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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Nebraska State FSA Newsletter

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A Message from the State Executive Director

I want to begin by acknowledging the difficult circumstances under which many Nebraska farmers and ranchers have had to operate during the first quarter of 2019. Nebraska Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff recognizes the challenges Mother Nature has thrown your way, and we will continue our efforts to assist you as you address these weather-related impacts.

In the articles below you'll find important information regarding FSA-implemented disaster programs, such as:

Hilary Maricle
Mark Jagels

Program Chiefs:

Cathy Anderson,
Production/Compliance
Doug Klein,
Conservation/Price Support
Mark Wilke, *Farm Loans*
Tim Divis, *Executive Officer*

To find more information
about FSA programming or
contact information for your
local office, go to
www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

- **Livestock Indemnity Program** to address livestock losses from extended cold and abnormal precipitation, flooding and blizzards;
- **Emergency Conservation Program** to address land rehabilitation needs and fence repair needs due to flooding and blizzard conditions; and
- **Emergency Loan Program** to assist with financial needs in counties with disaster designations.

We have been receiving many questions on these disaster-related resources, so we have developed a Question and Answer document in an attempt to address these questions. You can find it at www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

There are other programs noted below, so please take the time to review this newsletter. As with any government program, each of these carry with them regulations we must follow as a part of implementation. Please know we are doing our best to deliver services to you, but also know it is OK to ask about something if you don't understand it. In fact, the best way to get accurate information about FSA programs is to call us direct. Not everyone is familiar with FSA, so if you don't know who to call, type offices.usda.gov into your internet browser, click on Nebraska, and find your county FSA contact information.

In closing, please note we also are continuing to roll out the 2018 Farm Bill. Important information was recently released regarding the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and increased FSA farm loan limits. See more below.

That's all for this month.

--Nancy Johner

Deadline Approaching for Producers to File Livestock Indemnity Program Notice of Loss on Livestock Lost Due to Extended Cold, Precipitation

Nebraska Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that producers who lost livestock due to a combination of extended cold and above-normal precipitation during the months of January, February and March may be eligible for assistance under the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP). The deadline to submit a LIP Notice of Loss due to these weather circumstances is April 29, 2019.

Extended cold combined with above-normal precipitation during the months of January, February and early March created an adverse weather event that may have impacted some livestock, resulting in losses to producers.

LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to an adverse weather event. The payment rate is based on 75 percent of the average fair market value of the livestock. A livestock producer normally must file a notice of loss

within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is first apparent. Due to the abnormal conditions in January, February and March 2019, producers with livestock losses attributable to the combination of extended cold and above-normal precipitation have until April 29, 2019, to submit a notice of loss to FSA county offices. Livestock producers must provide evidence that the death of livestock was due to an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition.

Once a Notice of Loss is completed and approved by FSA, an application for payment can be completed by submitting supporting documents regarding beginning inventory and losses. This may include documentation showing the number and kind of livestock that died, photographs or video records to document the loss, purchase records, veterinarian records, production records and other similar documents.

For more information on LIP, or to file a Notice of Loss, contact your county FSA office. To find your nearest office, click [here](#).

USDA Announces Buy-Up Coverage Availability, New Service Fees for Noninsured Crop Coverage Policies

Deadline to Apply for Buy-Up Coverage is May 24

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that higher levels of coverage are being offered through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), a popular safety net program. The 2018 Farm Bill also increased service fees and made other changes to the program, including service fee waivers for qualified military veterans interested in obtaining NAP coverage.

"When other insurance coverage is not an option, NAP is a valuable risk mitigation tool for farmers and ranchers," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. "In agriculture, losses from natural disasters are a matter of when, not if, and having a NAP policy provides a little peace of mind."

NAP provides financial assistance to producers of commercial crops for which insurance coverage is not available in order to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevent crop planting.

NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Producers have a *one-time opportunity until May 24, 2019*, to obtain buy-up coverage for 2019 or 2020 eligible crops for which the NAP application closing date has passed.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

NAP Service Fees

For all coverage levels, the new NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. These amounts reflect a \$75 service fee increase for crop, county or multi-county coverage. The fee increases apply to obtaining NAP coverage on crops on or after April 8, 2019.

NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans

The 2018 Farm Bill NAP amendments specify that qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are now eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.*”

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your nearest office, click [here](#).

USDA Offers Flood, Blizzard Impacted Farmers, Ranchers Disaster Assistance

Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service Ready to Assist Agricultural Producers Affected by Recent Adverse Weather

USDA reminds farmers and ranchers across the state of federal farm program assistance that may be available to help eligible producers recover from recent heavy rains, flooding and blizzards.

Nebraska Farm Service Agency is offering disaster assistance to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts. Available programs include:

- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by floods, blizzards, wildfires, tornados, lightening, extreme heat and extreme cold. Producers will be required to provide documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.
- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss. To view counties approved for this program, click [here](#). Contact your county FSA office regarding program application deadlines.
- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** - provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. ELAP can cover up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to floodwaters. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster, including flooding.
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disaster.

- **HayNet** - is an internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze. www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet.

Nebraska USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also has services available to producers impacted by the recent adverse weather, including the availability of funding to assist producers with the costs associated with livestock mortality disposal due to the recent extreme weather events. To learn about this program, which has a pending application cutoff date of May 1, and other potential NRCS assistance, click [here](#).

For more information on disaster assistance programs, visit www.farmers.gov or contact your county FSA Office. To find your nearest office, click [here](#).

