

June 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Nebraska State FSA Newsletter

**Nebraska State Farm
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State Executive Director:
Nancy Johner

A Message from the State Executive Director

I want to begin this month by offering a note of thanks to you, our Nebraska FSA customers. It is a stressful and challenging time in agriculture, and while our offices are here to help you, we've had to do so under unique circumstances and different models of service delivery due to the impact of COVID-19. We appreciate your patience and adaptation to using our office drop boxes, email, and other online tools.

State Committee:

Scott Spilker, *chair*
Geoff Ruth
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.

As a federal government agency, we must follow the lead of USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. We are moving toward a resumption of in-person, in-office traffic in phases, and so USDA Service Centers across the state will be at different levels of operation, depending on local trend lines for COVID-19 cases. The best way to learn your office status is to call ahead for an appointment. [Click here](#), to find your local office contact information.

Again, thanks for your patience. Please know we are as anxious as you to get back to “normal” service options. Please also know we see value in continuing to offer some of these new service delivery mechanisms going forward.

Take a moment to read the articles below to familiarize yourself with upcoming important deadlines, such as ARC/PLC 2020 enrollment (June 30) and spring crop acreage reporting (July 15). We also continue to assist folks with Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) applications. If you haven’t visited with us yet about this program (it includes most major crop and livestock commodities in Nebraska), please go to farmers.gov/cfap to learn more and then make an appointment with your local FSA office.

I also want to highlight the article below on the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+). This program is an ad hoc disaster assistance program that was rolled out late last year to assist producers with crop losses due to natural disasters for 2019 and 2018. Excessive moisture was added to the program in late 2019 as a qualifying disaster event. Please review the article and then call your county FSA office if you believe you may qualify for this program.

That’s all for this month. Best wishes for the summer.

--Nancy Johner

Deadline Approaching for 2020 Enrollment in ARC, PLC Farm Safety Net Programs

Producers Reminded that Enrollment Includes Ensuring All Contract Signatures Are Complete

Producers signed a record 1.77 million contracts for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2019 crop year, and USDA is reminding producers June 30 is the deadline to enroll in ARC and PLC for the 2020 crop year.

Producers interested in enrolling for 2020 should contact their FSA county office. Producers should keep in mind that contracts are not considered complete until all producers who are required to be on the contract have returned their signatures. Producers must enroll by June 30 and make their one-time update to PLC payment yields by September 30.

FSA attributes the significant participation in the 2019 crop year ARC and PLC programs to increased producer interest in the programs under the 2018 Farm Bill and to an increase in eligible farms because of the selling and buying of farms and new opportunities for beginning farmers and military veterans with farms having 10 or fewer base acres. Enrollment for 2019 ended March 16.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors may also be required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone, and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download the [program fact sheet](#) or the [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#). Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. To locate the nearest USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

FSA Notes Importance of Completing Spring Acreage Reporting

FSA county offices are reminding producers to timely file crop acreage reports. The deadline for acreage certification is July 15, 2020. This includes common spring-planted crops, such as corn, soybeans, and grain sorghum, but also includes Conservation Reserve Program acres and perennial grass.

Acreage certification is required to maintain eligibility for program benefits. Certification plans may vary by county office, but in general customers can assist FSA by paying close attention to email or mail from their County FSA office that outlines the process put in place for 2020 spring certification, and then follow the requested steps. Producers also are requested to keep good records of what is planted, where it is planted and when it was planted, and then ensure the transfer of that information to FSA using the process outlined by their county office, as soon as possible following the completion of planting.

County FSA offices are using Microsoft Teams software as an option to virtually meet with producers to review maps and documents for certification. Producers who want to schedule a virtual appointment would download the Microsoft Teams app on their smart phone and call their FSA county office to schedule an appointment. Producers also can use Microsoft Teams from their personal computer without downloading software. Producers can work with their county FSA office on the best available option for completing certification.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, county offices will make the certification updates and then contact the producer to acquire signatures on the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578).

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the 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 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.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

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

Producers with questions should contact their county FSA office.

FSA Offices Now Accepting Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Applications

Producers Encouraged to Use Payment Calculator, Download Application from Website, View Webinar

Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency also set up a call center in order to assist with service to customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

FSA also wants to remind producers the program is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply. In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Where to Go for Information

Producers can learn about the program and download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap. Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help identify sales and inventory information and calculate potential payments.

USDA posted information recently regarding eligibility for commodity crops and the potential influence on that eligibility based on type of marketing contract in place as of Jan. 15, 2020. To view that information, go to the Non-Specialty Crop Marketing Contract Eligibility For CFAP chart on the farmers.gov/cfap/non-specialty website. USDA also posted information recently regarding classification of cattle under the livestock category for CFAP eligibility. To view that information, go to the [Common Livestock Types/Cattle Common Name chart](https://farmers.gov/cfap/livestock) on the farmers.gov/cfap/livestock website (scroll to middle of page). Nebraska FSA presented information on the program during a

recent webinar. To access the webinar, [click here](#). Additionally, producers in search of one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a good first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

Applying for Assistance

Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Producers are encouraged to visit the farmers.gov/cfap website to view, and potentially use, the online payment calculator tool and the online application process. Those who use the online calculator tool can convert their responses into a completed CFAP application that can be signed and submitted to their local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/cfap.

Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested after the application is filed, so producers should retain this information in the event of spot checks. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

There are some additional commodities common in Nebraska that may be eligible for CFAP, such as seed corn, popcorn, corn silage, forage sorghum and dual purpose sorghum. Producers interested in learning more about the eligibility of these or other similar commodities should contact their county FSA office for additional information.

