June 2017

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Hours
Monday – Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

State Executive Director
Mike Sander, Acting

State FSA Committee
Susan Frazier, Chair
Fred Christensen
Leo Hoehn
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Roy Stoltenberg

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For More Information
For more information about any of the programs listed in this newsletter, your best resource is your local FSA County Office. To find a County Office near you, or to see more information about FSA programming, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

Schedule Office Appointment
To Help Us Serve You Better

Appointments. Doctors, dentists, accountants, mechanics — generally speaking, if you want to receive service from any of these folks, it’s important to reserve a specific time in their schedules and then make every effort to arrive at that given time.

For farmers and ranchers, this can be extremely difficult because no two days are alike and often things don’t go as planned. Your cows find a downed fence and visit the neighbor’s field; the weatherman’s predicted morning rain doesn’t materialize, leaving perfect planting conditions; the watering system in the hog barn is malfunctioning. At Nebraska Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices across the state, we understand. But, that doesn’t mean we don’t want you to schedule an appointment with us.

Like the doctors, dentists and accountants of the world, we want to be prepared to give you thorough, quality service when you walk through the door, and we are better able to do that when you set a specific date and time to come to the office.

There are a number of programs important to your operation that have upcoming enrollment deadlines, ones that you will want to meet in order to retain program benefits and/or avoid late fees. For example, acreage certification for spring-seeded crops and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres must be completed by July 17, while there is an Aug. 1 cutoff for reporting farm revenues.

Deadline Nears for ARC, PLC Enrollment

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, must visit their local FSA office to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period closes Aug. 1, 2017.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year to ensure it reflects the producers who currently share in the crop and the base acreage. It’s important for producers to report any changes to their farming operation or interests throughout the year so FSA farm records, acreage reports, program applications and contracts are accurate. This includes updating shares or other changes.

* See: Visit County Offices, Page 10

* See: ARC/PLC, Page 3
Acreage Reporting Necessary for Program Eligibility

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

For Nebraska, the acreage reporting date for 2017 spring-seeded crops, such as corn and soybeans, is July 17, 2017. Acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) also must be certified to FSA by this date.

The deadline to report fall-seeded and perennial forage crops for the 2017 crop year was Nov. 15, 2016. If these crops were not reported timely with FSA last fall, they can still be reported, though late-filing requirements must be met. Late-filing provisions include an FSA representative physically verifying the late-filed crop and the producer paying a late-filed measurement service fee.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:
- If the crop has not been planted by the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop has the intended use of “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” or was planted as a cover crop, then the acreage must be reported by July 17.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the applicable dates or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

In most cases, for acreage reporting FSA provides producers with a map of their farming interests representing that crop year. To ensure an accurate acreage report is filed, producers are reminded to review the map to verify the field boundaries are accurately delineated. Producers should notify FSA of any changes or corrections needed prior to filing the acreage report with FSA.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office.

Timely Notice of Loss Report Key for Prevented Planting, Failed Acres

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting 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 Risk Management Agency (RMA). Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports may be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit and can verify the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres.

Producers with certain Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days. Contact your County FSA Office for details regarding these specific crops.
Program Participants Must Maintain Acres Enrolled in ARC/PLC, CRP; Includes Control of Noxious Weeds

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs 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.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants also must control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area. All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Nebraska is May 1 through July 15. Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times. For reference, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture has designated 12 weeds in the state as noxious: Canada thistle, leafy spurge, musk thistle, plumeless thistle, purple loosestrife, spotted and diffuse knapweeds, saltcedar, phragmites, sericea lespedeza, Japanese knotweed, Bohemian knotweed and giant knotweed. County FSA offices will complete field visits and spot checks of ARC/PLC and CRP acreage and will consult with county weed authorities as necessary. This effort usually begins the later part of May and continues through the summer months.

Farm Ownership, Operation Changes Must be Reported

Changes in farm ownership or operation must be reported to FSA timely. A reconstitution may be needed to accurately represent a farm’s constitution for FSA program purposes. A reconstitution is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

Changes to existing FSA farms must be reported to FSA by Aug. 1, 2017, to maintain benefits for the current crop year.

The following are the different methods for dividing base acres when a farm division is completed:

**Estate Method** - The division of base acres for a parent farm among heirs according to the estate.

**Designation by Landowner Method** - The division of base acres in the manner agreed to by the parent farm owners and the purchaser or transferee. This method may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons.

