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Nevada FSA Newsletter

Farmers and Ranchers across Nevada Participate in June Surveys

Right now, farmers and ranchers across Nevada are participating in two major mid-year surveys, the June Agricultural Survey and the June Area Survey. NASS gathers the data for the June Agriculture Survey online, by mail, phone and through in-person interviews. For the June Area Survey, agency representatives are now visiting randomly selected tracts of land and interviewing the operators of a farm or ranch on that land. NASS will compile and analyze the survey information and publish the results in a series of USDA reports, including the annual Acreage report, Rice Stocks report and quarterly Grain Stocks report, all to be released June 30, 2016 at 9:00 am PT. Survey data contribute to NASS’s monthly and annual Crop Production reports, as well as the
USDA Unveils New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filing at one location, data that’s important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

Since 2009, USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more
crops. Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as FSA Farm+, gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit http://offices.usda.gov.

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**USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment**

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new “microloan” option, which allows applicants seeking less than $50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact a
USDA Offers Help to Fire-Affected Farmers and Ranchers

In addition, the FSA Emergency Conservation Program provides funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Producers located in counties that received a primary or contiguous disaster designation are eligible for low-interest emergency loans to help them recover from production and physical losses. Compensation is also available to producers who purchased coverage through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which protects non-insurable crops against natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses or prevented planting.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can assist producers with damaged grazing land as well as farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who find themselves in emergency situations caused by natural disasters. The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides financial assistance to producers who agree to defer grazing on damaged land for two years. In the event that presidentially declared natural disasters, such as wildfires, lead to imminent threats to life and property, NRCS can assist local government sponsors with the cost of implementing conservation practices to address natural resource concerns and hazards through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

Farmers and ranchers with coverage through the federal crop insurance program administered by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) should contact their crop insurance agent to discuss losses due to fire or other natural causes of loss. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator.

When wildfires destroy or severely damage residential property, Rural Development (RD) can assist with providing priority hardship application processing for single family housing. Under a disaster designation, RD can issue a priority letter for next available multi-family housing units. RD also provides low-interest loans to community facilities, water environmental programs, businesses and cooperatives and to rural utilities.

For the first time in its 110-year history, the Forest Service, part of USDA, is spending more than 50 percent of its budget to suppress the nation’s wildfires.

Today, fire seasons are 78 days longer than in the 1970s. Since 2000, at least 10 states have had their largest fires on record. This year, there have been more than 46,000 fires. Increasing development near forest boundaries also drives up costs, as more than 46 million homes and more than 70,000 communities are at risk from wildfire in the United States.

Visit http://go.usa.gov/3eDeF to learn more about USDA disaster preparedness and response. For more information on USDA disaster assistance programs, please contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Center go to http://offices.usda.gov

First-Ever Local Food Marketing Practices Survey Provides Benchmark Data
NASS is conducting the 2015 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey to produce official benchmark data on the local food sector across the U.S. This first-time survey asks Nevada producers for information on their production and local marketing of foods during the 2015 calendar year. Now as communities are using programs funded by the Agricultural Act of 2014, to help grow the local food sector, this new survey will help show where the sector is today and help identify future needs. The Local Foods Marketing Practices Survey was mailed to a random sample of Nevada and U.S. producers that grow and sell foods locally. Farmers and ranchers can fill out the survey online via a secure website, www.agcounts.usda.gov or return their form by mail. For more information, contact Scot Rumburg at Scot.Rumburg@nass.usda.gov or (775) 353-3714 or call us toll-free at 1-800-851-1127.

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**Report Livestock Losses**

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather 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 2016, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2016, and before December 31, 2016. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year for which benefits are requested:

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers 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 400 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2016 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or by January 30, 2017

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

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**Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres**

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. 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 Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

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**Borrower Training**

Borrower training is available for all Farm Service Agency customers. This training is required for all direct loan applicants, unless the applicant has a waiver issued by the agency.

Borrower training includes instruction in production and financial management. The purpose is to help the applicant develop and improve skills that are necessary to successfully operate a farm and build equity in the operation. It aims to help the producer become financially successful. Borrower training is provided, for a fee, by agency approved vendors. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager for a list of approved vendors.

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**USDA to Provide Agricultural Credit Training, Expand Opportunities for Farmer Veterans and Beginning Farmers**

USDA is partnering with the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) to conduct agricultural credit training sessions in the Midwest for military veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers. States under consideration to host the workshops include Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska.

These workshops will provide individuals interested in farming as a career, including military veterans, with methods to improve business planning and financial skills, and improve understanding of the risk management tools that can help small farm operations.

Other partners include Niman Ranch a community network of more than 700 independent family farmers and ranchers, and the Farm Credit Council and the Farm Credit System, which provides
loans, leases and financial services to farmers, ranchers and rural businesses across the United States. The workshops will also include assistance with credit applications and introductions to local or regional food markets.

To learn more about veterans in agriculture, visit www.usda.gov/veterans. Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to learn more about FSA’s farm loan programs. To find your local FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov. More information also is available from the Farmer Veteran Coalition at www.farmvetco.org.

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).