

June 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Montana FSA: June 2020 Newsletter

- [From the State Executive Director](#)
- [Farm Service Agency County Committee Nominations Open June 15](#)
- [Farmers and Ranchers in Montana Can Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#)
- [Monday, June 15th CFAP Webinar for Montana Ag Producers](#)
- [Thursday, June 18th Webinar: COVID-19 Financial Assistance for Montana Farmers & Ranchers](#)
- [June 30 Last Day to Complete Enrollment for 2020 Agriculture Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage Programs](#)
- [July 15th Deadline for FSA Maps - 2020 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification](#)
- [FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [5 Steps to Complete After Spring Planting](#)
- [FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup](#)
- [August 21 Deadline for New Conservation Pilot Program for Prairie Pothole Producers to Plant Perennial Cover Crops in Montana](#)
- [Emergency Loans Available in Montana Disaster Areas](#)
- [March Margin Triggers Dairy Margin Coverage Program Payment](#)
- [FSA Disaster Notice of Loss Requirements](#)
- [FSA Program Dates and Deadlines](#)
- [Document the Drought: USDA U.S. Drought Monitor Offers Producers a Voice to Report Drought Impacts](#)
- [Montana Farmers, Ranchers and Private Forest Landowners Use Conservation to Protect Pollinator Habitat, Boost Crop Production](#)
- [Montana Farm and Ranch Stress Resource Clearinghouse](#)

Montana USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone, email, mail, fax and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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Carl Mattson, Chair (Chester)
Chaley Harney (Billings)
Liane Johnson (Cut Bank)
Bob Lee (Judith Gap)

Policy Reminders: [2020 Annual Notification to FSA Customers](#)

To find contact information for your local office, visit:
www.farmers.gov.

From the State Executive Director

In the first two weeks of Coronavirus Food Assistance Program signup, Montana FSA offices administered more than \$15 million in relief to Montana farmers and ranchers. The deadline to apply for CFAP is Aug. 28. To learn more about the CFAP program, you can join us on **Monday, June 15 at 9 am** in a webinar for Montana ag producers. You can join Monday's live webinar [HERE](#).

We partnered with USDA Rural Development and U.S. Small Business Administration in a joint webinar set for **Thurs., June 18 at 2 pm**. Register [HERE](#) to learn about financial assistance available to farmers and ranchers through each of our agencies.

If you haven't signed up for 2020 ARC-PLC this year, please contact your local FSA office to schedule a phone appointment to complete your paperwork by **June 30**.

Nominations open June 15 for FSA county committee elections across Montana. The deadline to submit nominations is **Aug. 1**. To view the area up for election and nomination this year in your Montana county, click [HERE](#) and select your county. You can learn more about FSA's nomination and election process [HERE](#).

On behalf of FSA offices across our great state, we look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,
Mike Foster

Farm Service Agency County Committee Nominations Open June 15

The USDA Farm Service Agency encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the 2020 county committee election nomination process.

FSA's 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. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by Aug. 1, 2020 (or next business day). For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to FSA fact sheets online at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Farmers and Ranchers in Montana Can Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

Online Tools and Toll-Free Number Available to Assist Producers

Agricultural producers can apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

We also want to remind producers that the program is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply.

In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap. Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments.

Additionally, producers in search of one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call **877-508-8364** to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a good first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

Applying for Assistance

Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print off a pre-filled CFAP application, sign, and submit to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/cfap.

Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested after the application is filed. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

Additional Commodities

USDA is also establishing a process for the public to identify additional commodities for potential inclusion in CFAP. Specifically, USDA is looking for data on agricultural commodities, that are not currently eligible for CFAP, that the public believes to have either:

1. suffered a five percent-or-greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. shipped but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channel, or
3. not left the farm or remained unharvested as mature crops.

Comments must be received by June 22, 2020. More information about this process is available on farmers.gov/cfap.

More Information: To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364.

