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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Nebraska FSA Newsletter

Nebraska Farm Service Agency

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A Message from the Acting State Executive Director

The warm weather throughout the month so far has made it somewhat difficult to believe that Fall officially started last week. However, there are a few things that serve as key reminders: calves are being weaned, silage has been cut, soybeans are mostly turned and ready for harvest, and the final alfalfa bales are headed for the barn.

Even though it is a busy time of year, I hope you'll still take a few minutes to think about your local Farm Service Agency office. We are getting ready for some big activity in October and November, and we could use your help to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Linda Kleinschmidt
Roy Stoltenberg

Program Chiefs:

Cathy Anderson
Doug Klein
Greg Reisdorff
Mark Wilke

To find contact information for
your local office or other
information about Nebraska

FSA, go to

www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

For example, farm bill safety net payments for eligible counties/crops authorized through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage (ARC/PLC) programs, for crop year 2016, will be issued sometime in October. Conservation Reserve Program payments also most likely will be released that same month. In order to make timely payments, if you previously received your benefits electronically, please notify the office if you have closed your account, changed accounts or banks, or if your bank has been purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

The end of September signals the end of emergency Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grazing provisions, put in place earlier this summer to address drought conditions in the Northern Plains. Much of Nebraska was opened up to both the grazing and haying options (hayage ended on Aug. 31). Keep in mind that if you used either the CRP haying or grazing option, we need to have the final number of acres hayed or grazed reported to us by Oct. 1.

The fall acreage reporting deadline is Nov. 15 for fall-seeded crops, such as wheat, and perennial grasses. While this deadline is over a month away, it'll be here before we know it. Please make an appointment and stop in as soon as you get your other fall activities, like harvest and weaning, out of the way. Certification of acres now helps maintain your eligibility in 2018 for important safety net programs. This includes, for livestock, disaster programs such as the Livestock Forage Program.

That's all for this month. I wish you all a safe and productive harvest.

--Mike Sander

Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre-authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful for borrowers who use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development

(RD) website at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines>. Click forms and search for “Form 3550-28.”

If you have a “filter” on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Pre-authorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a pre-authorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three month period, the pre-authorized debt agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of pre-authorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

For more information about PAD, contact your local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines

FSA encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser2017/CropCriteria.aspx>.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA’s online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

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 members of 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 needed credit elsewhere.

Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman shall sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe.
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from an eligible parent.

Note, by signing the applicable document, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc.

When signing on one's behalf, the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form, or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc.

Faxed signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for faxed signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of faxed information.

Examples of documents not approved for faxed signatures include:

- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office.

Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Any member of the general partnership can sign on behalf of the general partnership and bind all members unless the Articles of Partnership are more restrictive. Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office. Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts shall consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity.

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program Available

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2016, through Sept. 30, 2017, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope.

Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certification fees, late fees and inspections necessary to address National Organic Program regulatory violations.

Producers and handlers may submit OCCSP applications to FSA county offices in Nebraska.

The FSA OCCSP application form is available at [USDA's eForms site](#), by selecting "Browse forms" and entering "OCCSP" in the "title or keywords" field on the search page.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acres Enrolled in CRP, Farm Programs

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. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment.

The County Committee will consult with Natural Resources Conservation Service to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

In addition, the county FSA office will complete field visits and spot-checks of 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.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

Management Requirements on CRP Acres

All Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants with contracts from 2004 and beyond must complete at least one management activity during the life of the contract. Contracts that have been re-enrolled will require two management activities, one at the beginning and one mid-contract.

Management activities must be completed before the end of year six for 10-year contracts. Required management activities must not occur during the last three years of the CRP contract. An approved Conservation Plan of Operation will provide information on when the CRP management activity is scheduled during the life of the CRP contract.

Management activities must be completed outside the primary nesting season. For Nebraska the primary nesting season is May 1 through July 15.

Management activities create plant diversity for wildlife as well as enhance permanent cover. Producers can choose from the following appropriate management practices: prescribed burn and inter-seeding; tillage and inter-seeding; spraying with inter-seeding; haying with inter-seeding; or prescribed grazing with inter-seeding.

Inter-seeding is optional if the existing CRP cover meets plant diversity requirements. If using the broadcast seeding method, the seeding rate should be doubled.

If prescribed burning is chosen, a "burn packet" consisting of a burn plan and burn permit should be obtained from your local FSA office prior to burning. The FSA staff also will provide instructions for grass seeding for the areas being inter-seeded.

Based on the choice of practice, your local FSA office will furnish the necessary forms to report completion, cost associated with the activity and request for cost-share assistance. CRP participants must complete and sign the FSA-848B and provide necessary paperwork such as bills and seed receipts to receive cost-share assistance for the management activity.

Authorization Required for Incidental Grazing of CRP Acres

In certain situations, landowners and operators may need to graze a field containing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous practices such as grass waterways (CP8A), contour grass strips (CP15A); filter strips (CP21); quail and upland bird habitat buffers (CP33), denitrifying bioreactor on filter strips (CP21B), or saturated filter strips (CP21S). FSA must first authorize the incidental grazing on CRP in a field intended to be gleaned.

Grazing is incidental to the gleaning of the crop residue in a field, or before the harvest of a small grain and occurs after the harvest of crops from within the surrounding field, or during the dormant period of a small grain intended for harvest. The grazing cannot occur during the primary nesting season, which for Nebraska is May 1 through July 15. In addition, grazing can only occur if the

approved cover for that practice has been established and the grazing will not adversely impact the purpose or performance of the practice.

All livestock shall be removed from CRP acreage **no later than two months** after incidental grazing begins. CRP participants utilizing incidental grazing will have a payment reduction for the acreage being grazed. Participants also are responsible, at their own expense, to re-establish a cover destroyed or damaged as a result of the incidental grazing.

If the acreage to be grazed is separated from the surrounding cropland by a fence, the CRP acreage shall not be grazed.

September FSA Interest Rates

Farm Operating: 2.875%
Microloan Operating: 2.875%
Farm Ownership: 3.750%
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.50%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.50%
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 year term: 1.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 1.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 2.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 2.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 2.375%
Commodity Loan: 2.250%

Dates to Remember

September 30, 2017 – **NAP sales closing date for 2018 coverage for rye, triticale and fall-seeded wheat

September 30, 2017 – Authorization ends for emergency grazing of CRP acres

October 1, 2017 – Deadline to report the number of CRP acres grazed or hayed

October 9, 2017 – FSA Offices closed for federal holiday

November 1, 2017 – Deadline to apply for 2017 ELAP losses

November 15, 2017 – Acreage reporting deadline to report fall-seeded crops and perennial grasses (including for NAP program purposes for 2018)

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

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).

