

October 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

**GovDelivery**

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [A Message from the Acting State Executive Director](#)
- [USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Nebraska Farmers](#)
- [Acreage Reporting Deadline for Pastures, Fall-Seeded Crops is Nov. 15](#)
- [USDA Processing Pending Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment Offers](#)
- [Producers Are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting, Failed Acres](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [Loan Servicing During Financial Stress](#)
- [Farm Loan Information Chart](#)
- [USDA Provides Incentive to Transfer CRP Acres to New Farmers](#)
- [FSA Offers Disaster Assistance for Qualifying Tree, Bush and Vine Losses](#)
- [Ballots to be Issued Soon for 2017 County Committee Elections](#)
- [October FSA Interest Rates](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

---

## Nebraska FSA Newsletter

---

### Nebraska Farm Service Agency

7131 A Street  
Lincoln, NE 68510

Phone: (402) 437-5581  
Fax: (844) 930-0237

**State Executive Director:**  
Mike Eller, Acting

**State Committee:**  
Susan Frazier, Chair  
Fred Christensen  
Leo Hoehn

### A Message from the Acting State Executive Director

As you work around the weather to bring in the 2017 crop, we at the Nebraska Farm Service Agency (FSA) are working hard for your farming operation as well. October is a significant month for us. It's when "the rubber meets the road" so to speak, as we work to certify farm safety-net program payments to some 85,000 enrolled farms. This "certification" function is the final step necessary to move benefits into producers' hands.

In total, we are sending somewhere around \$638 million into the state's agriculture economy through the Agriculture Risk Coverage

Linda Kleinschmidt  
Roy Stoltenberg

(ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, covering the 2016 crop year.

To find contact information for your local office or other information about Nebraska FSA, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/ne](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ne).

Crop producers should be watching their bank accounts, or their mail if they still receive payment by traditional check, for the funds. FSA state and county office staff have been reviewing the price and yield information that goes into the safety-net program formula, so farmers should not be shy about calling with questions regarding final payments. Keep in mind that payments from county to county can vary because average county yields will differ. Also keep in mind that it could take as much as a month for the process to be complete, so don't be surprised if the funds haven't arrived yet.

I also want to call attention to an article below that highlights the current status of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This program is nearing its nationwide acreage cap of 24 million acres, established in the 2014 Farm Bill. At present, the only new eligible offers that Nebraska FSA offices can accept are those associated with our state-specific [Platte-Republican Resources Area Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) and the CRP Grasslands program. See below for more information.

That's all for this month. From Nebraska FSA, best wishes for the remainder of harvest 2017.

Until next time,  
Mike Eller

---

## USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Nebraska Farmers

USDA Nebraska Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that approximately 85,000 Nebraska farms that enrolled in safety-net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill will receive financial assistance for the 2016 crop year. The programs, known as Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), are designed to protect against unexpected drops in crop prices or revenues due to market downturns.

Producers in 93 Nebraska counties have experienced a significant drop in prices or revenues below the benchmark established by the ARC or PLC program and thus, will receive payments totaling \$638 million. Payments related to corn, soybeans, wheat and grain sorghum crops made up much of those payments. There were also payments for oats, dry peas, barley and other less-predominant crops. Cash flow from these payments is particularly helpful to farmers and ranchers in counties impacted by natural disasters.

Payments by county for an eligible commodity can vary because average county yields will differ.

More details on the price and yield information used to calculate the financing assistance from the safety-net programs is available on the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc) and [www.fsa.usda.gov/ne](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ne).

---

## **Acres Reporting Deadline for Pastures, Fall-Seeded Crops is Nov. 15**

Producers who file accurate and timely acres reports for all crops and land uses, including pastures, can prevent the potential loss of FSA program benefits, such as those for the Livestock Forage and ARC/PLC programs. The next acres reporting deadline is Nov. 15, 2017, for 2018 fall-seeded crops, such as wheat, and perennial forage crops such as pastures.

The following exceptions apply to the above acres reporting date:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acres reporting date, then the acres must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acres after the above acres reporting date, then the acres 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 is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed" then the acres must be reported by July 15.

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

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your FSA county office. To find an office near you, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

---

## **USDA Processing Pending Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment Offers**

### *Acceptance of Most 2018 Offers Temporarily Suspended*

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will process many pending eligible offers for land enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and will temporarily suspend accepting most new offers until later in the 2018 fiscal year.