More Information

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Participants Reminded of Acreage Reporting, Notice of Loss Requirements

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

To be eligible to receive NAP assistance, producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2020 crops by the applicable deadline. In addition, NAP policy holders are required to report acres planted by July 15, 2020, or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins, whichever is earlier.

A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your local FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

FSA Offices Still Accepting WHIP+ Crop Disaster Program Applications for 2018, 2019 Losses

The application period remains open for the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program-Plus (WHIP+), which is available to agriculture producers affected by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019. Producers are reminded that late in 2019 excessive moisture was added as a qualifying disaster event under the program. An application deadline has not yet been established.

WHIP+ Eligibility and Application

WHIP+ is available to producers who have suffered eligible losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only). 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 event.

Disaster losses must have been a result of floods, tornadoes, snowstorms, wildfires, excessive moisture or D3 or D4 drought, as well as 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.

Producers who call their county FSA offices regarding this program should be prepared to identify: the disaster event that caused the loss and the approximate date of the event; what crops on their farm were impacted; and field location of the impacted crops.

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 for the next two available, consecutive crop years after the crop year for which WHIP+ payments were paid.

WHIP+ Payments

WHIP+ payment amounts will be determined using a formula that includes several factors: expected value of the crop, how much of the crop was actually harvested, and crop insurance coverage and payments issued on those crops. At the time of sign-up, producers will be asked to provide verifiable and reliable production records.

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 at a later time, if sufficient funding remains.

WHIP+ Prevented Planting

FSA 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.

For More Information

Additional information about the WHIP+ Program and other disaster assistance programs can be found at farmers.gov/recover or by contacting the local county FSA office.

Requirements Outlined for CRP Emergency, Managed Haying and Grazing

Haying and grazing of land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is authorized under certain conditions to improve the quality and performance of the CRP cover or to provide emergency relief to livestock producers due to certain natural disasters. There are two types of haying and grazing authorizations: emergency and managed.

In certain drought or excessive moisture conditions, emergency haying and grazing can be authorized by the State FSA Committee when requested by county FSA committees.

Under normal conditions, managed haying and grazing can be requested at the local county office by the landowner or producer on the CRP contract.

Both managed and emergency haying and grazing have restrictions. This includes how frequently the CRP acres can be harvested, the amount of acres that can be harvested and which practices are eligible. The date of the contract initiation usually determines the frequency and number of acres that can be harvested.

CRP acres must be considered fully established before haying or grazing under either the emergency and managed provisions. In addition, haying or grazing CRP acres is not authorized during the primary nesting season. For Nebraska, the primary nesting season is May 1 through July 15.

Haying is limited to one cutting and grazing and haying cannot occur on the same acreage. Participants agree to graze with certain grazing height limitations. For managed haying and/or grazing, there is a reduction to the annual CRP payment.

For managed haying/harvesting, the authorization expires August 31 and all hay bales must be completely removed from CRP contract acres by no later than October 15. CRP participants must report the number of acres hayed to FSA by no later than October 1.

For managed/routine grazing, this authorization expires September 30 and all livestock must be removed by October 1. CRP participants must report the number of acres grazed to FSA by no later than October 1.

All hayed and grazed acres are subject to FSA spot-check at any time during the authorization period.

It is important to contact your local FSA office prior to any haying or grazing activities on CRP acres to ensure your contract remains in compliance.

Livestock Indemnity Program Can Assist with 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 hurricanes, 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.

For 2020 livestock losses, eligible livestock owners must file a notice within 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 grower's 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 250 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, 2021.

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

FSA Offers Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about FSA Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA office, visit offices.usda.gov.

USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups, Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

June FSA Interest Rates

OPERATING/OWNERSHIP

Farm Operating: 1.375%

Microloan Operating: 1.375%

Farm Ownership: 2.25%

Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.5%

Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.5%

Emergency - Actual Loss: 2.375%

FARM STORAGE

Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 year term: 0.25%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 0.375%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 0.5%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 0.625%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 0.75%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 1.125%

Dates to Remember

June 30, 2020 – 2020 enrollment deadline for the Ag Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs

July 3, 2020 – FSA offices closed for federal holiday

July 15, 2020 – Deadline to report all spring-seeded crops, perennial forage and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage

July 15, 2020 - End of primary nesting season for CRP program purposes

August 3, 2020 – Deadline to submit a candidate nomination for FSA County Committee election

August 3, 2020 – Deadline to request farm transfers or reconstitutions for 2020

August 28, 2020 – Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) application deadline

Nebraska AgrAbility Focuses on Helping Farmers, Ranchers Who Have Physical Disabilities, Chronic Health Issues

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, in partnership with Easterseals Nebraska, offers the Nebraska AgrAbility program to farmers and ranchers in the state who suffer from a disabling or chronic health condition that hinders their ability to work. Producers can apply for free services through this program to help them continue with gainful employment in production agriculture or a related occupation.

AgrAbility addresses a wide variety of disabling conditions in agriculture, including arthritis, spinal cord injuries/paralysis or back impairments, amputations, brain or head injuries, visual or hearing impairments, disabling diseases, and respiratory impairments, among others. AgrAbility team members work to provide support such as modification of farm or ranch equipment, increased farmstead accessibility, injury prevention education, financial guidance, assistance in identifying funding sources for assistive technology, and coordinating community services.

AgrAbility services are available for individuals who have a disability or significant healthcare condition and who receive their income from agriculture.

To learn more about this free service, call (800) 471-6425 or email neagrability@ne.easterseals.com. More information also can be found at agrability.unl.edu. Other contacts include Rod Peterson at (402) 984-3819 or Emily Freudenburg at (402) 718-1914.

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