In order to use the Designation by Landowner Method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

**DCP Cropland Method** - Applicable to tract divisions, the division of base acres is proportional to the DCP Cropland acres associated on the resulting tracts.

**Default Method** - Applicable to farm divisions, the tracts identified with the resulting farms maintain the associated base acres.

The ARC and PLC programs offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Among the covered commodities are barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, dry peas, rapeseed, safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.
Nonrecourse Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) may be available to eligible producers for the 2017 crop year on several crops, including wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, soybeans, other oilseeds (including sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe and sesame seed), dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, graded and non-graded wool, mohair, unshorn pelts and honey.

To be eligible for a MAL or LDP, producers must comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements and submit an acreage report to account for all cropland on all farms. Additionally, they must have and retain beneficial interest in the commodity until the MAL is repaid or the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) takes title to the commodity, while also meeting Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations.

In addition to producer eligibility, the commodity must have been produced, mechanically harvested, or shorn from live animals by an eligible producer and be in storable condition. It also must be merchantable for food, feed or other uses, as determined by CCC. Nonrecourse MALs must meet specific CCC minimum grade and quality standards.

If beneficial interest in the commodity is lost, the commodity loses eligibility for a MAL or LDP and remains ineligible even if the producer later regains beneficial interest. To retain beneficial interest, the producer must have control and title to the commodity. The producer must be able to make all decisions affecting the commodity including movement, sale and the request for a MAL or LDP. The producer must not have sold or delivered the commodity or warehouse receipt to the buyer.

Producers are responsible for any loss in quantity or quality of commodities pledged as collateral for a farm-stored or warehouse stored loan. CCC will not assume any loss in quantity or quality of the loan collateral regardless of storage location. It is important to call your FSA County Office before hauling any loan grain. Disposing of loan grain through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the County FSA Office is considered unauthorized disposition and potentially subject to penalties.

The 2014 Farm Bill sets national loan rates. County and regional loan rates are based on each commodity’s national loan rate, and they vary by county or region and are based on the average prices and production of the county or region where the commodity is stored.

For all loan-eligible commodities except extra-long staple cotton, a producer may repay a MAL any time during the loan period at the lesser of the loan rate plus accrued interest and other charges or an alternative loan repayment rate as determined by CCC.

Producers may obtain MALs or receive LDPs on all or part of their eligible production anytime during the loan availability period. The loan availability period runs from when the commodity is normally harvested (or sheared for wool) until specified dates in the following calendar year.

The final loan/LDP availability dates for the respective commodities are:

- Jan. 31 - peanuts, wool, mohair and LDP only for unshorn pelts
- March 31 - barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, sesame seed and wheat
- May 31 - corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, long grain rice, medium grain rice, safflower, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, cotton, soybeans and sunflower seed.

### National loan rates for 2014-2018 crops (per production unit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Production Unit</th>
<th>2014-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>bushel</td>
<td>$2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>bushel</td>
<td>$1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain Sorghum</td>
<td>bushel</td>
<td>$1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>bushel</td>
<td>$1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>bushel</td>
<td>$0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland Cotton</td>
<td>pound</td>
<td>$0.7977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS Cotton</td>
<td>pound</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Grain Rice</td>
<td>cwt</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Grain Rice</td>
<td>cwt</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>bushel</td>
<td>$10.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Peas</td>
<td>cwt</td>
<td>$5.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>cwt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Chickpeas</td>
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<td>$7.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Chickpeas</td>
<td>cwt</td>
<td>$11.28</td>
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<td>Wool, graded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wool, non graded</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohair</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts</td>
<td>ton</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The upland cotton loan rate is subject to change for 2017 and 2018.
Price Support/Disaster Programs

Timely Livestock Loss Reporting Critical to Indemnity Assistance

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. Adverse weather can include events such as floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers.

For 2017, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2017, and no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event or attack. 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 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred:

- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation
- Proof of death 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 established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2017 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or by March 31, 2018
- An application for payment by March 31, 2018

Additional information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/ne under the “programs” tab.

Producers Can Have Role in Disaster Designation Process

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 County FSA 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.

Other factors in a Secretarial disaster designation are:

- This designation is triggered by a 30 percent or greater production loss to at least one crop because of a natural disaster, or at least one producer who sustained individual losses because of a natural disaster and is unable to obtain commercial financing to cover those losses.
- In 2012, USDA developed a fast-track process for disaster declarations for severe drought. This provides for a nearly automatic designation when, during the growing season, any portion of a county meets the D2 (Severe Drought) drought intensity value for eight consecutive weeks or a higher drought intensity value for any length of time as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor (http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu).

