

February 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Massachusetts FSA Newsletter

Massachusetts Farm Service Agency

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Please contact your local FSA
Office for questions specific to

USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Program Deadline Extensions

USDA's Farm Service Agency extended deadlines on many of its programs because of the government shutdown and the emergency nature of many of the programs. Below are updated deadlines:

*** *For details on all program deadlines and extensions, view [FSA National Notice CM-807](#)*

Farm Programs

- Market Facilitation Program
- *Deadline to apply extended to Feb. 14, 2019*
- Marketing Assistance Loans
- *If loan matured in December 2018, settlement date extended to Feb. 14, 2019*
- *Peanut loans or Loan Deficiency Payments - loan availability date now Feb. 28, 2019*
- Emergency Conservation Program

your operation or county at offices.usda.gov.

- *Performance reporting due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Livestock Forage Disaster
- *2018 application for payment due Feb. 28, 2019*
- Emergency Assistance Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program
- *Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Livestock Indemnity Program
- *Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
- *Submitting 2019 application for coverage due Feb. 14, 2019*
- *Notice of loss for 72-hour harvest and grazing (as applicable) due Feb. 14, 2019*
- *Notice of loss for prevented planting and failed acres due Feb. 14, 2019*
- *Applications for payment for 2018 covered losses due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Tree Assistance Program
- *Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Acreage Reporting

January reporting deadlines extended to Feb. 14, 2019

Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI)

Farmers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location. This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI).

Producers must still visit both their local FSA office and their insurance provider to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps, or provide program-specific information, including reporting uninsured crops to FSA. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report.

Maps for Acreage Reporting

Maps are now available at the County FSA Office for acreage reporting purposes. Producers may pick them up any time during office hours. If you wish to receive your maps by e-mail, please call your county office.

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for

future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Producers are encouraged to file their acreage reports as soon as planting is completed.

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

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 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.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an

environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

Breaking New Ground

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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