January 2020

Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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- A Message from the State Executive Director
- Dates to Remember:
- January FSA Interest Rates:
- Deadline Nears for Assistance Through On-Farm Storage Loss Program
- WHIP+ Milk Loss Program Application Deadline Nears
- Deadline for General Practice Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Contract Offers Is Feb. 28, 2020
- USDA Offers Assistance for Farmers Hurt by 2018, 2019 Disasters
- FSA Reminds Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage for Non-insurable Crops
- Goal of Supervised Credit: Graduate Borrowers to Commercial Market
- FSA Offers Beginning Farmer Loan Options
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)
- USDA Swine Study for Small and Large Enterprises

Nebraska State FSA Newsletter

Nebraska Farm Service Agency - State Office

7131 A Street
Lincoln, NE 68510

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

State Executive Director:
Nancy Johner

State Committee:
Scott Spilker, *chair*

A Message from the State Executive Director

Here we are, in the depths of winter, with short days and cold temperatures that make one want to hibernate. I know for many of you, our farmers and ranchers, that really isn't an option. Please take care of yourselves as you watch over livestock and do other outdoor winter activities.

I am hopeful that while the weather is less than ideal to be outside, you'll make time to come in and see your county Farm Service

Geoff Ruth
Lonnie Starke
Mark Jagels

Program Chiefs:
Cathy Anderson, *Production/Compliance*
Doug Klein, *Conservation/Price Support*
Mark Wilke, *Farm Loans*
Michael Kresin, *Administrative Officer*
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.

Agency office staff. There are several programs on which we would like you to focus your attention.

Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC): These programs are the heart of the commodity crop safety net available through the 2018 Farm Bill, and now is the time to make your decision about whether you will use ARC or PLC on your farm(s) for 2019 and 2020, and then enroll those farms for the 2019 crop year. The deadline to get this done is March 16, 2020.

Because we have tens of thousands of you in Nebraska to assist, we are specifically asking that you do not delay making an appointment to complete this process. Producers who take care of the election and 2019 enrollment now would still have until March 16 to come back into the office and make changes, should you so desire.

Some county FSA offices hand out appointment cards for ARC/PLC election and enrollment. If you already have an appointment scheduled, please keep that appointment. If you need one, please call your county FSA office now. We want to get as many of you through this process as possible before you need to start focusing on spring planting and other outdoor activities.

Last point regarding ARC/PLC – please do your best to understand the ARC and PLC program options and have a decision made, ahead of your FSA appointment, regarding which program you intend to enroll each farm and each crop. To assist you with this decision-making process, Nebraska FSA has posted links to a number of educational resources at www.fsa.usda.gov/ne. This includes a new webinar option that is a joint effort between Nebraska FSA and Nebraska Extension.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP): I may sound a bit like a broken record, however, I want to once again remind producers if you filed a LIP Notice of Loss for livestock losses in 2019 due to natural disasters, and you have not yet completed the paperwork, the deadline to do so is March 2, 2020. Producers need to keep in mind there is more than one step to this application process. If you expect a LIP payment to assist with the financial loss of qualified dead livestock in 2019, you must provide required supporting documentation of beginning and ending inventories, and you must file an application for payment. Our offices are working hard to get producers in the door before this deadline arrives, but we need your help to make it happen. If you are waiting for a LIP payment for 2019 losses, please reach out to your county FSA office to see what they need to complete your application.

Other Key Deadlines: The **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** application process is ongoing, but has an approaching deadline. Two key disaster program deadlines – one for **On-Farm Storage Loss** and one for **WHIP+ Milk Loss** – also are nearing. See deadlines and read the stories below for more information.

That’s the highlights for this month. On behalf of our FSA county offices, thanks for your attention to these important matters.

--Nancy Johner

Dates to Remember:

Jan. 30, 2020 - Deadline to submit application for payment and supporting information for prior year losses through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program
Feb. 17, 2020 - FSA offices closed for holiday
Feb. 28, 2020 – Deadline to apply under general signup for Conservation Reserve Program
Feb. 28, 2020 – Deadline to submit an application for the WHIP+ Milk Loss Program (disaster program)
Feb. 28, 2020 – Deadline to submit an application for the On-Farm Storage Loss Program (disaster program)
March 2, 2020 – Deadline to file supporting documents for 2019 Livestock Indemnity Program applications, as well as application for payment
March 16, 2020 – Election and 2019 enrollment deadline for the Ag Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs

****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.**

January 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: 1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 1.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 1.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 1.875%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE
Commodity Loan: 2.5%

Deadline Nears for Assistance Through On-Farm Storage Loss Program

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is taking applications through Feb. 28, 2020, from eligible producers who lost stored commodities due to natural disaster in 2018 and/or 2019. The On-Farm Storage Loss Program (OFSLP) was authorized by the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019.

