or by completing the identity verification in-person at your USDA Service Center.
- Step 3: You're enrolled!
- Step 4: Contact your local USDA Service Center to have your new Level 2 account linked with your USDA customer record
- Step 5: You're ready to Log In!

Or go to your local USDA Service Center and our supportive staff will help you sign up for Level 2 Access right in the office! They will get you online so you can create an online account at <https://www.farmers.gov/sign-in>. You'll complete identity verification right on the spot. You're enrolled! Users with a secure Level 2 eAuthentication ID linked to their USDA customer record can apply for select USDA programs, view and print farm maps and farm records data. Enrolling is easy! Visit [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://www.farmers.gov/sign-in) to learn more.

To locate a service center near you or use online services not requiring eAuthentication access, visit www.farmers.gov. For technical assistance, call the eAuthentication help desk at 1-800-457-3642.

Columbus Indiana SCORE Offers Free Workshop - Understanding and Using Financial Statements

USDA is collaborating with SCORE – www.score.org - the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors in an effort to provide free business mentoring to farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural and rural business owners.

SCORE volunteer mentors with backgrounds in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, business and financial planning will provide local expertise and free one-on-one business mentoring to new and existing farmers and business owners as they work through the process of starting up and maintaining their businesses. No matter what stage your business is in, SCORE volunteer mentors can help in developing business plans, navigating financing and legal issues, identifying new markets, and other topics in order to help you succeed. FSA invites you to learn more and sign up for a mentor today at <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship>.

Free Financial Statements Workshop Presented by Columbus Indiana SCORE!

The Columbus Indiana SCORE is offering a free workshop to anyone interested in learning how to start up a new business on **Wednesday, March 6 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** at the Bartholomew County Public Library Conference Room, 536 5th Street, Columbus, IN 47201.

They will cover an easy-to-understand overview of the key financial statements:

- Income Statement (profit and loss)
- Balance Sheets
- Cash Flow

Additionally they will define and demonstrate the concepts of:

- Cash and Accrual Accounting
- Gross Profit Margins
- Equity and Debt
- Cash Management & Net Worth

For reservations call the Columbus Area Chamber at 812-379-4457 or e-mail Melissa@ColumbusAreaChamber.com. Seating will be limited so early sign-up is encouraged.

Dates to Remember

March 1: Final application for payment for 2018 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

March 15: NAP application closing date for annual spring/summer planted crops not limited to: beans, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, canola, cantaloupes, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, greens, herbs, honeydew, lettuce, oats, okra, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, sorghum, squash, tomatillos, tomatoes, and watermelon

March 31: Final date to obtain loans or Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP's) on 2018 harvested small grains

May 1: Deadline to certify production for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP)

May 27: Offices closed in observance of Memorial Day

May 31: Final date to obtain loans or LDPs on 2018 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 15: Reporting date for cucumbers (planted 5/1 to 5/31) in Knox County

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

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).