

June 2016



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## Nebraska FSA Newsletter

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### Nebraska Farm Service Agency

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**State Executive Director:**  
Dan Steinkruger

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Fred Christensen  
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Leo Hoehn  
Linda Kleinschmit  
Roy Stoltenberg

### A Message from the State Executive Director

This is one of my favorite times of the year in rural Nebraska. With spring calving season done, cow/calf pairs are out on grass, and with the rain we've had the past couple months, those pastures are looking beautiful. As the sun shines brighter and hotter, day to day growth is evident in corn and soybean seedlings. And farmers' markets are bustling in communities of all sizes across the state, with radishes, rhubarb, strawberries and spinach among the offerings.

The transition to summer is upon us.

There is a transition of sorts going on in FSA county offices across the state as well, and I want to take this opportunity to point out these changes, designed to bring you more efficient

**Division Chiefs:**

Cathy Anderson  
Doug Klein  
Greg Reisdorff  
Mike Sander  
Mark Wilke

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

services. We recently announced a new partnership with U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency (RMA) called the Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). Through ACRSI common information from acreage reports can now be shared between FSA county offices and participating insurance providers approved by RMA. This information-sharing system helps avoid redundant or duplicative reporting and means there is less opportunity for data entry errors. Producers will still visit both locations to validate information, sign paperwork and complete maps, but having the acreage information prepopulated in reports should save time in the office.

Speaking of time in the office, if you haven't already, you really should make an appointment now to visit your local FSA office. The deadline for reporting acres for all spring-seeded crops, including Conservation Reserve Program acres, is July 15. Certification of acres is critical to maintain eligibility for farm safety net benefits.

This month marks the start of the FSA County Committee nomination period. From June 15 through Aug. 1, county offices will be accepting applications from producers who want to have a role in federal farm program implementation at the local level. County Committee work is important; elected members serve three-year terms and are responsible for making the decisions on FSA disaster, conservation and commodity and price support programs. The individuals elected to these roles provide a valuable service to agriculture in their immediate area.

Producers may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, we are always looking for women or minority farmers and ranchers to help broaden the scope of representation on these committees. To learn more about the FSA County Committee election process, see the article below or stop in to your local county FSA office.

Until next month, I hope the rains fall softly, timely and in just the right amounts.

--Dan Steinkruger

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## **FSA County Committee Nomination Period Now Open**

The nomination period for FSA county committees began on June 15, 2016. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in county FSA offices by close of business on Aug. 1, 2016.

County Committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice on federal farm program implementation at the local level.

To be eligible to serve on a FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) where they are nominated. All producers, including women, minority and beginning farmers and ranchers, are encouraged to participate in the nomination and election process.

Producers may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Organizations representing minority and women farmers and ranchers may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and more information about county committee elections is available online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues. County committees consist of three to 11 members.

FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 7. Ballots are due back to the county FSA office by mail or in person no later than Dec. 5, 2016. All newly elected county committee members and alternates will take office January 1, 2017.

For more information about county committees, please contact your local county FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

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## **Biannual Newsletter Now Available**

Twice a year the Nebraska Farm Service Agency publishes a newsletter highlighting deadlines and programs that farmers, ranchers and landowners will want to pay special attention to over the coming six months. The publication is called Nebraska FSA News, and it will be delivered right to your U.S. Post Office mailbox in the coming weeks. You also can find it online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/ne](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ne).

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## **USDA Unveils New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting**

Farmers and ranchers 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). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance

companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filed at one location, data that's important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location, avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

Since 2009, USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as **FSAFarm+**, gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Report Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2016, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2016, and before Dec. 31, 2016. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year for which benefits are requested:

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 5%. These

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established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2016 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or by January 30, 2017
- An application for payment by March 31, 2017.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## USDA's Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a comprehensive and detailed approach to support farmers, ranchers and forest land owners in their response to address the causes of climate change in April 2015. The framework consists of 10 building blocks that span a range of technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon storage, and generate clean renewable energy through mitigation.

USDA's strategy focuses on climate-smart practices designed for working production systems that provide multiple economic and environmental benefits in addition to supporting resilience to extreme weather, reduced emissions and increased carbon storage.

Through this comprehensive set of voluntary programs and initiatives spanning its programs, USDA expects to reduce net emissions and enhance carbon sequestration by over **120 million metric tons** of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e) per year – about 2% of economy-wide net greenhouse emissions – by 2025. That's the equivalent of taking **25 million cars** off the road, or offsetting the emissions produced by powering nearly **11 million homes** last year.

For more information on the Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry click the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/documents/climate-smart-fact-sheet.pdf> . For additional information on ways to consider greenhouse gases when managing land, refer to the USDA Climate Hub webpage: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.

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## Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a customer receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity. Electronic receipts for acreage reports will begin on Aug. 1, 2016.

A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

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## Loan Servicing

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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.

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## Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization adviser, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project adviser. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by a local county FSA office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

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## June FSA Interest Rates

Farm Operating: 2.25%

Microloan Operating: 2.25%

Farm Ownership: 3.5%

Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.50 %

Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.50%

Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.25%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 1.625%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 1.875%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 1.875%

Commodity Loan: 1.625%

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## Dates to Remember

July 15, 2016 – Deadline to report all spring-seeded crops, including Conservation Reserve Program acreage, and all other crops for the 2016 crop year.

Aug. 1, 2016 – Enrollment period for 2016 ARC/PLC ends.

Aug. 1, 2016 – Deadline to request farm transfers or reconstitutions for 2016.

Sept. 1, 2016 – NAP application/sales deadline for Christmas trees, nursery crop coverage for 2017.

Sept. 30, 2016 – Deadline to report aquaculture, Christmas trees and nursery crops.

Sept. 30, 2016 – Deadline for Dairy Margin Protection Program election period.

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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).