Monday, June 15th CFAP Webinar for Montana Ag Producers

Monday, June 15 at 9:00 am Mountain Time

USDA Farm Service Agency is hosting a second [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#) webinar on June 15 for Montana agricultural producers. The first webinar held June 8 for agricultural stakeholders is available for viewing [HERE](#).

Montana producers and others involved in agriculture can learn about the CFAP available to farmers and ranchers whose operations have been directly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. CFAP provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. The webinars will highlight basic program information, discuss the application process and farm loan flexibilities available.

[Click HERE to join June 15th 9 am Montana Webinar](#)

Registration is not required. When you join the live meeting, attendees will be taken to a page where you can choose to either join on the web or download the desktop app. If you already have the Teams app, the meeting will open there automatically. If you don't have a Teams account, you may join the meeting as a guest. The webinar will be recorded and available for viewing following each session utilizing the same link provided.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact Jennifer Cole at (406) 654.1333, ext. 117, or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, and jennifer.cole@usda.gov by Close of Business on June 12.

Thursday, June 18th Webinar: COVID-19 Financial Assistance for Montana Farmers & Ranchers

Thursday, June 18 at 2:00 pm MDT

Presented by USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Rural Development and the U.S. Small Business Administration

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

This webinar will discuss financial assistance available to Montana farmers and ranchers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs discussed will include:

- USDA Farm Service Agency: [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program \(CFAP\)](#) & [FSA Loan Flexibilities](#)
- USDA Rural Development: [Business & Industry \(B&I\) Loan Guarantees](#) for farm & ranch working capital and operating expenses
- U.S. Small Business Administration: [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#) & [Economic Injury Disaster Loan \(EIDL\)](#)

Please contact Shelby Johnson with webinar and registration questions at Shelby.Johnson@usda.gov or 406.585.2587.

June 30 Last Day to Complete Enrollment for 2020 Agriculture Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage Programs

Call Today Regarding 2020 Crop Year Eligibility

Agricultural producers who have not yet enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2020 must do so by June 30. Although program elections for the 2020 crop year remain the same as elections made for 2019, all producers need to contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to sign a 2020 enrollment contract.

To date, more than 1.4 million ARC and PLC contracts have been signed for the 2020 crop year. This represents 89 percent of expected enrollment. FSA will send reminder postcards to producers who, according to agency records, have not yet submitted signed contracts for ARC or PLC for the 2020 crop year.

Producers who do not complete enrollment by close of business local time on Tuesday, June 30 will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2020 crop year and will be ineligible to receive a payment should one trigger for an eligible crop.

ARC and PLC contracts can be mailed or emailed to producers for signature depending on producer preference. Signed contracts can be mailed or emailed back to FSA or, arrangements can be made in advance with FSA to drop off signed contracts at the FSA county office – call ahead for local drop off and other options available for submitting signed contracts electronically.

Producers are eligible to enroll on farms with base acres for the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium- and short-grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

July 15th Deadline for FSA Maps - 2020 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification

USDA Farm Service Agency offices in Montana are currently open to phone and virtual appointments only; but can still work with producers on timely filing crop acreage reports. FSA staff can provide assistance over the phone, by email and through virtual meetings via a software program called Microsoft Teams.

The deadline for acreage certification is **July 15, 2020**, and applies to crops such as **spring alfalfa seed, Conservation Reserve Program, perennial forage (not covered by NAP), annually spring seeded crops, and any other crop not reported by a previous deadline.**

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers, including livestock producers, must file an accurate crop acreage report by the deadline. FSA staff is available to assist producers in completing acreage reports and providing maps.

Certification plans may vary by office, so customers can assist FSA by:

- Paying close attention to email or mail from their county FSA office that outlines the process put in place for 2020 spring certification in their office and following the requested steps; and
- Keeping good records of what is planted, where and when it is planted, and ensuring that information is accurately reported on the maps and provided to FSA as soon as possible following the completion of planting.