Emergency Conservation Program A Tool to Repair Flood, Blizzard Damage

Farms and ranches that have damage from the March flooding and blizzard may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in approved counties. To view counties approved for this program, click [here](#).

For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- affect the productive capacity of the farmland
- impair or endanger the land

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. Producers who qualify as beginners, limited resource or underserved can receive up to 90 percent of the eligible cost of restoration activities. No producer is eligible for more than \$500,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence. The following activities are eligible:

- removing debris from farmland
- grading, shaping, or releveling severely damaged farmland
- restoring permanent fences
- restoring conservation structures and other similar installations
- shelterbelt rehabilitation

Producers with damage must apply for assistance **prior** to beginning reconstructive work in order to qualify for cost-share resources. This allows FSA offices to assess the need for on-site inspection and environmental compliance requirements, taking into consideration the type and extent of the damage. Please note FSA does have streamlined processes in place for debris removal and fence work, under certain conditions.

For more information about ECP, including information about application deadlines, please contact your county FSA office. To find your nearest office, click [here](#).

Emergency Use of Conservation Reserve Program Acres Ends April 30

Nebraska Farm Service Agency has approved the emergency use of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres for all Nebraska counties, due to the impacts of recent adverse weather. CRP participants who are interested in using this emergency use authorization must contact their FSA county office to complete required paperwork **before** allowing the use to begin.

The emergency use authorization ends April 30, 2019. Livestock must be removed from CRP by May 1, 2019.

The authorization was granted to address the impacts of the recent extreme weather, including flooding, snowmelt and mud. CRP participants who use this option will need to obtain a modified conservation plan, which includes emergency use provisions, from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). CRP participants can allow others to use their CRP acres under this emergency use authorization; however, the livestock owners also will need to complete FSA paperwork as part of the application process.

There will be no reduction in CRP rental payments to CRP contract holders who use the emergency use authorization. CRP contract holders are not permitted to charge livestock producers for the emergency use option.

For more information on this option, contact your county FSA office. To find your nearest office, click [here](#).

Nebraska Counties Eligible for Emergency Loans Following Presidential Disaster Declaration

Several counties in Nebraska have been declared a disaster due to flooding, severe winter storms and straight-line winds. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low-interest emergency loans.

Emergency loans can help producers recover from production and physical losses due to the disaster.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your nearest office, click [here](#). To view a list of counties and disaster designations, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ne and scroll down on the front page to "Disaster Assistance Information."

Higher Loan Limits Now Available on USDA Farm Loans

2018 Farm Bill Increases Limits, Makes Other Changes to Farm Loans

Higher limits are now available for borrowers interested in USDA's farm loans, which help agricultural producers purchase farms or cover operating expenses. The 2018 Farm Bill increased the amount that producers can borrow through direct and guaranteed loans available through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and made changes to other loans, such as microloans and emergency loans.

Key changes include:

- The Direct Operating Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000, and the Guaranteed Operating Loan limit increased from \$ 1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Operating loans help producers pay for normal operating expenses, including machinery and equipment, seed, livestock feed, and more.
- The Direct Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$600,000, and the Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Farm ownership loans help producers become owner-operators of family farms as well as improve and expand current operations.
- Producers can now receive both a \$50,000 Farm Ownership Microloan and a \$50,000 Operating Microloan. Previously, microloans were limited to a combined \$50,000. Microloans provide flexible access to credit for small, beginning, niche, and non-traditional farm operations.
- Producers who previously received debt forgiveness as part of an approved FSA restructuring plan are now eligible to apply for emergency loans. Previously, these producers were ineligible.
- Beginning and socially disadvantaged producers can now receive up to a 95 percent guarantee against the loss of principal and interest on a loan, up from 90 percent.

About Farm Loans

Direct farm loans, which include microloans and emergency loans, are financed and serviced by FSA, while guaranteed farm loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. For guaranteed loans, FSA provides a guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest.

For more information on FSA farm loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your [local USDA service center](#).

Market Facilitation Program Production Certification Deadline Is May 1

USDA launched a trade mitigation package in August 2018 that was aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to trade retaliation by foreign nations. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is administering the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) as a part of that package.

MFP will provide payments to corn (fresh and processed), cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean (fresh and processed), wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers.

Producers of these commodities had until Feb. 14, 2019, to complete initial enrollment in MFP. Producers also were required to submit 2018 harvest production totals as a part of the application process. The deadline to submit these numbers to FSA is May 1, 2019.

For a list of initial MFP payments rates, and other information about this program, 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.

For more information on MFP, please visit www.farmers.gov.

April FSA Interest Rates

OPERATING/OWNERSHIP

Farm Operating: 3.5%
Microloan Operating: 3.5%
Farm Ownership: 4%
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.5%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.5%
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.75%

FARM STORAGE

Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 year term: 2.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 2.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 2.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 2.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 2.750%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 3.5%

Dates to Remember

April 29, 2019 – Deadline to file a Notice of Loss for the Livestock Indemnity Program for losses above normal mortality due to an adverse weather event in Jan., Feb. and March.

May 1, 2019 – Deadline to remove livestock from Conservation Reserve Program acres used under the CRP Emergency Use provisions granted in late March.

May 1, 2019 – Deadline to certify 2018 production figures for Market Facilitation Program

May 24, 2019 – Deadline to apply for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program buy-up coverage

May 27, 2019 – Farm Service Agency offices closed for federal holiday

May 31, 2019 – 2018 Marketing Assistance Loan availability deadline for corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower 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.**

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).