Administered by FSA, OFSLP provides payments to eligible producers who suffered uncompensated losses of harvested commodities including grains, oilseeds, and hay stored in on-farm structures. For producers to receive payment, the losses must be directly related to an eligible disaster event such as floods, tornadoes, snowstorms and wildfires that occurred during 2018 and/or 2019.

To be eligible for OFSLP, the farm storage structure must be located on the farm, not used for commercial storage, and would have, under normal circumstances, maintained the quality of the commodity. Commodities stored in warehouses are not eligible for OFSLP. Program payments are made for the loss of the stored commodity and not for the loss of the structure itself.

Commodities eligible for OFSLP include: barley, canola, chickpeas (large & small), corn, cotton, crambe, dry peas, flaxseed, grain sorghum, hay (alfalfa and all-hay), lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, rice, safflower seed, sesame seed, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

FSA uses a national payment rate per commodity which is based on market or harvest prices. Payments will be calculated using a 75 percent factored FSA payment rate multiplied by the quantity lost while stored.

OFSLP has a payment limitation of $125,000 per entity. Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) does not apply to OFSLP and an acreage report is not required for this program.

For specific commodity payment rates, to submit an application, or for additional program information, contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

WHIP+ Milk Loss Program Application Deadline Nears

The WHIP+ Milk Loss Program is designed to provide payments to eligible dairy operations for milk that was dumped or removed without compensation from the commercial milk market because of a qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disaster. In Nebraska, qualifying natural disasters for this program include floods, tornadoes and snowstorms.

Applications are being accepted for this assistance through Feb. 28, 2020.

Eligible producers can receive assistance payments at a rate of 75 percent of the market value of the milk that was dumped. The payment formula takes into consideration normal milk marketings for the impacted dairy operation, fair market value of the milk, and promotion and hauling fees, among other factors.

Producers cannot receive payments for more than 30 days in which milk was dumped in 2018 and 2019. There is a payment limitation of $125,000 per year.

For more information about WHIP+ Milk Loss Program eligibility and other factors contact your county FSA office.

Deadline for General Practice Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Contract Offers Is Feb. 28, 2020

USDA opened signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) on December 9, 2019. The deadline for agricultural producers to sign up for general CRP is February 28, 2020, while signup for continuous CRP is ongoing.

Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive a yearly rental payment for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

CRP Enrollment Options

General Signup

CRP general signup will be held annually. The competitive general signup will now include increased opportunities for enrollment of wildlife habitat through the State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative.

Continuous Signup

While some practices under SAFE will remain available through continuous signup, CRP continuous signup will focus primarily on water quality with the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR) Initiative. The 2018 Farm Bill prioritizes water quality practices such as contour grass strips, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetlands and a new prairie strip.

USDA will also be working with Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) partners to relaunch CREP continuous options in each state under new statutory provisions. CREP will continue to target high-priority local, state or regional conservation concerns.

Grasslands Signup

CRP Grasslands signup helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland and certain other lands while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. A separate CRP Grasslands signup will be offered each year following general signup.

Pilot Programs

Later in 2020, (FSA will roll out pilot programs within CRP: CLEAR 30, which allows contracts expiring with CLEAR practices to be reenrolled in 30-year contracts and in the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) in the prairie pothole region. More information on these programs will be announced in the new year.

Land Transition

The CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP) is an option for producers interested in transitioning land to a beginning farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group to return land to production for sustainable grazing or crop production. CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants may have a lease less than five years with an option to purchase, and they have two years before the end of the CRP contract to make conservation and land improvements.

Previously Expired Land

Land enrolled in CRP under a 15-year contract that expired in September 2017, 2018 or 2019, may be eligible for enrollment if there was no opportunity for re-enrollment and the practice under the expired contract has been maintained.

CRP Rates and Payments

FSA recently posted updated soil rental rates for CRP. County average rates are posted on the CRP Statistics webpage. Soil rental rates are statutorily prorated at 90 percent for continuous signup and 85 percent for general signup. The rental rates will be assessed annually. Under continuous signup, producers also receive incentives, including a signup incentive payment and a practice incentive payment.

To enroll in CRP, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

USDA Offers Assistance for Farmers Hurt by 2018, 2019 Disasters

WHIP+ May Benefit Variety of Nebraska Producers for Varying Losses

Nebraska producers affected by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019 now can apply for assistance through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) program.

WHIP+ Eligibility

WHIP+ is available for producers who have suffered eligible losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only). A list of counties that received qualifying disaster declarations and designations is available at farmers.gov/recover/whip-plus. Also, producers with losses in counties that did not receive a disaster declaration or designation may still apply for WHIP+ but must provide supporting documentation to establish that the crops were directly affected by a qualifying disaster loss. In Nebraska, disaster losses must have been a result of floods, tornadoes, snowstorms or wildfires, and related conditions, that occurred in 2018 or 2019.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available, excluding crops intended for grazing. Because grazing and livestock losses are covered by other disaster recovery programs offered through FSA, those losses are not eligible for WHIP+.