Producers are encouraged to work with their county office to arrange for completing the certification process using available options. Upon receipt of completed maps, FSA will make software updates and contact the producer to obtain signatures on the FSA-578 to complete the certification process by the July 15 deadline. Crops not certified by this date may be subject to late-filed fees.

The following exceptions apply to the July 15 acreage reporting date:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting deadline, the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after the purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation to support the newly acquired land must be provided to the county office.
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the **earlier of** July 15, 2020 or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop.

Reporting Prevent Plant Acres: Producers also must report crop acreage that they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevent planted acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later

than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency. If you have acreage that was prevented from being planted, please notify your county office and they can assist you in completing this form.

Reporting Organic Crops: Producers who selected the "organic" option on their NAP application must report the applicable crop as organic and provide a copy of their current organic plan and recent written certification in effect from a certifying agency. Please note that if you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary information to FSA immediately upon receipt.

FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19

Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers

USDA's Farm Service Agency will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on farmers.gov/coronavirus.

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the farmers.gov portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at farmers.gov/sign-in.

5 Steps to Complete After Spring Planting

With #Plant2020 in the rear-view mirror, it's time to think about next steps on your farm.

Your USDA team understands that the real work continues after planting. We know the rest of spring and summer will be spent scouting crops, irrigating or waiting for timely rains for your non-irrigated fields, and monitoring weed and insect pressure.

Before you get too busy, [there are five things to keep in mind after planting.](#)

FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup

The USDA has started making payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) to agricultural producers who suffered eligible losses because of drought or excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Signup for these causes of loss opened March 23, and producers who suffered losses from drought (in counties designated D3 or above), excess moisture, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires can still apply for assistance through WHIP+.

To be eligible for WHIP+, producers must have suffered losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary county may be eligible if a producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event.

For losses due to drought, a producer is eligible if any area of the county in which the loss occurred was rated D3, or extreme drought, or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor during calendar years 2018 or 2019. Producers who suffered losses should contact their FSA county office.

In addition to the recently added eligible losses of drought and excess moisture, FSA will implement a WHIP+ provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops damaged by eligible disaster events. To ensure an effective program for all impacted farmers, the Agency is currently gathering information on the extent of quality loss from producers and stakeholder organizations.

USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information on Service Centers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus, and more information on WHIP+ can be found at farmers.gov/whip-plus.

August 21 Deadline for New Conservation Pilot Program for Prairie Pothole Producers to Plant Perennial Cover Crops in Montana

The Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) is a land conservation program administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency.

USDA Farm Service Agency announced a new pilot program that enables farmers in Prairie Pothole states to receive payments for planting perennial cover crops on their land for three to five years. The new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) pilot is available to producers in Iowa, Minnesota, **Montana**, North Dakota and South Dakota. The signup for this pilot started March 30, 2020 and ends **August 21**.

Through SHIPP, producers have the option of three-, four- or five-year CRP contracts to establish perennial cover crops on less productive cropland in exchange for payments. This pilot enables producers to plant perennial cover crops that, among other benefits, will improve soil health and water quality while having the option to harvest, hay and graze during certain times of the year. Up to 50,000 acres can be enrolled.

Perennial cover crops, whether used in a single crop rotation or over multiple years, can improve the productivity of soils and soil health on a farm for generations and increase the bottom line for the farmer. Soil health, or soil quality, by definition, is the capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans.

The SHIPP pilot is the latest option in a full suite of opportunities available to producers through CRP and other conservation programs offered by USDA. Farmers and ranchers are encouraged to talk to their FSA county office soon about whether this pilot fits their operation or consider another longer-term option such as the CRP General signup that ends February 28 or CRP Continuous signup that is ongoing.

For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp and contact your local office. To find your local USDA Service Center office, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/service-locator>.

