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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Nebraska FSA Newsletter

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A Message from the State Executive Director

After some delay due to weather, it was great to see combines in the field last week as I traveled across Nebraska. We know you are busy, but please keep safety in mind as you work to finish fall harvest.

Part of the reason I was on the road last week was to welcome USDA Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Under Secretary Bill Northey to the state. Farm Service Agency (FSA) is a part of FPAC, so it was great to have Mr. Northey travel here from Washington, DC, to visit directly with farmers and ranchers and FSA and Natural Resources and Conservation Service staff at the local level. We discussed the programs and services our agency

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To find more information about FSA programming or contact information for your local office, go to

www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

provides and opportunities to do things better. Mr. Northey is a farmer from Iowa, so he understands agriculture in our part of the country.

One of the things we discussed with Mr. Northey is a wheat acreage reporting project that Nebraska FSA is piloting for USDA. Producers in 16 Nebraska wheat-producing counties have the opportunity to submit their winter wheat planted acreage report using data from their precision ag equipment. USDA continues to look for ways to streamline its programs using new technologies, and that is the goal with this pilot program. We are excited to be a part of it. To learn more, please read the article below.

There are many other things going on at Nebraska FSA right now, in addition to the pilot project. Here are just a few:

- The acreage reporting deadline for fall-seeded annual crops is Thursday, Nov. 15. Please call your county FSA office to schedule an appointment to complete this process.
- The application period for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) is ongoing. This program is for dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, wheat and corn producers in Nebraska and is designed to assist producers impacted by foreign market trade disruptions. See the article below for program details.
- Our farm loan staff across the state already is working with producers - particularly livestock producers - on their financing needs for the coming year. If you want to learn more about Nebraska FSA's farm loan programs, we encourage you to call us sooner rather than later to discuss your needs.

That's it for this month. Best wishes for the rest of harvest season.

--Nancy Johner

USDA Issues Safety-Net, Conservation Payments to Nebraska Producers

Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is in the process of issuing approximately \$115 million to Nebraska farms that enrolled in the 2017 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. Additionally, Nebraska FSA is distributing about \$68 million in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rental payments to landowners for their commitment to conservation stewardship.

PLC payments have triggered for 2017 barley, canola, corn, grain sorghum, wheat and other crops. In the next few months payments will be triggered for rice, chickpeas, sunflower seeds, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, crambe, and sesame seed. Producers with bases enrolled in

ARC for 2017 crops can visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc for updated crop yields, prices, revenue and payment rates.

ARC payments by county can vary because average county yields will differ.

CRP rental payments go to landowners to support voluntary conservation efforts on private lands that improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and improve wildlife habitat.

For more information about USDA programs or to locate the nearest USDA Service Center, visit www.farmers.gov.

Application Period Ongoing for Market Facilitation Program

USDA continues to implement the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn, cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The sign-up period for MFP runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at www.farmers.gov/mfp. MFP provides payments to producers of eligible commodities who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA.

For a list of initial MFP payments rates, view the [MFP Fact Sheet](#).

MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined \$125,000 for eligible crop commodities
- A combined \$125,000 for dairy production and hogs
- A combined \$125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than \$900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

Expanded Hog Timeline

USDA has expanded the timeline for producers with whom the Aug. 1, 2018, date does not accurately represent the number of head of live hogs they own. Producers may now choose any date between July 15 to Aug. 15, 2018 that correctly reflects their actual operation.

MFP applications are available online at www.farmers.gov/mfp. Applications can be completed at a local FSA office or submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing. To locate or contact your local FSA office, visit www.farmers.gov.

Marketing Assistance Available for Several Crops in Nebraska

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs). MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for corn, soybeans, grain sorghum, and wheat, as well as other commodities such as oilseeds, pulse crops, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows.

A producer who is eligible to obtain a MAL, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

To be eligible for a MAL or an LDP, producers must have a beneficial interest in the commodity, in addition to other requirements. A producer retains beneficial interest when control of and title to the commodity is maintained. For an LDP, the producer must retain beneficial interest in the commodity from the time of planting through the date the producer filed [Form CCC-633EZ \(page 1\)](#) in the FSA County Office.

For more information, producers should contact their FSA county office or view the [LDP Fact Sheet](#).

Program Assists with Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

Due to an amendment in the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA), for 2017, 2018 and subsequent livestock losses, eligible livestock owners must file a notice of loss by the later of:

- December 3, 2018; or
- 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.

Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred:

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

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 5%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

In addition to filing a notice of loss, producers must also submit an application for payment by March 1, 2019.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

FSA Offers Safety Net Programs for Honeybee Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers two programs that have specific safety net benefits for producers of honeybees and honey. The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm Raised Fish Program (ELAP) assist producers when disasters impact honey production or damage or destroy colonies, hives or honeybee feed.

NAP is designed to reduce financial loss when natural disasters cause lower yields or loss of value in a crop, including honey. NAP coverage is equivalent to catastrophic insurance, meaning it covers up to 50 percent of a producer’s normal yield (must have at least a 50 percent loss) at 55 percent of the average market price. The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind, flood, and conditions related to damaging weather such as excessive heat, among others.