Both insured and uninsured producers are eligible to apply for WHIP+, but all producers who receive WHIP+ payments will be required to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage, at the 60 percent coverage level or higher, for the next two available, consecutive crop years after the crop year for which WHIP+ payments were paid. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two applicable, consecutive years will be required to pay back the WHIP+ payment.

WHIP+ Payments

WHIP+ payment amounts will be determined using a formula that includes several factors, including expected value of the crop, how much of the crop was actually harvested, and crop insurance coverage and payments issued on those crops. Producers with qualifying losses on insured crops will receive between 75 percent and 95 percent of expected value; those who purchased the highest levels of coverage will receive 95 percent of the expected value.

Producers who did not insure their crops in 2018 or 2019 will receive 70 percent of the expected value of the lost crop.

At the time of sign-up, producers will be asked to provide verifiable and reliable production records. If a producer is unable to provide production records, WHIP+ payments will be determined based on the higher of either the actual loss certified by the producer and determined acceptable by FSA, or the county expected yield and county disaster yield. The county disaster yield is the production that a producer would have been expected to make based on the eligible disaster conditions in the county.

Producers with WHIP+ payments for 2018 disasters will be eligible for 100 percent of their calculated value. Producers with WHIP+ payments for 2019 disasters will be limited to an initial 50 percent of their calculated value, with an opportunity to receive up to the remaining 50 percent after January 1, 2020, if sufficient funding remains.

WHIP+ Prevented Planting

WHIP+, through the Farm Service Agency, will provide prevented planting assistance to uninsured producers, NAP producers and producers who may have been prevented from planting an insured crop in the 2018 crop year and those 2019 crops that had a final planting date prior to January 1, 2019. In addition, WHIP+ provides prevented planting assistance to **uninsured** producers who may have been prevented from planting an **insurable** crop in 2019.

For More Information

Additional information about WHIP+ program eligibility and payment limitations can be found at farmers.gov/recover or by contacting your County FSA office.

FSA Reminds Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage for Non-insurable Crops

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

NAP application deadlines can vary by county and by crop, so producers interested in NAP are encouraged to contact the county FSA office for more information.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by federal crop insurance may be eligible for NAP. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops. NAP can protect against losses associated with lower yields, destroyed crops or prevented planting.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. The 2018 Farm Bill allows for “buy-up” levels of NAP coverage from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

For all coverage levels, the 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. Producers qualifying as beginning, underserved, or limited resource farmers or those who can meet eligibility requirements as a military veteran are eligible for free catastrophic (basic) level of NAP coverage, as well as the potential for reduction in “buy-up” premiums.

To learn more about NAP, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Goal of Supervised Credit: Graduate Borrowers to Commercial Market

Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loan programs are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, it is our goal to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will advise borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation’s goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA’s staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

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

FSA Offers Beginning Farmer Loan Options

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county’s average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2018 to Dec. 31, 2019, must file:

- A notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent
- An application for payment by Jan. 30, 2020

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets.

USDA Swine Study for Small and Large Enterprises

Starting in June 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), will conduct national studies of U.S. small and large enterprise swine operations.

Nebraska producers are included in these studies, which take an in-depth look at small (fewer than 1,000 pigs) and large (1,000 or more pigs) U.S. swine operations and provide information regarding health and management practices to the U.S. swine industry. Information collected will be used to inform disease management and preparedness strategies to safeguard the swine industry.

Large Enterprise Study (1,000 or more pigs)

Representatives from NASS will visit participating operations from July through August 2020 to complete a questionnaire. If you choose to continue in the study, USDA or state veterinary health professionals will visit you from September 2020 through January 2021 to complete a second questionnaire and discuss free biologic testing (oral fluids and feces).

Approximately 2,700 operations will be selected from 13 of the Nation’s top swine-producing states representing about 90 percent of the U.S. swine operations with 1,000 or more pigs.

Small Enterprise Study (Fewer than 1,000 pigs)

In June 2020, selected producers will be mailed a letter describing the study and be provided with a questionnaire to complete and return. Producers who don’t respond to the questionnaire will be called by a NASS representative to arrange a convenient time to complete the questionnaire via a telephone interview.

Approximately 5,000 swine operations from 38 states will be asked to participate in the study. These states account for about 95 percent of U.S. swine operations with fewer than 1,000 pigs.

Participation in any NAHMS study is voluntary. The privacy of every questionnaire participant is protected. Data will only be presented in an aggregate or summary manner.

For more information, please contact Charles Haley at 970-494-7216 or charles.a.haley@aphis.usda.gov.
