

October 2015



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New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

New Jersey Farm Service Agency

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Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county

2016 Acreage Reporting of PRF and Perennial Forage (grass intended for grazing or hay)

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA Office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline for PRF/Perennial Forage.

Programs that require certification of pasture, rangeland, and forage (PRF) and/or Perennial Forage include the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage Program (PLC).

Perennial Forage includes but is not limited to grass, alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, clover and mixed forage intended for hay or grazing. PRF includes acreage insured as PRF with crop insurance.

The acreage reporting deadline for PRF/Perennial Forage is November 16, 2015.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting date:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is complete.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above 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.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing" or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

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.

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

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

Local Offices Issue Receipts for Services Provided

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

To learn more about FSA, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or to find your local USDA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and 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 October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2015.
- An application for payment by November 1, 2015

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

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.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Sign-up

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experience losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2015 must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent. TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

Direct Loans

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 both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000 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.

Additional conservation activities included in 2016 Environmental Quality Incentives Program: Application period closes October 16

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering some new opportunities for New Jersey agricultural and forest landowners through the 2016 [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#). "NRCS has developed some new standards in our (electronic) field office technical guide that will be incorporated into 2016 EQIP, and we have added conservation practices that may benefit New Jersey producers," State Conservationist Carrie Lindig said.

NJ NRCS can now offer assistance for planning and implementing On-farm Secondary Containment Facilities, Livestock Shelter Structures and Amending Soil Properties with Gypsum Products. Two additional practices eligible for assistance through EQIP, Drainage Water Management and Denitrifying Bioreactor, will help to reduce the concentrations of nitrogen, pathogens and pesticides from agricultural drainage systems.

"Whether producers are interested in the practices that have been offered in the past, or they want to investigate some of these new offerings, they will want to visit their local office soon to be sure they can get their applications submitted by October 16 when the current EQIP application period closes," Lindig said. Applicants

who contract with NRCS for a 2016 program could receive funding to implement conservation practices on their land as early as this coming Spring.

EQIP is NRCS's most popular conservation program and the program brought \$4.6 million to New Jersey last year. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program offers farmers and forestland managers a variety of options to conserve natural resources while boosting production on their lands. EQIP provides financial assistance for a variety of conservation activities, such as irrigation water management, reduced tillage, field buffers, and rotational grazing systems. EQIP also includes targeted initiatives that focus on particular practices. Landowners interested in the on-farm energy, organic farming, seasonal high tunnels, and soil health initiatives should apply by October 16 to be considered in the first round of funding. NRCS has added an aquaculture initiative in 2016, and will keep the application period for that initiative open until November 20.

The current application period for [Agricultural Management Assistance \(AMA\)](#) will also close on October 16. Agricultural Management Assistance is a voluntary conservation program available to beginning and limited resource farmers, small farms, and producers who have had limited participation in other USDA financial assistance programs.

Interested producers should visit their [local NRCS service center](#) for information on EQIP and AMA. Program information is also available at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers conservation programs to help agricultural producers improve water and air quality, build healthier soil, improve grazing and forest lands, conserve energy, enhance organic operations, improve habitat for wildlife, and achieve other environmental benefits.

FSA Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office
- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities.
- Individual signatures are required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents. For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.

Please contact your local county office for additional clarification on proper signatures.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).