FSA administers three other types of disaster designations:

* See: Disaster Designation, Page 10

TAP Assists Nurseries, Orchards with Losses Due to Disasters

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experience losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2017 must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.

TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters. Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted. If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

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- 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 established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2017 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or by March 31, 2018
- An application for payment by March 31, 2018

Additional information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/ne under the “programs” tab.

Producers Can Have Role in Disaster Designation Process

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 County FSA 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.

Other factors in a Secretarial disaster designation are:

- This designation is triggered by a 30 percent or greater production loss to at least one crop because of a natural disaster, or at least one producer who sustained individual losses because of a natural disaster and is unable to obtain commercial financing to cover those losses.
- In 2012, USDA developed a fast-track process for disaster declarations for severe drought. This provides for a nearly automatic designation when, during the growing season, any portion of a county meets the D2 (Severe Drought) drought intensity value for eight consecutive weeks or a higher drought intensity value for any length of time as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor (http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu).

FSA administers three other types of disaster designations:

* See: Disaster Designation, Page 10
CRP Migratory Birds, Butterflies and Pollinator Initiative An Option for Playas

Contracts only available in designated areas

Select Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in Nebraska are accepting Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract offers under the recently-approved Kansas-Nebraska CRP Migratory Birds, Butterflies, and Pollinator State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project. Sign-up began earlier this year and will be ongoing until the acres are filled. In Nebraska there are 10,000 acres available for enrollment.

The Migratory Birds SAFE project is designed to improve habitat by restoring playas for migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds and water birds. Playas are round, shallow depressions that often fill with water after spring rainstorms or fill from underlying aquifers.

The minimum enrollment per offer is two acres, and the maximum enrollment per offer is 160 acres. The process for enrollment will be by competitive bid, and the offers will be reviewed periodically and ranked.

Contracts will only be made available for acres that are located within designated playa areas.

To learn more about the project and find out if your land is located within a designated playa area, call or visit your County FSA Office. To find an office near you, go to http://offices.usda.gov.

USDA Makes It Easier to Transfer Land to the Next Generation of Farmers, Ranchers

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering an early termination opportunity for certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, making it easier to transfer property to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, including family members. The land that is eligible for the early termination is among the least environmentally sensitive land enrolled in CRP.

Normally if a landowner terminates a CRP contract early, they are required to repay all previous payments plus interest. There is now a policy provision that waives this repayment if the land is transferred to a beginning farmer or rancher through a sale or lease with an option to buy. With CRP enrollment close to the Congressionally-mandated cap of 24 million acres, the early termination also will allow USDA to enroll other land with higher conservation value elsewhere.

Acres terminated early from CRP under these land tenure provisions will be eligible for priority enrollment consideration into the CRP Grasslands, if eligible; or the Conservation Stewardship Program or Environmental Quality Incentives Program, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

According to the Tenure, Ownership and Transition of Agricultural Land survey, conducted by USDA in 2014, U.S. farmland owners expect to transfer 93 million acres to new ownership during 2015-2019. This represents 10 percent of all farmland across the nation.

For more information about CRP and to find out if your acreage is eligible for early contract termination, contact your local FSA office or go online at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.
Conservation Programs

Requirements Outlined for CRP Emergency and Managed Haying, Grazing

Haying and grazing of land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is authorized under certain conditions to improve the quality and performance of the CRP cover or to provide emergency relief to livestock producers due to certain natural disasters. There are two types of haying and grazing authorizations: emergency and managed.

In certain drought or excessive moisture conditions, emergency haying and grazing can be authorized by the State FSA Committee when requested by county FSA committees.

Under normal conditions, managed haying and grazing can be requested at the local county office by the landowner or producer on the CRP contract. Both managed and emergency haying and grazing have restrictions. This includes how frequently the CRP acres can be harvested, the amount of acres that can be harvested and which practices are eligible.

The date of the contract initiation usually determines the frequency and number of acres that can be harvested. CRP acres must be considered fully established before haying or grazing under either the emergency and managed provisions.

In addition, haying or grazing CRP acres is not authorized during the primary nesting season. For Nebraska, the primary nesting season is May 1 through July 15.

Haying is limited to one cutting and grazing and haying cannot occur on the same acreage. Participants agree to graze with certain grazing height limitations. For managed haying and/or grazing, there is a reduction to the annual CRP payment.