Emergency Loans Available in Montana Disaster Areas

FSA's Emergency Loan Program is available for agricultural producers in counties designated as primary or contiguous natural disaster areas. See map below of current Disaster Designations in Montana. Contact your local FSA office for specific designations in your area and time frames to apply. Eligible producers have **eight months** from the date of the disaster designation to apply for low-interest emergency loans to 1.) restore or replace essential property; 2.) pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; 3.) pay essential family living expenses; or 4.) refinance certain debts, excluding real estate. Producers interested in applying for an emergency loan, or other FLP loans, should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with the Farm Loan Program staff serving your area.

[Current Disaster Designations in Montana - \(by county\)](#) [Emergency Loans Website](#)

March Margin Triggers Dairy Margin Coverage Program Payment

The USDA's Farm Service Agency announced last month that the March 2020 income over feed cost margin was \$9.15 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the first payment of 2020 for dairy producers who purchased the appropriate level of coverage under the [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program.

Current projections indicate that a DMC payment is likely to trigger every month for the remainder of 2020, a different expectation from last July when some market models had forecast no program payments for 18 months.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. Over 13,000 operations enrolled in the program for the 2020 calendar year.

Although DMC enrollment for 2020 coverage has closed, dairy producers should look for FSA to open sign up for 2021 coverage in July.

For more information, visit [DMC webpage](#) or contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

FSA Disaster Notice of Loss Requirements

It's important for agricultural producers to report losses immediately as all disaster programs are dependent on the timely reporting of the loss. A notice of loss can be filed with USDA Farm Service Agency via phone, email, or fax.

- **ELAP – Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program:** Starting in 2020, producers will have **15 days** from when the loss is first apparent, instead of 30 days, to file a **honeybee** notice of loss. This change provides consistency between ELAP and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which also has a 15-day notice of loss period for honey. **For other covered losses**, including livestock feed, grazing and farm-raised fish losses, the notice of loss deadline for ELAP will remain **30 days** from when the loss is first apparent to the producer.
- **LIP - Livestock Indemnity Program:** Submit Notice of Loss within **30** calendar days of when the loss is first apparent. (See full article below.)
- **NAP – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program:** Submit Notice of Loss within **15** calendar days of the earlier of a natural disaster occurrence, the final planting date if planting is prevented by a natural disaster, the date that damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent; or the normal harvest date. **Note:** A producer's signature is required on form CCC-576 when a Notice of Loss is submitted. (See full article below.)
- **TAP - Tree Assistance Program:** Final Date to Submit an Application and Supporting Documentation within 90 calendar days of: the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent to the producer.

Contact the local FSA office for assistance and visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt and/or www.farmers.gov.

FSA Program Dates and Deadlines

March 23: Signup Began for Excess Moisture and Drought (D-3 and Above) Losses Under WHIP+

May 26: [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#) Signup Began

June 15: Nomination Period Opens for [2020 FSA County Committee Elections](#)

June 22: [Last date to submit additional commodities for consideration into CFAP](#)

June 30: Last day of [2020 Agricultural Risk Coverage Price Loss Coverage](#) Enrollment Period

July 15: 2020 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Spring Seeded Alfalfa Seed, Forage Seeding, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Perennial Forage not covered under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), Annually Seeded Spring Crops, and all other crops not required to be reported by a previous reporting date. *Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2019 reports for these crops.*

July 16: First day of 2020 CRP Summer/Fall Managed Grazing and Harvesting Periods (*prior approval required*)

Aug. 1: Last day to submit Nominations for 2020 FSA County Committee Elections to FSA (or postmarked)

Aug. 3: Deadline to request a farm reconstitution or farm transfer for 2020

Aug. 15: 2020 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Hemp

Aug. 21: Last day of [CRP Soil Health and Income Protection Program \(SHIPP\) Pilot](#) Signup Period

Aug. 28: Last day of [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Signup](#)

Aug. 31: Last day of 2020 CRP Summer/Fall Non-Emergency Harvesting Period (*prior approval required*)

Aug. 31: All Hay Bales Must be Removed from Non-Emergency Conservation Reserve Program Acreage

Ongoing: FSA [Farm Loan](#) Applications are accepted and processed year-round.

Ongoing: Contact FSA right away for notice of loss deadlines and disaster program requirements.

