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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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New York State FSA Newsletter

New York State Farm Service Agency

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USDA Acreage Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage Changes to July 15

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has established a new acreage reporting deadline for perennial forage for 2019 and subsequent years. Previously set in the fall, the new deadline is July 15 for all states, except for Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Timely and accurate acreage reports for all crops and land uses, including prevented planting or failed acreage, are the foundation for many FSA program benefits, including disaster programs for livestock owners. Producers must report their acreage to maintain program eligibility.

Producers who have coverage for perennial forage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must report their crop acreage by the earlier of any of the following:

- the established acreage reporting date (July 15)
- 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported
- the established normal harvest date for the end of the coverage period.

To find contact information for
your local office go
to www.fsa.usda.gov/ny

USDA Reminds Producers of Disaster Program Deadlines

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds New York producers who experienced losses from natural disasters during the 2017 and 2018 calendar years that they may be eligible for assistance through the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

Tree Assistance Program (TAP):

TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines lost due to natural disasters. Payment eligibility is triggered when a mortality loss in excess of 15 percent on a stand (adjusted for normal mortality) occurs due to natural disaster.

For 2017 and 2018 TAP losses, growers have until the later of **Dec. 3, 2018**, or 90 calendar days after the disaster event or date when the loss of trees becomes apparent to submit an application with supporting documentation.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP):

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish who have suffered losses due to an adverse weather or loss condition, including blizzards, disease, water shortages and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs.

For 2017 and 2018 ELAP, producers must file a notice of loss and application for payment at their local FSA office by **Dec. 3, 2018**. for losses occurring from Oct. 1, 2016, through Sept. 30, 2018.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock owners or contract growers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality, or injury resulting in reduced value, caused by an eligible loss condition.

For 2017 and 2018 LIP, a livestock owner or contract grower must file a notice of loss the later of 30 calendar days from when the loss of livestock is first apparent, or **Dec. 3, 2018**. For 2017 losses, a livestock owner or contract grower must file an application for payment by **Dec. 3, 2018**. For 2018 losses, a livestock owner or contract grower must file an application for payment by, **March 1, 2019**.

Other Amendments to the 2014 Farm Bill by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018

In February, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 made several changes to FSA disaster programs. This includes eliminating the \$20 million fiscal year funding cap for ELAP, eliminating the \$125,000 payment limitation for LIP for 2017 and future years and allowing producers to receive a payment for injured livestock that are sold for a reduced price due to an eligible event.

As a result of these changes, starting June 4, producers were allowed to submit ELAP, LIP and LFP applications for 2017 losses if they reached the payment limitation under the previous rules. The application periods for these programs for the 2017 program year will close on Dec. 3, 2018. Producers who already submitted applications and received decisions on their applications for these years do not need to file again but can reapply if they have additional losses or their application or notice of loss was denied because it was late filed.

Contact your local FSA office for program deadlines. For more information on FSA disaster assistance programs or to find your local USDA Service Center, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/>.

Changing Bank Accounts

FSA program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for whatever reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2017 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2018. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

FSA Offers A Wide Range Of Low-Interest Loans

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. The staff at the Name County FSA office can provide more details on farm operating and microloans and provide loan applications. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, or for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

Please call your local office if you have questions about any of the loans available through FSA.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan

(FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

USDA Market Facilitation Program

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn (fresh and processed), cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean (fresh and processed), wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The sign-up period for MFP runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at www.farmers.gov/mfp. MFP provides payments to producers of eligible commodities who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA.

For a list of initial MFP payments rates, view the [MFP Fact Sheet](#).

MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined \$125,000 for eligible crop commodities
- A combined \$125,000 for dairy production and hogs
- A combined \$125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than \$900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

Expanded Hog Timeline

USDA has expanded the timeline for producers with whom the Aug. 1, 2018, date does not accurately represent the number of head of live hogs they own. Producers may now choose any date between July 15 to Aug. 15, 2018, that correctly reflects their actual operation.

MFP applications are available online at www.farmers.gov/mfp. Applications can be completed at a local FSA office or submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing. To locate or contact your local FSA office, visit www.farmers.gov.

Sign in/Sign up!

Farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers have new online options to access U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. Through USDA's new streamlined process, producers doing business as an individual can now register, track and manage their applications for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) and 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (2017 WHIP) on the secure and convenient www.farmers.gov. USDA eAuthentication does not have the mechanism to issue login accounts to businesses, corporations, other entities, or for anyone acting on behalf of another individual or entity. Producers, doing business as an individual, first need to sign up for Level 2 eAuthentication access.

- Step 1: Create an online account at www.eauth.usda.gov
- Step 2: Complete identity verification by either using the online self-service identity verification method or by completing the identity verification in-person at your USDA Service Center.
- Step 3: Contact your local USDA Service Center to have your new Level 2 account linked with your USDA customer record
- Step 4: You're enrolled and ready to log in

Users with a secure Level 2 eAuthentication ID, linked to their USDA customer record, can apply for select USDA programs, view and print farm maps and farm records data. Enrolling is easy! Visit farmers.gov/sign-in to learn more.

To locate a service center near you or use online services not requiring eAuthentication access, visit www.farmers.gov. For technical assistance, call the eAuthentication help desk at 1-800-457-3642.

USDA and SCORE Joining Forces to Find Mentors

If you are a farmer or rancher, or have agricultural or business experience, join us in supporting the next generation and in investing in your local community! Your experiences and knowledge as a business owner, agricultural professional, or farmer can provide vital support to the community you live in.

USDA is collaborating with SCORE – www.score.org - the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors in an effort to expand the field of available agricultural mentors and provide free business mentoring to farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural and rural business owners. SCORE is currently looking for volunteers with experience in an agriculture-related field who would like to become a part of an extended field of volunteers. The organization's Orientation and Mentoring Certification program provides volunteers with everything needed to be a successful volunteer. Training includes background about SCORE's mission and services, as well as guidance on how to be a business mentor, including enhancement of listening, interviewing and problem-solving skills.

Current SCORE volunteer mentors have backgrounds in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, business and financial planning. The mentors provide local expertise and free one-on-one business mentoring to new and existing farmers and business owners. Together they work through the process of starting up or maintaining agricultural and rural businesses. No matter what stage a business is in, SCORE volunteer mentors can help in developing business plans, navigating financing and legal issues, identifying new markets, and other topics, in order to help their clients succeed. FSA invites you to learn more and sign up to become a mentor today at <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship>.

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 www.fsa.usda.gov.

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).