All current, eligible CRP continuous enrollment offers made through Sept. 30, 2017, except for those made under the Pollinator Habitat Initiative (CP42), will be approved. Additionally, FSA is temporarily suspending acceptance of most offers going forward to provide time to review CRP allocation levels and to avoid exceeding the statutory cap of 24 million acres. The CRP acres cap is a provision of the 2014 Farm Bill. Current enrollment is about 23.5 million acres nationwide.

USDA is accepting all pending CRP continuous enrollment offers that were made beginning on May 4, 2017, and extending through Sept. 30, 2017, except Pollinator Habitat Initiative offers. Pollinator acres offers are being declined because the program has met its acres enrollment goal. In addition, Nebraska already is at its state-level acres cap for the highly erodible land initiative, the Upland Bird State Acres for Wildlife Habitat (SAFE) and the Tallgrass Prairie SAFE, so offers cannot be accepted for these initiatives.

Effective immediately, USDA is suspending acceptance of all new CRP continuous offers received or submitted after Sept. 30, 2017. The suspension will continue until later in the 2018 fiscal year.

However, FSA will continue to accept eligible offers for state-specific Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP Grasslands enrollment. In Nebraska, in addition to the

CRP Grasslands enrollment, the [Platte-Republican Resources Area CREP](#) is still available. Offers received on or after Oct. 1, 2017, are subject to fiscal year 2018 rental rates which have been adjusted to reflect current market conditions and were established after careful review of the latest USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) cash rent data.

In return for enrolling in CRP, USDA, through FSA, provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP pays farmers and ranchers who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat. Payments for 2017 were announced recently and totaled over \$1.6 billion.

For more information about CRP, contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp). To locate your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

---

## **Producers Are Encouraged to Report 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 were prevented from planting due to natural disaster. 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 is able to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

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

Producers with Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on hand-harvested and other crops designated by FSA 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.

For losses on certain other crops covered by NAP, producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops, including grasses.

Please contact your FSA county office to identify whether you have 72 hours or 15 days to report damage or loss of a specific crop.

---

## **Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

---

## Loan Servicing During Financial Stress

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.

---

## Farm Loan Information Chart

FSA has available a Farm Loan Information Chart Fact Sheet, containing information on maximum loan amounts, loan terms and use of proceeds. The fact sheet can be accessed by clicking [here](#). Additional details on available farm loan programs can be obtained at local FSA offices and on FSA's website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

---

## USDA Provides Incentive to Transfer CRP Acres to New Farmers

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. The new policy 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 will also 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 Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or go online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

---

## FSA Offers Disaster Assistance for Qualifying Tree, Bush and Vine Losses

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 was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. 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. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

---

## Ballots to be Issued Soon for 2017 County Committee Elections

Elections for USDA Farm Service Agency's County Committees are under way.

It is important every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the USDA. County Committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on Nov. 6, 2017.

To be eligible to vote in the elections, a person must:

Meet requirement one (see explanation below) **or** meet requirement two, **and** requirement three (see explanation below).

**Requirement One:** Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as either: an individual who meets one or more of the following; (a) is eligible to vote in one's own right, (b) is a

partner of a general partnership, (c) is a member of a joint venture. **OR** an authorized representative of a legal entity, such as: (a) a corporation, estate, trust, limited partnership or other business enterprise, excluding general partnership and joint ventures (b) a state, political subdivision of a state or any state agency (only the designated representative may cast a vote for the entity).

**Requirement Two:** Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm.

**Requirement Three:** Participates or cooperates in an FSA program that is provided by law.

The last day to return completed ballots to the USDA service center is Dec. 4, 2017.

For more information on eligibility to serve on FSA county committees, visit:  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

---

## October FSA Interest Rates

Farm Operating: 2.750%  
Microloan Operating: 2.750%  
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: 2.00%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 2.125%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 2.250%  
Commodity Loan: 2.250%

---

## Dates to Remember

**Nov. 1, 2017** – Deadline to apply for 2017 ELAP losses

**Nov. 6, 2017** – Ballots mailed for County Committee Election

**Nov. 10, 2017** – FSA Offices closed for federal holiday

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

**Nov. 23, 2017** – FSA Offices closed for federal holiday

**Dec. 1, 2017** – NAP (2018) sales closing date for honey, apples, cherries, plums, strawberries, asparagus, grapes, caneberries, pears, and peaches

**Dec. 4, 2017** – Deadline to return ballots for County Committee election to USDA Service Centers

**Jan. 2, 2018** – 2018 initial reports for honeybee colonies and locations

---

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).