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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Nebraska State FSA Newsletter

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Scott Spilker, *chair*
Geoff Ruth

A Message from the State Executive Director

I just want to remind you, our farmer and rancher customers, to be safe as you work to bring in the harvest and complete other fall chores ahead of the winter months.

Once you get a break in your farm or ranch activities, please take a moment to consider whether you have business that needs to be addressed with your county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. We have a great deal of activity going on in our service centers across the state right now, including:

Hilary Maricle
Lonnie Starke
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.

- Sign-up is ongoing through Dec. 6 for the 2019 Market Facilitation Program. Make an appointment today to take care of this, if you haven't already done so.
- Payments are going out for the 2018 crop year for those enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net programs. Learn more about what commodities triggered for payments in the article below. In addition, rental payments for those with contracts through the Conservation Reserve Program also have been released.
- Speaking of ARC and PLC, both programs were reauthorized under the 2018 Farm Bill, and sign-up for the 2019 and 2020 crop years is ongoing in our offices. If you already know into which program you would like to enroll your farm(s), please make an appointment to stop in and complete the paperwork. If you would like to learn more about these options, FSA and Nebraska Extension are hosting ARC/PLC education meetings across the state in the coming months. These meetings are designed to help you understand the changes in ARC/PLC from the 2014 Farm Bill to 2018 Farm Bill and learn how to use tools available to aid in your decision-making process. See more information on these meetings in the story below.

In closing, I want to note that our offices continue to assist customers in addressing losses from weather disasters throughout the year. Your production records can be an important part of the application process, and as noted in the article below, this is especially true of livestock disaster programs. Please review the article and then be ready to assist your county FSA office as they work to help you complete any outstanding 2019 Livestock Indemnity Program applications.

That's all for this month. Best wishes for the remainder of harvest.

--Nancy Johner

FSA Begins Issuing ARC/PLC, Conservation Reserve Program Payments to Nebraska Farmers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Nebraska is processing \$40.8 million in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments for the 2018 crop year. Additionally, Nebraska FSA will distribute \$66.8 million in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rental payments to landowners to support voluntary conservation efforts on private lands.

FSA began processing payments for 2018 ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC on covered commodities that triggered payments on enrolled farms in the 2018 crop year.

Producers who had 2018 covered commodities enrolled in ARC-CO can visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity.

For farms and covered commodities enrolled in 2018 PLC, the following crops met payment triggers: wheat, barley, peanuts, corn, grain sorghum, dry peas, lentils and canola. Oats and soybeans did not meet 2018 PLC payment triggers.

2018 PLC payment rates for the following covered commodities have not yet been determined: large chickpeas, small chickpeas, sunflower seed, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, crambe, sesame seed, seed cotton, long grain rice, medium grain rice and temperate Japonica rice.

Also, last week USDA began issuing 2019 CRP payments to support voluntary conservation efforts on private lands. In Nebraska, 24,655 landowners will receive compensation for their efforts to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and improve wildlife habitat on 973,499 acres enrolled in CRP throughout the state.

For more information about USDA programs or to locate your FSA county office, visit www.farmers.gov.

FSA Opens Enrollment for 2020 Agriculture Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage Programs

Informational Meetings Scheduled Across Nebraska

Agricultural producers now can enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs – two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) safety net programs – for the 2020 crop year. Meanwhile, producers who enrolled farms for the 2018 crop year have started receiving more than \$1.5 billion for covered commodities for which payments were triggered under such programs.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and updated both programs.

Signup for the 2019 crop year closes March 15, 2020, while signup for the 2020 crop year closes June 30, 2020. Producers who have not yet enrolled for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office.

Informational meetings to assist producers with their ARC and PLC enrollment decisions are scheduled for locations across Nebraska. Details can be found at farmbill.unl.edu.

ARC and PLC have options for the farm operator who is actively farming the land as well as the owner of the land. Farm owners also have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields beginning with crop year 2020. If the farm owner and producer visit the FSA county office together, FSA can also update yield information during that visit.

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 and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

2018 Crop Year ARC and PLC Payments

FSA began processing payments earlier this month for 2018 ARC-County (ARC-CO) and PLC on covered commodities that met payment triggers on enrolled farms in the 2018 crop year. In addition to the \$1.5 billion now in process, FSA anticipates it will issue another \$1 billion in November once USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service publishes additional commodity prices for the 2018 crop.

Producers who had 2018 covered commodities enrolled in ARC-CO can visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity. For farms and covered commodities enrolled in 2018 PLC, the following crops met payment triggers: barley, canola, corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, peanuts, and wheat.

Oats and soybeans did not meet 2018 PLC payment triggers.

2018 PLC payment rates for the following covered commodities have not been determined: crambe, flaxseed, large and small chickpeas, long and medium grain rice, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, seed cotton, sesame seed, sunflower seed and temperate Japonica rice.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC including two online decision tools that assist producers in making enrollment and election decisions specific to their operations, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#).

Nebraska Extension, FSA to Host Farm Bill Education Meetings

Nebraska Extension and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) are planning a series of 2018 Farm Bill education meetings across the state. All producers are invited to attend these informational meetings, which are designed to provide important information to assist producers as they begin to make farm-bill related program decisions.

The 2018 Farm Bill, signed into law last December, reauthorized the existing Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net programs that were in the 2014 Farm Bill, however producers will need to make new program enrollment decisions over the coming months.