For more information, contact your local FSA office and/or visit www.farmers.gov.

Document the Drought: USDA U.S. Drought Monitor Offers Producers a Voice to Report Drought Impacts

The U.S. Drought Monitor's reporting feature offers producers an opportunity to submit drought impact and condition reports.

The USDA, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, produced the U.S. Drought Monitor to include a reporting feature that allows producers to report local drought impacts and conditions.

The report allows producers to:

- Provide a written description of drought impacts on livelihood, activities, etc.;
- Select categories to show losses and gains as a result of the drought;
- Report on the duration of drought event;
- Select *Affected Places* – geographic areas ranging from an entire state to a small area within a state;
- Submit images that document the drought and its impact;
- Provide contact information (includes an option to keep information confidential).

The reporting tool for producers to record the effects of the drought can be accessed at the following link:
droughtreporter.unl.edu/submitreport/

More information can be found on the U. S. Drought Monitor site:
<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?MT>

Montana Farmers, Ranchers and Private Forest Landowners Use Conservation to Protect Pollinator Habitat, Boost Crop Production

The next time you snack on almonds, add blueberries to your smoothie or eat pumpkin pie, thank a pollinator and thank farmers, ranchers and private forestland owners who work hard to create and maintain their habitat.

Pollinators, such as honeybees, bumblebees, butterflies, birds, bats, flies and many others, play a critical role in crop production. Without pollinators, we wouldn't have many crops.

During the week of June 22-28, the nation will celebrate these iconic and crucial pollinators during National Pollinator Week. This year's theme is "Pollinators, Plants, People and Planet." Thirteen years ago, the U.S. Senate unanimously designated the third week in June as National Pollinator Week to increase awareness about the importance of pollinators and the challenges many of them face, including serious population declines and habitat losses, often due to land use changes and excessive or improper pesticide use. Nearly 200 species of pollinators are considered threatened or extinct.

Pollination occurs when pollen grains are moved between two flowers of the same species, or within a single flower by wind or insects and animals. Successful pollination results in healthy fruit and fertile seeds, allowing the plants to reproduce.

The extensive and critical world of crop pollinators is a \$20 billion a year industry. About 75 percent of crop plants are pollinated by billions of animals and insects every year

Many federal, state and local government agencies, non-government organizations and universities have launched extensive efforts to protect pollinators, especially honeybees and the Monarch butterfly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works closely with farmers, forest landowners and other private landowners to increase pollinator habitat in targeted areas nationwide.

The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), through USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS), offers financial incentives to agricultural producers and private forest landowners who enhance pollinator habitat by voluntarily implementing conservation practices such as cover crops, wildflower and native plantings in buffers and areas not in production.

[Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) also can be used to enhance habitat to protect pollinators. Administered by USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA), CRP is a land conservation program in which enrolled landowners remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality.

As owners and stewards of the land, many farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners manage their natural resources to work to achieve their production goals, they are protecting the rich and diverse ecology on or near their operations.

When we protect pollinators, we protect our ability to grow food. We thank our farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners for who offer a safe haven for pollinators and grow the products we enjoy.

Whether you are a large commodity producer, a small and diverse organic producer or even a suburban homeowner, you can have an important role in saving pollinators in Montana.

Do your part to help protect pollinators. By taking action to diversify and beautify your operation or property, you could ensure that many fruits and vegetables are available and plentiful for future generations for many years to come.

For more information about pollinators and what you can do in Montana, please contact your local [USDA service center](#).

Montana Farm and Ranch Stress Resource Clearinghouse

Montana State University Extension and an associated statewide advisory council have developed an online clearinghouse of resources for a wide range of topics related to stress and mental health. The clearinghouse was created specifically for ag producers and their families, but it contains a wealth of information for anyone interested in learning more about causes of stress, stress prevention and management, and overall mental health. To access the site, please click on this link: https://msuextension.org/wellness/stress-management/mt_farm_stress_clearing_house/

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