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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

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Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions specific to your operation or county

Nominations Open June 15th for the 2018 County Committee Elections

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. 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 land owners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

Important Dates:

June 15: spring seeded
forage acreage reporting

June 15: COC
Nominations Begin

All nomination forms for the 2018 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2018. 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: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Visit the New Jersey FSA Website at www.fsa.usda.gov/nj to find election information for your service center.

USDA Resumes Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment

One-Year Extension Available to Holders of Many Expiring Contracts through Continuous Signup

As part of a 33-year effort to protect sensitive lands and improve water quality and wildlife habitat on private lands, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will resume accepting applications for the voluntary [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP). Eligible farmers, ranchers, and private landowners can sign up at their local [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) office between June 4 and Aug. 17, 2018.

FSA stopped accepting applications last fall for the CRP continuous signup (excluding applications for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP grasslands). This pause allowed USDA to review available acres and avoid exceeding the 24 million-acre CRP cap set by the 2014 Farm Bill. New limited practice availability and short sign up period helps ensure that landowners with the most sensitive acreage will enroll in the program and avoid unintended competition with new and beginning farmers seeking leases. CRP enrollment currently is about 22.7 million acres.

2018 Signup for CRP

For this year's signup, limited priority practices are available for continuous enrollment. They include grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others. [View a full list of practices](#).

FSA will use updated soil rental rates to make annual rental payments, reflecting current values. It will not offer incentive payments as part of the new signup.

USDA will not open a general signup this year, however, a one-year extension will be offered to existing CRP participants with expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less. Producers eligible for an extension will receive a letter with more information.

CRP Grasslands

Additionally, FSA established new [ranking criteria](#) for [CRP Grasslands](#). To guarantee all CRP grasslands offers are treated equally, applicants who previously applied will be asked to reapply using the new ranking criteria. Producers with pending applications will receive a letter providing the options.

About CRP

In return for enrolling land in CRP, USDA, through FSA on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP pays producers who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.

The new changes to CRP do not impact the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a related program offered by CCC and state partners.

Producers wanting to apply for the CRP continuous signup or CRP grasslands should contact their USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit <https://www.farmers.gov>. More information on CRP can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

Acreage Reporting

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit your County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

Remaining for the 2018 crop year:

- June 15, 2018 spring seeded forage
- July 15, 2018 all other crops, including CRP
- August 15, 2018 processing beans

For the 2019 crop year:

- Sept. 30, 2018 – Christmas trees and sod
- Nov. 15, 2018 – small grains and hay
- Jan. 2, 2019 – honey
- Jan. 16, 2019 - apples, peaches, grapes and strawberries

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- 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 completed.
- 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. 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.

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

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 notify their county office with 72 hours for hand harvested crops and 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.

USDA Reopens Application Period for Producers Recovering from Cattle Loss, Other Disasters

Signup Began June 4 for Livestock Indemnity Program and Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin accepting disaster assistance program applications on June 4 from agricultural producers who suffered livestock, honeybees, farm-raised fish and other losses due to natural disasters.

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) is reopening the application period for two disaster assistance programs in response to statutory changes made by Congress earlier this year.

Beginning June 4, FSA will accept new applications for losses for calendar year 2017 or 2018 filed under the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) or [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP). Producers who already submitted applications and received decisions on their applications for these years do not need to file again, but they can reapply if they have additional losses or their application was disapproved because it was filed late.

In February, Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, which made several changes to these two disaster programs, including:

- Removing ELAP's \$20 million fiscal year funding cap, enabling FSA to pay producers' 2017 applications in full and their 2018 applications as soon as they are approved.
- Removing the per-person and legal entity annual program payment limitation of \$125,000 for LIP for 2017 and future years. (The income limitation applies as it did before, meaning producers with an adjusted gross income of more than \$900,000 are not eligible.)
- Changing LIP to allow producers to receive a payment for injured livestock that are sold for a reduced price due to an eligible event. Previously, the program only covered financial loss for livestock death above normal mortality.

Producers interested in LIP or ELAP should contact their [local USDA service center](#). To apply, producers will need to provide verifiable and reliable production records and other information about their operation.

Drought, wildfires and other disasters continue to impact farmers and ranchers, and LIP and ELAP are two of many programs available through USDA to help producers recover. Learn more at <https://www.usda.gov/disaster>.

Strong Roots Grow Success for Beginning Farmer

By Shawn McCowan, Texas FSA

Dakota Davidson, a beginning farmer in Deport, Texas, knew early on his future was planted in farming. Dakota now owns and operates [Davidson Farms](#), growing wheat, corn and soybeans.

Rooted in Agriculture

Dakota grew up surrounded by agriculture. When Dakota turned 18 in 2012, he graduated high school and immediately planned to start a farming operation of his own. "Agriculture is something I've always been around. I've always dreamed of having a farm of my own," he said. All he needed was business guidance, land, equipment and financing.

Dakota's father, Jackie, provided sound guidance and allowed him to borrow machinery until he could afford his own. A few local farmers considered retiring and Dakota's youthful charisma inspired them. One became a mentor, while others transferred land leases or equipment to him.

Growing an Operation

Within a few months, Dakota acquired nearly 150 acres and enough equipment to get started. His next step was to visit the USDA [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) at his local USDA service center in Lamar County.

Dakota met with David Dunmon, an FSA farm loan manager who helped him apply for a [beginning farmer loan](#) to purchase the remainder of what he needed to plant his first wheat crop.

FSA's beginning farmer direct and guaranteed loan programs support America's next generation of farmers and ranchers. While [farm ownership loans](#) can provide access to land and capital, [operating loans](#) are a resource for farmers and ranchers to start, maintain and strengthen their operations. [Microloan programs](#) offer more flexible access to credit for small, beginning and niche agricultural operations.

Dakota earned enough from his first harvest in 2014 to purchase a new grain cart. Inspired, he set his sights even higher.

By the end of 2016, he paid another visit to this local service center, where he applied for an additional loan to purchase his own tractor and an upgraded planter. Before long, Dakota was planting corn and soybeans on an additional 500 acres.

"I am so glad FSA was there to help me get my first loan. I couldn't have done this without them," he said. "Anyone thinking about working in agriculture should find their local office and go meet the people there. I still visit with them and always get good advice."

Giving Thanks

Between seasons at the new Davidson Farms, he took time to thank everyone who helped him pursue his dream, starting with helping on his father's 920-acre operation.

"Without the cooperation, help and prayers of those around me, there's no way I'd be where I am today," Dakota said. "It's very important to build a good relationship with people in your community, especially in farming. They got me started."

Dakota also recognized the many obstacles he had to face as a new farmer, but said he never regretted one minute of it.

"It's truly been everything I ever hoped it would be," he said. "Although we've fought droughts, floods, harmful insects, wild hogs and poor market prices along the way, I'd do it all again a thousand times over."

Managing Risk

In addition to using loan programs to expand his operation, Dakota also manages his risk by enrolling his eligible crops in FSA's [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\) programs](#) to provide a safety net when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues.

He further protects his commodities with federal crop insurance administered by the [USDA Risk Management Agency](#).

For more information about USDA programs and services, contact your [local USDA service center](#).

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