Producers must apply for NAP coverage by Dec. 1 prior to the year for which they are seeking coverage.

ELAP covers colony losses, hive losses and the loss of purchased feed intended for honeybees. For colony losses, producers must have losses in excess of normal mortality (normal mortality is 22 percent) as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition. For hive losses, the hive must have been damaged or destroyed as a result of an eligible adverse weather or loss condition. Eligible adverse weather or loss conditions include Colony Collapse Disorder (for colony losses only), earthquake, eligible winter storm (colony losses only), excessive wind, flood, lightning, tornado and wildfire. For purchased feed, the program covers feed purchased above normal quantities to sustain bees during an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition. Under ELAP the producer must provide documentation that best management practices are being followed.

Both the NAP and ELAP programs require producers to report the number of colonies they have in production to FSA by Jan. 2, 2019. Honeybee producers must notify FSA within 30 calendar days of changes in the total number of colonies or when honeybees are moved to another county.

For ELAP, producers must notify FSA within 30 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent. An application for payment must be filed no later than November 1, 2018. Producers with NAP coverage must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

To learn more about programs for honey and honeybee producers, contact your local FSA office.

Communication Is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation;
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses;
- The development of problem situations;
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security.

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

FSA Partners with Local Lenders Through Guaranteed Loan Program

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 \$1,429,000. 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.

USDA Offers Secure, Convenient Online Business Options

Farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers in Nebraska have new online options to access U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. Through USDA's new process producers can now register, track and manage their application for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) on the secure and convenient farmers.gov website at <https://www.farmers.gov/sign-in>.

MFP is administered by FSA. To apply and manage an application online, producers first need to sign up for the *Level 2 eAuthentication* access. Enrolling is a two-step process. Producers who do not already have an account can register for an account at www.eauth.usda.gov. After creating the account, customers receive a confirmation email with instructions for identity verification. Identity verification can be completed online or by presenting a government issued photo ID in person at a USDA service center.

In addition to the programs available through the farmers.gov portal, other programs offered by FSA can be managed at the [Online Services page](#) with the same eAuthentication credentials.

Individual producers have many options available for conducting business online with USDA agencies including FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA). Online tools such as the NRCS [Conservation Client Gateway](#) offer customers added flexibility and a secure web portal to track payments, report completed practices, request assistance, and sign documents. Level 2 eAuthentication access is not yet available for entities, but it is available for individuals.

To learn more about conducting business with USDA online and to locate the nearest USDA service center, visit www.farmers.gov.

Producers in 16 Nebraska Counties Invited to Join Acreage Reporting Pilot Project

Producers Using Precision Ag Data Needed for Initiative

Wheat producers in 16 Nebraska counties may be eligible for a pilot program to test their ability to use precision ag data for reporting acreage to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies.

Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) are looking for wheat producers to test the transfer of data collected by producers' planting equipment as part of a streamlining initiative. The data will be processed by an approved third-party provider and transmitted directly to FSA and RMA as part of the Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI).

Crop acreage reporting is an important step farmers and ranchers take to be eligible for many USDA programs and services, such as federal crop insurance administered by RMA and farm programs administered by FSA. The fall acreage reporting deadline is Nov. 15, 2018, for winter wheat sown for 2019 production.

The Nebraska counties participating in the pilot include Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes-North Sioux, Frontier, Furnas, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Kimball, Lincoln, Morrill, Perkins, Red Willow, Sheridan and Webster.

Participating wheat farmers still will have to visit their participating FSA county office to sign the final acreage reports and provide any additional information as well as visit their crop insurance agent to validate transmitted data.

Wheat farmers interested in participating in the pilot should contact their county FSA office for additional information. This process must be completed by the Nov. 15, 2018, fall acreage reporting deadline.

October FSA Interest Rates

Farm Operating: 3.750%
Microloan Operating: 3.750%
Farm Ownership: 4.125%
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.50%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.50%
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 year term: 2.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 2.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 3.000%
Commodity Loan: 3.5%

Dates to Remember

Nov. 1, 2018 – Deadline to apply for 2018 ELAP losses
Nov. 12, 2018 - FSA offices closed for federal holiday
Nov. 15, 2018 – Acreage reporting deadline for fall-seeded annual crops for 2019 program eligibility (including for NAP**)
Nov. 15, 2018 – **NAP application closing deadline for grass (2019 coverage)
Nov. 20, 2018 – **NAP application closing deadline for aronia berries, grapes (2019 coverage)
Nov. 22, 2018 - FSA offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday
Dec. 14, 2018 – **NAP production reporting deadline for alfalfa and grass (2018 coverage)
Dec. 31, 2018 – **NAP production reporting deadline for barley, rye, triticale and fall-seeded mixed forage (2018 coverage)
Jan. 2, 2019 – Deadline to report honeybees for 2019 FSA program eligibility (ELAP, NAP)

**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.

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).