For managed haying/harvesting, the authorization expires August 31 and all hay bales must be completely removed from CRP contract acres by no later than October 15. CRP participants must report the number of acres hayed to FSA by no later than October 1.

For managed/routine grazing, this authorization expires September 30 and all livestock must be removed by October 1. CRP participants must report the number of acres grazed to FSA by no later than October 1.

All hayed and grazed acres are subject to FSA spot-check at any time during the authorization period.

It is important to contact your local FSA office prior to any haying or grazing activities on CRP acres to ensure your contract remains in compliance.

Farmers, Landowners Encouraged to Learn More About ‘Fix It, Don’t Disc It’ NRCS Initiative

Agricultural producers and land owners are reminded that conservation compliance on acres considered to be Highly Erodible Land (HEL) is a requirement in order to maintain eligibility for federal farm program and crop insurance premium benefits.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for conducting compliance reviews on HEL in the state. NRCS recently began an outreach effort called “Fix It, Don’t Disc It,” to educate farmers and land owners about ephemeral gully erosion, and conservation practices and management options available for repairing the erosion including no-till, seeding cover crops or installing terraces.

Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) also is an option for land owners to consider when addressing ephemeral gully erosion. A practice under CCRP to consider is Conservation Practice 8A, installation of a grassed waterway.

Farmers and land owners with questions regarding how CCRP can assist with conservation compliance should contact their County FSA Office. To learn more about ephemeral gully erosion and the “Fix It, Don’t Disc It” NRCS initiative, producers can visit www.nrcs.usda.gov and find Nebraska under “state websites” on the right side or stop in at a local office. To find a local USDA office go to: http://offices.usda.gov.
Farm Storage Facility Loan Program
Covers Large Variety of Commodities

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, or permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 3, 5, 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.

The FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program has also undergone several recent changes to make it more accessible to farms of all types and sizes. For example, the purchase of portable storage and handling equipment and trucks are now included as eligible items under the loan program. These items can be new or used.

The program also now includes a “microloan” option with lower down payments, designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets. The microloan option allows applicants seeking less than $50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of 5 percent. Producers can self-certify the storage needs of the eligible commodity and are not required to demonstrate storage needs based on production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible.

Both changes are expected to be of particular benefit to small 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 such as conveyors, 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.

FSA also has significantly expanded the list of commodities included in the FSFL program. Eligible commodities are: 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 loans also can be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

All loan requests are subject to an environmental evaluation. Accepting delivery of equipment, or starting any site preparation or construction before loan approval may impede the successful completion of an environmental evaluation and may adversely affect loan eligibility.

To learn more about the FSFL Program, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your County FSA Office.

Resources Available for Farmers, Ranchers Under Financial Stress

There are options for USDA 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.

Farmers and ranchers also can access assistance through other entities in Nebraska that offer services during financially challenging times. The Rural Response Hotline provides referral and support services for farmers, ranchers and rural residents and their families. The number to call is (800) 464-0258.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture manages the Negotiations Program, which offers mediation services for agricultural borrowers, creditors and USDA program participants. Participants can access free one-on-one education on agricultural financial and legal matters. For information, call (800) 446-4071.

Nebraska Extension has developed an initiative called “Strengthening Nebraska’s Agricultural Economy” that features educational materials designed to provide producers with ideas for reducing input costs, increasing efficiencies and improving profitability. Find the materials at CropWatch.unl.edu and Beef.unl.edu.
Direct, Guaranteed Loan Programs Offer Producers Options

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans also can be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings and to make farm improvements. The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is $300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer’s ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years. Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender’s normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes. Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt. Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to $1,399,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer’s ability to repay the loan.

Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years. Please contact your lender or local FSA farm loan office for more information on guaranteed loans.

Programs Place Emphasis on Loaning to Beginners, Underserved, Young Farmers

Underserved Farmer Loans
FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for targeted underserved applicants. A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the credit elsewhere.

Beginning Farmer Loans
FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years;
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm;
- Agrees to participate in any loan assessment and borrower training required by the agency; and,
- For farm ownership loan purposes, does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county’s average size farm.

Youth Loans
FSA 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.

Among the requirements are that the youth must be 10 years to 20 years of age, be unable to get a loan from other sources, and demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance from a project adviser.

To learn more about these and other loan programs, visit your County FSA Office or go to www.fsa.usda.gov.
**USDA Census of Agriculture Important Tool for Programs, Policy Development**

*Producers should begin receiving survey forms in late 2017*

America’s farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches and those who operate them.

