Michigan FSA Newsletter

Note from the State Executive Director

In light of recent winter weather, we would like to highlight three USDA disaster assistance programs that may be beneficial to Michigan producers.

- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. 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.

- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists, vinyardists, berry growers, and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, canes and vines damaged by natural disasters. Eligible producers who experience losses from natural disasters must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.

Producers who were prevented from reporting losses during the government shutdown have until Feb. 14, 2019, to file a notice of loss.

We sincerely hope your farms and ranches haven't suffered any losses. But if they have, FSA is here to provide assistance in any way we can. Please stay warm, and stay safe.
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:

- **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**
  - 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

For details on all program deadlines and extensions, view [FSA National Notice CM-807](#). For inquiries related to these programs or any not listed above, contact your local FSA Service Center.

USDA Market Facilitation Program

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn (fresh and processed), cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean (fresh and processed), wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The sign-up period for MFP runs through Feb. 14 2019, with information and instructions provided at [www.farmers.gov/mfp](http://www.farmers.gov/mfp). MFP provides payments to producers of eligible commodities who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer’s total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA.

For a list of initial MFP payments rates, view the [MFP Fact Sheet](#).
MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined $125,000 for eligible crop commodities
- A combined $125,000 for dairy production and hogs
- A combined $125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than $900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

**Expanded Hog Timeline**

USDA has expanded the timeline for producers with whom the Aug. 1, 2018, date does not accurately represent the number of head of live hogs they own. Producers may now choose any date between July 15 to Aug. 15, 2018, that correctly reflects their actual operation.

MFP applications are available online at [www.farmers.gov/mfp](http://www.farmers.gov/mfp). Applications can be completed at a local FSA office or submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing. To locate or contact your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

**Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations**

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county. Agricultural producers can play a vital role in this process.

If you have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster you may submit a request to your local FSA county office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the county office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

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

**Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers and Ranchers**

Retired or retiring landowners or operators are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or underserved farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires, provided the transition is not to a family member.

Enrollment in TIP is on a continuous basis. Beginning, veteran or underserved farmers and ranchers and retiring CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning one year before the expiration date of the CRP contract or Aug. 15. For example, if a CRP contract is scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2018, the land may be offered for enrollment in TIP beginning Oct. 1, 2017, through Aug. 15, 2018. The Aug. 15 deadline allows the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) time to complete the TIP sustainable grazing or crop production conservation plans. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands.

New landowners or renters must return the land to production using sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information on TIP, visit [https://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).
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 (HELC) 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.

Interest Rates - February 2019

FSA Farm Loans

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<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Operating - Direct</td>
<td>3.750%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership - Direct</td>
<td>4.125%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing</td>
<td>2.500%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership - Down Payment</td>
<td>1.500%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Loan - Amount of Actual Loss</td>
<td>3.750%</td>
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Commodity Credit Corporation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCC Borrowing Rate-Based Interest Charges</td>
<td>2.625%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crop Year Commodity Loan (if less than 1 year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year</td>
<td>2.625%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year</td>
<td>2.750%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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).