More information on these meetings can be found at fsa.usda.gov/ne or farmbill.unl.edu. The meetings are scheduled from late November to mid-December in advance of the coming ARC/PLC enrollment deadlines in 2020. Advance registration is encouraged for planning purposes for materials and facilities. Attendees can register for any of the meetings at the farmbill.unl.edu site or by calling or visiting their county FSA or Extension office. All times are local with registration beginning 30 minutes ahead of start.

The educational programs are each set to run three hours in length, featuring information and insight from FSA specialists and Extension experts.

There also are resources available online that can educate producers in their ARC/PLC decision-making process. Links to these resources are available from FSA at www.fsa.usda.gov/ne under the Spotlights section or from Extension at farmbill.unl.edu.

For more information on the 2018 Farm Bill, visit farmers.gov/farmbill.

Dairy Margin Coverage Program Enrollment Now Open

Dairy producers can now enroll in the [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) program for calendar year 2020. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) opened signup for the program that helps producers manage economic risk brought on by milk price and feed cost disparities.

The DMC program offers reasonably priced protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. The deadline to enroll in DMC for 2020 is Dec. 13, 2019.

Dairy farmers earned more than \$300 million from the program in 2019 so far. Producers are encouraged to take advantage of this very important risk management tool for 2020.

All producers who want 2020 coverage, even those who took advantage of the 25 percent premium discount by locking in the coverage level for five years of margin protection coverage are required to visit the office during this signup period to pay the annual administrative fee.

Dairy producers should consider coverage for 2020 as even the slightest drop in the margin can trigger payments.

More Information

The 2018 Farm Bill created DMC, improving on the previous safety net for dairy producers. DMC is one of many programs that FSA and other USDA agencies are implementing to support America's farmers.

For more information on enrolling in DMC and taking advantage of an online dairy decision tool that assists producers in selecting coverage for 2020, visit the [DMC webpage](#).

For additional questions and assistance, contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

FSA Offers Direct Loans for Farm Ownership, Operating

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 direct farm ownership loans is \$600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is \$400,000 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.

FSA Guaranteed Loans An Option Through Commercial Lenders

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 \$1,776,000. 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.

Fall Acreage Reporting Period Runs Through Nov. 15

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop acreage certification report by the applicable deadline.

The next acreage reporting deadline in Nebraska is Nov. 15, 2019, for fall-seeded crops for 2020 production, such as winter wheat and rye. Crops vary by county so producers should contact their county FSA office for detailed acreage reporting information.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

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

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office.

Livestock Inventory Records Important for Disaster Programs

Producers are reminded to keep updated livestock inventory records. These records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster and are an important part of disaster assistance program applications, including applications for the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP).

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can assist producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, producers will be required to provide verifiable 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. For grazing or feed losses, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

To be eligible for livestock deaths, producers must submit evidence to support their losses. Some examples of records that could be used to help support a claim include: veterinary records, contemporaneous producer records, veterinary certification existing at the time of the event, balance sheets, brand inspection records, loan records, docking records, bank statements, shearing records, farm credit balance sheets, property tax records, ear tag records, trucking and/or livestock hauling records, sales and purchase receipts, inventory records used for tax purposes, private insurance documents, chattel inspections, and canceled check documentation.

To be eligible for livestock injuries, producers must submit one of the following documents: sales receipt from a livestock auction, sale barn or other similar livestock sales facility; private insurance documents; or processing plant receipt. At a minimum, these records must include livestock kind, type, and weight, and the price for which the animal was sold.

For more information on documentation requirements associated with receiving disaster-related assistance, contact your local FSA office.

Voting Begins Nov. 4 for 2019 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin mailing ballots on November 4 to eligible farmers and ranchers across the country for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee elections.

County committee members play a key role at FSA. Over 7,000 members nationwide provide their valuable knowledge and judgment on decisions made about FSA services, including disaster and emergency programs.

To be counted, ballots must be returned to the local FSA county office or postmarked by December 2.

Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office. One-third of county committee seats are up for election each year. Newly elected committee members will take office January 1, 2020. County committee members help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, and emergency programs and eligibility.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. Producers who supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, but are not of legal voting age, also may be eligible to vote.

Producers can find out if their local administrative area is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who did not receive a ballot in the mail can pick one up at their local FSA county office. Visit fsa.usda.gov/elections for more information.

Dates to Remember

Oct. 31, 2019 – Deadline to submit an application for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Nov. 11, 2019 – FSA offices closed for federal holiday

Nov. 15, 2019 – Acreage reporting deadline for fall-seeded crops for 2020 program eligibility (including for NAP)

Nov. 15, 2019 - Deadline to submit a Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program application for coverage for alfalfa, mixed forages and grass in the 2020 production season

Nov. 20, 2019 – Deadline to submit a Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program application for coverage for aronia berries and grapes in the 2020 production season

Nov. 28, 2019 – FSA offices closed for federal holiday

Dec. 6, 2019 – Deadline to submit an application for the 2019 Market Facilitation Program

Dec. 13, 2019 – Deadline to enroll in Dairy Margin Coverage Program for 2020.

Jan. 2, 2020 – Deadline to report honeybees for 2020 FSA program eligibility (ELAP, NAP)

****Please note any 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.**

October FSA Interest Rates

OPERATING/OWNERSHIP

Farm Operating: 2.625%

Microloan Operating: 2.625%

Farm Ownership: 3.25%

Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.5%

Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.5%
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.625%

FARM STORAGE

Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 year term: 1.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 1.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 1.75%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 2.75%

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