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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

Nebraska FSA county offices across the state are wrapping up a busy time period, as important deadlines have passed for ARC/PLC enrollment and spring acreage certification. That doesn't mean we are sitting back and relaxing. There's still plenty of work to be done.

Here are a few things we are working on of importance to you, our customers:

- We continue to process applications for the **Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)**. Nebraska is one of the top states in numbers of applications and financial assistance provided. With that said, we know there are farmers and ranchers whose operations have been

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

negatively impacted by COVID-19, but who have yet to call their FSA office for more information. If this happens to be you, the deadline to apply for CFAP is Aug. 28, but please don't wait until then. Visit farmers.gov/cfap today to learn more and then call your county FSA office for additional information.

- We are working on the required paperwork and conservation planning associated with the recent announcement of **CRP Grasslands**. Of the 1.2 million acres accepted into the program nationally, Nebraska landowners were awarded contracts for 298,890 acres, one of the top states in the nation. Through CRP Grasslands, farmers and ranchers can protect grasslands, rangelands and pastures while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices, produce hay and do other management practices on the enrolled land.
- The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Nebraska unfortunately is showing deteriorating conditions in some portions of the state. Conditions are extreme enough in some areas that FSA county committees have requested approval for CRP Emergency Grazing and Haying. There are triggers for this program that include Drought Monitor status or loss of forage production. CRP contract holders are reminded emergency grazing or haying of CRP acres requires prior approval from the FSA county office.

Even though the July 15 acreage certification deadline has passed, some offices still are wrapping up final details. If your county FSA office contacts you about filling in maps or finalizing your FSA-578, please respond to them timely. Acreage certification is a requirement in order to maintain eligibility for farm program benefits, so it is important to complete all the paperwork as soon as possible. th

FSA County Committee (COC) election season continues, with the deadline to submit a nomination to serve on a local committee set for Aug. 3. County Committees are important as they oversee the functions of county FSA offices and provide input on programming and local agricultural issues. For example, see above mention of county committee role in CRP Emergency Grazing and Haying implementation. For more information on this opportunity, read the article below and then contact your FSA county executive director.

In closing, I want to remind you that as the state and nation address COVID-19 impacts, Nebraska FSA continues to be open for business and continues to provide the best customer service possible while also prioritizing the health of employees, customers and partners. Some USDA Service Centers in Nebraska are now open for in-office visitors by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business should call ahead to confirm the office is able to accept in-person appointments and schedule the visit. Visitors will be pre-screened based on health concerns or recent travel and must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Service Centers that are not yet open for in-person, in-office traffic continue to serve customers using a variety of tools, including phone, email, online and drop box options. USDA has created a dashboard where folks can find out the current status of their county office by using a clickable map. To view the map, [click here](#).

That's all for this month. Stay cool and stay safe.

--Nancy Johner

Applications Open for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Through Aug. 28

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) continues to implement the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), with applications being accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion in 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.

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.

Getting Help from FSA

New customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap. Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help producers identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments. Producers self-certify their records when applying for CFAP and that documentation is not submitted with the application. However, producers may be asked for their documentation to support the certification of eligible commodities, so producers should retain the information used to complete their application for a period of three years.

Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print a pre-filled CFAP application, sign it, and submit it to your local FSA office. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred delivery method. Team members at FSA county offices will be able to answer detailed questions and help producers apply. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/cfap.

Policy Clarifications

FSA has been working with stakeholder groups to provide further clarification to producers on the CFAP program. For example, the agency has published a matrix of common marketing contracts that impact eligibility for non-specialty crops and has provided a table that crosswalks common livestock terms to CFAP cattle categories. Updated information can be found in the frequently asked questions section of the CFAP website.

More Information

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

LIP Provides Financial Assistance for Livestock Losses

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

LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to 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.

Streamlined Guaranteed Loans Assist Small-Scale Operators

Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has the availability of a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers. The program, called EZ Guarantee Loans, uses a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to \$100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to \$50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to \$100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

More information about the available types of FSA farm loans can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or by contacting your local FSA office.

Farm Reconstitution Requests Due by Aug. 1 for Current Fiscal Year

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

To be effective for the current Fiscal Year (FY), farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the FY** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. A reconstitution is considered to be requested when all:

- of the required signatures are on FSA-155
- other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Communication is Key in Lending

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

borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

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

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

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

CRP Transition Incentives Program an Option for Those with Expiring Contracts

CRP contract holders are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the landowner or operator for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires, provided the transition is not to a family member.

Enrollment in TIP is on a continuous basis through 2023 or until the new statutory limit of \$50 million under the 2018 Farm Bill is reached.

CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants must agree to sell, have a contract to sell, or agree to lease long term (at least five years) land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who is not a family member.

Beginning, veteran or social disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning two years before the expiration date of the CRP contract. For example, if a CRP contract is scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2022, the land may be offered for enrollment in TIP from October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2022. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands.

New landowners or renters that return the land to production must use sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information on TIP, visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation>.

FSA County Committee Candidate Nomination Deadline is Aug. 3, 2020

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year, and the candidate nomination period runs through Aug. 3.

To be eligible for nomination and to hold office as a committee member or alternate, a person must fulfill each of the following requirements: (1) be a producer with an interest in farming or ranching operations, (2) participate or cooperate in any FSA program provided for by law, (3) be a U.S. citizen, (4) be of legal voting age, (5) meet the basic eligibility requirements, and (6) reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in which they will be serving.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by Aug. 3, 2020. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member* available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections. Contact your FSA county executive director for more information about the election in your area.

FSA Loan Interest Rates for July

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: 0.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 0.875%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 1.125%

Dates to Remember

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

September 7, 2020 – FSA offices closed for federal holiday

September 30, 2020 – Deadline to complete Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Program yield update

NRCS Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program Seeks Mentors

The Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program is a state-driven program that matches an experienced producer who is passionate about conservation with an NRCS field employee that is new to the job or new to the area.

The goal through the program is to grow critical relationships between NRCS staff and producers, while at the same time advancing employee knowledge of production agriculture and natural resources in their local area, ultimately enhancing the ability to provide excellent customer service.

Once matched with a producer mentor, the employee will go out on the land with them 6-12 times per year for a period of 12-18 months – always during agreed upon times that are convenient for the producer.

Producer mentors provide a safe, low-risk learning environment for employees to advance their knowledge of:

- Common agricultural practices, equipment, inputs and other topics.
- The types of daily challenges and decisions producers face.
- Local resource problems and concerns.
- How producers use conservation practices to address resource concerns.

For more information on the CAMP program, check out our [Fact Sheet](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Contact your [local CAMP Coordinator](#) to speak with someone directly or to sign-up to become a mentor.

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).