



# NEWSLETTER



**May 2015**

**Nebraska Farm Service Agency**

7131 A Street  
Lincoln, NE 68510

[www.fsa.usda.gov/ne](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ne)

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Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county

## Nebraska FSA Update

### 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance and Wetland Changes

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 certification form must be on file with the FSA by June 1, 2015.

FSA and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) programs already have implemented this requirement and therefore most producers should already have the Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELCS) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification (AD-1026) form on file for their associated lands. However, if a producer is a crop insurance participant who does not currently have an AD-1026 certification form on file with FSA, it is critical to file one now to maintain eligibility for a crop insurance premium subsidy. The certification for compliance and the requirements are available at your local Service Center.

### Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

A list of noxious weeds can be found on the following website:  
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver>.

### 2015 and 2016 Acreage Reporting Dates

Producers must file an accurate crop acreage certification by the applicable deadlines to maintain eligibility for most FSA programs. The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Nebraska:

## 2015 and 2016 Acreage Reporting Dates (Cont.)

### Dates to Remember

**June 1, 2015** – Deadline to obtain MAL's and LDP's for Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower Seed.

**June 1, 2015** – Deadline to file an AD-1026 certifying HELC/WC compliance for 2016 reinsurance year.

**July 15, 2015** - Deadline to report all spring-seeded crops, including Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

**August 3, 2015** – Deadline to request a reconstitution or farm transfer for 2015.

- July 15, 2015 - Spring seeded crops, CRP, and all other crops for the 2015 crop year
- November 16, 2015 -Fall seeded crops and perennial forage for the 2016 crop year
- January 2, 2016 - Initial reports of honey bee colonies and locations for the 2016 crop year

Producers are encouraged to submit 2016 fall acreage reports for perennial forage at the time the spring planted crops for 2015 are reported.

### Filing a Notice of Loss

It is important to notify FSA timely if a crop has failed or if a crop is prevented from being planted. The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including winter wheat that may have failed over the winter.

A prevented planting claim must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop. Failed acreage must be reported on a CCC-576 for losses to crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Losses on NAP crops must be filed within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. In all other cases, the failed acreage must be reported prior to disposition of the crop. To be approved for either prevented planting or failed acreage credit, the reason for loss must be due to a weather related event.

For hand harvested crops, not limited to fruits and vegetables, producers must notify the County Office within 72 hours of the loss or damage becomes apparent. These types of losses may be made by phone, and must be followed up in office with a CCC-576, within 15 days of the reported loss by phone.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, or to request an appointment to report acreage, contact the local FSA office.

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### Continuous CRP Sign-Up – Filter Strips

Each month, our office will highlight a different continuous CRP signup practice. This month the highlighted practice is CP21, Filter Strips. This practice is to remove nutrients, sediment, organic material, pesticides, and other pollutants from surface and subsurface runoff. This practice needs to be established on eligible cropland (cropped 4 out of 6 years between 2008 and 2013) along a perennial or seasonal stream. The minimum acceptable width is 20 feet and the maximum average acceptable width is 120 feet.

CRP program benefits include:

- Calculated annual rental rates plus an additional 20 percent incentive
- Fifty percent cost share of eligible costs to establish the practice
- Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) of 40 percent of eligible costs
- Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) calculated at \$100 per acre paid up front.

Environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time under continuous sign-up. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producers meet certain eligibility requirements. Offers for continuous sign-up are not subject to competitive bidding. Continuous sign-up contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

To learn the details and offer land for continuous sign-up, producers should contact their local FSA office.

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## **USDA Announces New Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers**

USDA has announced several new Farm Bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA also unveiled [www.USDA.gov/newfarmers](http://www.USDA.gov/newfarmers), a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

USDA's [www.usda.gov/newfarmers](http://www.usda.gov/newfarmers) has in depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.

The policy announcements that support beginning farmers and ranchers include:

- Waiving service fees for new and beginning farmers or ranchers to enroll in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the 2014 crop year. NAP provides risk management tools to farmers who grow crops for which there is no crop insurance product. Under this waiver, farmers and ranchers whom already enrolled in NAP for the 2014 crop year and certified to being a beginning farmer or social disadvantaged farmer are eligible for a service fee refund.
- Eliminating payment reductions under the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans. Previously, farmers and ranchers grazing on CRP land were subject to a reduction in CRP payments of up to 25 percent. Waiving these reductions for new and beginning farmers will provide extra financial support during times of emergency like drought and other natural disasters.
- Increasing payment rates to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for [Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#). Under this provision, beginning farmers can claim up 90 percent of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a fifty percent increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

## USDA Grants Help Cut Energy Costs for Farmers and Rural Small Businesses

USDA is offering grants and loan guarantees to help rural small businesses and agricultural producers reduce their energy costs and consumption.

The funding is being provided through USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Loans and grants are available to purchase and install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements to a farm or business.

Renewable energy systems include solar, wind, geothermal, anaerobic digesters, and renewable biomass. Energy efficiency improvements include grain drying and handling, lighting, refrigeration, facility improvements (such as adding insulation or replacing windows), heating and cooling upgrades, motor replacements and automated control upgrades.

Grants of up to 25% of a project's total eligible costs are available. The maximum grants are \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements and \$500,000 for renewable energy systems. The REAP program also provides for the guarantee of loans for up to 75% of the cost of a renewable energy or energy efficiency project.

The next grant application deadline is **June 30, 2015**. Guaranteed loan applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Residential projects are not eligible for the REAP program.

Nebraska has nearly \$2 million in grant funding available for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. For information on REAP, contact USDA's Rural Development at (402) 437-5554 or email [Jeff.Carpenter@ne.usda.gov](mailto:Jeff.Carpenter@ne.usda.gov).

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## Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL)

The FSFL program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum FSFL loan amount is \$500,000 per loan. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility, permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. FSFL security requirements have been eased for loans in the amount of \$100,000 and less. Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Qualified facilities include grain bins, grain handling and drying equipment, hay storage sheds, cold storage facilities and handling equipment for fruits and vegetables. Specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers can also use the FSFL loan program for sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety-related equipment. For more information about the FSFL loan program, please contact your local FSA office or view the FSFL Fact Sheet by clicking [here](#).

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## FSA Farm Ownership Loan Financing Available

FSA has adequate direct farm ownership loan funding available for beginning and existing farmers and ranchers who want to purchase farm real estate, construct farm buildings or make farm improvements. The maximum loan amount for a direct farm ownership loan is \$300,000. Farm ownership loans are available with interest rates starting as low as 1.5% for down-payment loans and 2.5% for joint financing loans. Repayment terms for loans vary depending on the type of loan and the borrower's ability to repay the loan, but loan terms will not exceed 40 years. In order to

qualify for an FSA loan, the applicant must substantially participate in the farm operation, meet a test for credit eligibility requirement and be able to provide a feasible cash flow projection that shows repayment of the requested loan. FSA also has a guaranteed farm ownership loan program with a loan limit of \$1,392,000, which is financed through a commercial lender and guaranteed by FSA. For additional information regarding FSA's farm loan programs, financing options and eligibility information, please contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## May FSA Interest Rates

Farm Operating: 2.5%

Microloan: 2.5%

Farm Ownership: 3.625%

Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.5%

Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.50%

Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.5%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 1.75%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 1.875%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 2.0%

Commodity Loan: 1.25%

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).