

May 2016



NEWSLETTER



Missouri FSA Newsletter

Missouri Farm Service Agency

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Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions specific to your operation or county.

Check out our [State Events page](#) for upcoming agricultural events.

USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Results

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the enrollment of more than 800,000 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through CRP, the USDA helps farmers offset the costs of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and strengthen wildlife habitat. Farmers' and ranchers' participation in CRP continues to provide numerous benefits to our nation, including helping reduce emissions of harmful greenhouse gases and providing resiliency to future weather changes.

A nationwide acreage limit was established for this program in the 2014 Farm Bill, capping the total number of acres that may be enrolled at 24 million for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. At the same time, USDA has experienced a record demand from farmers and ranchers interested in participating in the voluntary program. As of March 2016, 23.8 million acres were enrolled in CRP, with 1.7 million acres set to expire this fall.

FSA will accept 411,000 acres in general enrollment, the most competitive selection in the history of the program, with the acreage providing record high conservation benefits. In Missouri, of the 2,649 general CRP offers made, 472 offers were accepted. USDA selected offers by weighing environmental factors plus cost, including wildlife enhancement, water quality, soil erosion, enduring benefits, and air quality. Offers with an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) score of 292 or greater were determined basically acceptable.

The results of the first-ever enrollment period for CRP Grasslands, FSA will also accept 101,000 acres in the program, providing participants with financial assistance for establishing approved grasses, trees and shrubs on pasture and rangeland that can continue to be grazed. More than 70 percent of these acres are diverse native grasslands under threat of conversion, and more than 97 percent of the acres have a new, veteran or underserved farmer or rancher as a primary producer. In Missouri, 78 offers were made and 5 were accepted. FSA continues to accept CRP Grasslands offers and will conduct another ranking period later this year.

Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Crop Reporting Time is Around the Corner

Don't forget to stop by your local FSA office to report your crops. The following crop certification dates are quickly approaching in Missouri:

July 15, 2016: CRP, burley tobacco, corn, cotton, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, popcorn, rice, soybeans.

Please note: November 15, 2015, was the final reporting date for 2016 pasture, rangeland, forage & apiculture.

If the crop hasn't been planted by the reporting date listed above, it must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

If additional acreage is acquired after the final reporting date, the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after the purchase or acquisition of a new lease.

Some county offices may request that producers schedule an appointment for acreage reporting. Please check with your local county office to see if an appointment is requested, or for any questions regarding crop reporting and applicable crop deadlines.

The Missouri FSA staff hopes you have a safe planting season!

Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Ends Aug. 1

Producers who chose coverage from the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit FSA county offices through Aug. 1, 2016, to sign contracts to enroll for 2016.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment. If a contract is not signed during the 2016 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact a local FSA county office.

Changing Administrative Counties

Producers who wish to transfer their farm records to a different administrative county for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 must file a request no later than August 1, 2016. Restrictions do apply when transferring to an office other than the county in which the land is physically located. Contact your local FSA office for more information.

Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

Interest Rates and Dates to Remember

Selected Interest Rates for May 2016	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.375%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.375%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.50%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	1.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years)	1.875%
Commodity Loans 1996- Present	1.625%

Dates to Remember	
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday. FSA Offices are closed.
May 31	Final availability for 2015 crop Marketing Assistance Loans for feed grains, upland cotton and minor oilseeds.
June 15	County Committee nomination period begins. Nomination forms available from your local FSA office.
July 15	Final reporting date for CRP, burley tobacco, corn, cotton, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, popcorn, rice, soybeans & all other crops. NAP crops must be reported by the final reporting date or 15 days before harvest.
Aug. 1	ARC/PLC enrollment deadline.

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).