“The Census of Agriculture remains the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every county in the nation,” said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. “As such, census results are relied upon heavily by those who serve farmers and rural communities, including federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations, extension educators, researchers, and farmers and ranchers themselves.”

The Census of Agriculture highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and other topics. NASS defines a farm as any place from which $1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

“For farmers and ranchers, participation in the 2017 Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future, and their opportunity to shape American agriculture—its policies, services and assistance programs—for years to come,” said Hamer.

For more information about the 2017 Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

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**Administrator’s Physical Loss Notification**

- This designation is initiated by the FSA State Executive Director.
- The designation is triggered by physical damage and losses caused by a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the state and local governments.

**Presidential Designation**

- A Presidential major disaster designation and emergency declaration is initiated by the Governor of the impacted state through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the state and local governments.

**Quarantine Designation**

- This designation is requested of the Secretary of Agriculture by the FSA State Executive Director.
- A quarantine designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by the effects of a plant or animal quarantine approved by the Secretary under the Plant Protection Act or animal quarantine laws.

All four types of designations immediately trigger the availability of low-interest emergency loans to eligible producers in all primary and contiguous counties. FSA borrowers in these counties who are unable to make their scheduled payments on any debt may be authorized to have certain set aside. For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

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**Get FSA News Through Email, on Your Cellular Phone**

You can receive important FSA program information through electronic news bulletins by email. To subscribe, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe.

No office? No problem. FSA also now offers the option to receive text message alerts on your cellular phone. Those who choose this option will receive a limited number of messages and only on important deadlines and program information. Standard text messaging rates apply, and participants may unsubscribe at any time. Visit your local FSA office for more information on this option.

As you know, all these programs come with a decent amount of paperwork. And like I said above, our County FSA Offices want to be prepared to assist you when you walk in our door. So, while you may not want to be tied down with a specific date and time to handle your FSA farm business, we hope you recognize that an appointment helps us get you in and out of the office as efficiently as possible.

That’s not to say we don’t welcome walk-in traffic. If you happen to be in town, and have time to stop, we will do our best to assist you whenever you show up at our door.

Thank you for working with us to deliver services in a timely manner. We look forward to working with you.

Until next time,
### Miscellaneous

#### Dates to Remember

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2017</td>
<td>Enrollment period opens for 2018 coverage for Margin Protection Program for Dairy</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 17, 2017</td>
<td>Acreage reporting deadline for all spring-seeded crops, including Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage, and all other crops for the 2017 crop year</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 17, 2017</td>
<td>***NAP acreage reporting deadline for millet and spring-seeded mixed forage, oats, peas and sorghum forage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1, 2017</td>
<td>Enrollment period for ARC/PLC ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1, 2017</td>
<td>Deadline to request farm transfers or reconstituions for 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30, 2017</td>
<td>Enrollment period closes for 2018 coverage for Margin Protection Program for Dairy</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1, 2017</td>
<td>Deadline to apply for 2017 ELAP losses</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 15, 2017</td>
<td>Acreage reporting deadline to report fall-seeded crops and perennial grasses (including for NAP program purposes for 2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 14, 2017</td>
<td>***NAP production reporting deadline for alfalfa and grass</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 30, 2017</td>
<td>***NAP production reporting deadline for barley and spring-seeded mixed forage</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2, 2018</td>
<td>Deadline to report honeybees for ELAP and NAP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

***Please note the above NAP calendar references are not inclusive for all NAP-covered crops; NAP participants should contact their County FSA Office to confirm important program deadlines.***

### Payment Limits in Place for Commodity, Conservation, Disaster Programs

The 2014 Farm Bill established a maximum dollar amount for each program that can be received annually, directly or indirectly, by each person or legal entity. Payment limitations vary by program for 2014 through 2018. Below is an overview of payment limitations by program.

#### Commodity, Price Support Programs

The annual limitation for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Loan Gains is $125,000 total.

#### Conservation Programs

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payment and incentive payment is limited to $50,000. CRP contracts approved before Oct. 1, 2008, may exceed the limitation, subject to payment limitation rules in effect on the date of contract approval.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) has an annual limit of $200,000 per disaster event. The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) has an annual limit of $500,000 per disaster event.

#### Disaster Assistance Programs

The annual limitation of $125,000 applies to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). The total payments received under ELAP, LFP and LIP may not exceed $125,000. A separate limitation of $125,000 applies to Tree Assistance Program (TAP) payments. There is also a separate $125,000 payment limit for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

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If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

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