

January 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Nebraska FSA Newsletter

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### Nebraska Farm Service Agency

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**State Executive Director:**  
Nancy Johner

**State Committee:**  
Scott Spilker, Chair  
Cindi Allen  
Mark Jagels  
Hilary Maricle

### From the State Executive Director

The days are short and nights are long, and the thermometer seems to be dipping into the negative numbers more than any of us care for. It's January in Nebraska, and all these factors may make you want to book a flight south or hibernate in the house. Who can blame you?

But before you do either, I hope you'll take some time to stop in to your local FSA office. There is some important business we can take care of together now in order to free up your time later in the year when field work calls. For instance, enrollment for our main commodity crop safety net programs, the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, is open right now. For most producers, this is a critical piece of their overall business plan, so why not take care of it? While you are in,

Geoff Ruth

**Program Chiefs:**

Cathy Anderson

Bob Herchenbach, Acting

Doug Klein

Greg Reisdorff

Mark Wilke

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

we also can address important farm records changes, such as address or banking information updates, that may seem minor, but actually can hold up program benefit distribution later in the year.

As producers look to finalize their financing for the season, our county office farm loan staff also is extremely busy. The articles found below highlight our [direct and guaranteed loan options](#) for both operating and ownership financing. If you are having difficulty securing commercial credit, please stop in to start a conversation with our dedicated farm loan staff. That includes beginning farmers and ranchers who are in their first 10 years of production agriculture.

In closing, I want to highlight the Feb. 5, 2018, deadline for turning in your 2017 Census of Agriculture. The Census is conducted by our friends at the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) once every five years. It is a comprehensive analysis of agriculture in the United States, and the information is used in not only USDA programming, but for policy development work at both the state and national levels. To learn more see the article below or [click here](#).

That's all for this month. Stay warm and stay safe.

-- Nancy Johner

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## Perdue Names Appointees to the Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency State Committee

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue recently announced the individuals who will serve on the Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) state committee. The state committee is responsible for the oversight of farm programs and county committee operations, resolving appeals from the agriculture community and helping to keep producers informed about FSA programs.

Each state committee has five members, including one chairperson and four members. The individuals appointed to serve on this committee include: Committee Chair Scott Spilker, Beatrice; Cindi Allen, Ogallala; Mark Jagels, Davenport; Hilary Maricle, Albion; and Geoff Ruth, Rising City.

The Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs. The agency offers farmers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. FSA continues to conserve natural resources and also provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including special emphasis on beginning, underserved and women farmers and ranchers.

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## Census of Agriculture Response Deadline Approaching

In December farmers and ranchers across the nation received the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web

questionnaire. The online questionnaire has been revised extensively to make it more convenient for producers.

Conducted once every five years, the census of agriculture is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them; it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation. Completed surveys are due by Feb. 5, 2018.

Farmers and ranchers, trade associations, government, extension educators, researchers, and many others rely on census of agriculture data when making decisions that shape American agriculture – from creating and funding farm programs to boosting services for communities and the industry.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) or call (800) 727-9540.

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## Visit County Office Now to Enroll in Safety Net Coverage for 2018

Farmers and ranchers with base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program may enroll for the 2018 crop year now through Aug. 1, 2018.

**Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers must enroll by signing a contract each program year.**

The producers on a farm that are not enrolled for the 2018 enrollment period will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in previous years must still enroll during the 2018 enrollment period.

Producers with Conservation Reserve Program acres that expired on Sept. 30, 2017, should check with their county office to ensure any previously reduced base acres are restored and enrolled for safety net programming purposes.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Deadline Approaching for 2017 Livestock Indemnity Program Applications

Livestock producers are reminded the deadline is quickly approaching for 2017 applications for livestock losses through the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

Producers with eligible livestock losses must submit a LIP application for payment by April 2, 2018. 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.

For 2017, eligible LIP losses must have occurred 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: proof of death documentation, copy of growers contracts, and proof of normal mortality documentation.

Please contact your local FSA office to make an appointment to apply for LIP benefits.

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## Organic Producers, Handlers Can Apply to FSA for Assistance with Certification Costs

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, 2017, through Sept. 30, 2018, 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.

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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/organic) or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Direct Loans Available Through FSA

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 can also 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.

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## **Guaranteed Loans Provide Lenders, Producers An Option**

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.

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## **CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages 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.

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## January FSA Interest Rates

Farm Operating: 3%  
Microloan Operating: 3%  
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: 1.875%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 2.125%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 2.250%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 2.375%  
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 2.375%  
Commodity Loan: 2.625%

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## Dates to Remember

**Jan. 31, 2018** – 2017 Marketing Assistance Loan availability deadline for unshorn pelts and wool

**Feb. 19, 2018** – FSA office closed for federal holiday

**March 15, 2018** – 2018 NAP sales closing date for alfalfa, mixed forage, spring-seeded annual crops, grass, sorghum forage, most annual fruits and vegetables, oats, and peas. For additional crops with a March 15, 2018, sales closing date, contact your local FSA office.

**April 2, 2018** – Deadline to file supporting documents for 2017 Livestock Indemnity Program applications

**April 2, 2018** – 2017 Marketing Assistance Loan availability deadline for barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, wheat and sesame seed

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

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