A Message from the State Executive Director

Now is the time to make your decision about whether you will use ARC or PLC for your operation in 2019 and 2020. March 16 is the LAST day to make what is likely one of the most important business decisions you will make for your farming operation this year. With less than 25 business days remaining before March 16, we need producers to contact their FSA County office to setup an appointment today. There will not be an extension of this deadline.

If you’re still unsure about the choice of ARC or PLC, we offer online decision tools to help you determine the best program election for your farming operation. To access these tools, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

As many of you are preparing for spring planting, I cannot stress enough the importance of not letting this deadline get lost in the hectic day-to-day obligations of farm life. Producers who fail to elect either Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) by March 16, 2020 will NOT receive a 2019 payment and their 2020 election will default to the prior farm bill election.
Price Support Chief:
Mark VanHoose

Production Adjustment, Compliance and Risk Management Chief:
Matt Kleski

State Committee Members:
Trish Levering, Chair
Ronnie Clifton
Daryl Knipp
Chase Powell
Joe Steiner

Visit the Ohio FSA website for additional information at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

Please contact your FSA County Office for questions specific to your operation.

Current FSA Farm Loan Interest Rates

Current Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Interest Rates

Remember it's important to call ahead to your FSA County office and schedule an appointment before stopping in. It helps us prepare for your visit, so you can complete your FSA business and be on your way.

On behalf of our Ohio FSA employees, thanks for the opportunity to be of assistance. We look forward to seeing many of you within the next few weeks.

Respectfully,
Leonard Hubert

---

**USDA Reminds Producers of Feb. 28 Deadline for CRP General Signup**

FSA reminds agricultural producers interested in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2020 general signup to enroll by February 28, 2020. This signup is available to farmers and private landowners who are either enrolling for the first time or re-enrolling for another 10- to 15-year term.

Farmers and landowners who enroll in CRP receive yearly rental payments for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”), which can control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

Enrollment for program year 2020, following a valid election being performed on the farm for 2019 will continue to **June 30, 2020.**

Ohio FSA has over 89,000 farms to assist before March 16, and we are doing our very best to manage our office traffic. As of today, our records show that 35,000 farms out of an expected 89,000 farms have completed ARC or PLC enrollment for the 2019 crop year. We are asking that you do not delay in making an appointment. If you have an appointment now, please do your best to keep it. If you need an appointment, please call your FSA County office now!

With Secretary Perdue’s announcement on February 3rd of the third and final tranche of 2019 MFP payments our county offices were busy processing these payments and producers should see a deposit in their bank account soon. Producers of MFP-eligible commodities will be eligible to receive 25% of the total payment expected, in addition to the 75% they have already received from the 2019 MFP.

This is the first opportunity for general signup since 2016, and we want producers and private landowners to know that we have only 2 weeks remaining, as it **ends on February 28.** It is critical that producers and landowners make their final determinations and submit offers very soon to take advantage of this popular conservation program.
The CRP continuous signup is ongoing, which enables producers to enroll for certain practices. FSA plans to open the 2020 CRP Grasslands signup which runs from March 16, 2020 to May 15, 2020.

To enroll in CRP, contact your County FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp.

---

**FSA Reminds Producers of Approaching NAP March 16 Deadline for 2020 Crops**

FSA reminds producers who are interested in the 2020 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), of the need to apply for coverage by the following crop deadline dates.

- **March 16, 2020** is the deadline for 2020 NAP coverage on forage sorghum, oats, potatoes, Soybeans, Sunflowers and all spring planted specialty crops grown for food.

- **March 16, 2020** is the deadline to purchase NAP coverage for hemp. NAP will be available for 2020 to provide insurance-type coverage due to adverse weather conditions. NAP provides coverage against loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, seed, or cannabidiol (CBD) for the 2020 crop year where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. For all coverage levels, the new NAP service fee is the lesser of $325 per crop or $825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of $1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. These amounts reflect a $75 service fee increase for crop, county or multi-county coverage. Eligible producers can apply for 2020 NAP coverage at their local FSA Office using form CCC-471, Application for Coverage.

To help producers learn more about the NAP program and how it can help them, USDA, offers an online Web tool at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap. The webtool allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage and gives producers an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

The 2018 Farm Bill NAP amendments specify that qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are now eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.”

For a NAP application, eligibility and related program information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, view the NAP factsheet or contact your County FSA office.

---

**FSA Offers Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) 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.
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.

In addition, LIP provides assistance for injured livestock that are sold within 30 days of an eligible loss condition at a reduced price due to adverse weather or attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

For livestock death losses, eligible livestock owners must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent. Producers should document the adverse weather conditions and date(s) of weather events.

Participants must provide all 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. Livestock owners and contract growers must record all pertinent information, including the number and kind of all livestock adversely impacted. Some examples of required supporting documentation include:

- Beginning Inventory Records
- Proof of death loss documentation
- Purchase and sales records
- Calving records (include date of birth, date of death and cause of death)
- Preg test records (completed by 3rd party)
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

**2019 Livestock Losses:** In addition to filing a timely notice of loss, producers must submit an application for payment and all supporting documentation by March 2, 2020.

**2020 Livestock Losses:** In addition to filing a timely notice of loss, producers must submit an application for payment and all supporting documentation by March 2, 2021.

Additional information about LIP is available at your FSA County office.

---

**Enrollment Continues for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs**

Agricultural producers can continue to enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs – two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) safety net programs – for the 2019 and 2020 crop year.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical
base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and updated both programs.

Signup for the 2020 crop year closes June 30, 2020, while signup for the 2019 crop year closes March 15, 2020. Producers who have not yet enrolled for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office.

ARC and PLC have options for the farm operator who is actively farming the land as well as the owner of the land. Farm owners also have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields beginning with crop year 2020. If the farm owner and producer visit the FSA county office together, FSA can also update yield information during that visit.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC including two online decision tools that assist producers in making enrollment and election decisions specific to their operations, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#).

---

**FSA Reminds Producers about the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program Environmental Evaluation Requirements**

FSA’s Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks (including semi-trucks).

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water), malted small grains and maple sap or syrup. Eligible malted small grains include barley, oats, rice, rye and wheat. Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to $50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and loans between $50,000 and $100,000 may require additional security. Loans exceeding $100,000 require additional security. **For instance, the 7-year FSFL interest rate is 1.750% for February 2020.**

These loans must be approved by the local FSA state or county committee before any site preparation and/or construction can be started.

An environmental evaluation must be completed by FSA prior to all loan approvals to ensure no protected resources would be adversely affected by the proposed FSFL project. Accepting delivery of equipment and/or materials, starting any site preparation, or construction before loan approval, may impede the successful completion of an environmental evaluation and may adversely affect loan eligibility.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized
businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, contact your FSA County office.

**Applications for FSA Loans**

Farmers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Not applying early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA Loan Approval Official for more details and assistance in applying.

**Dates to Remember**

**Feb. 17** ---- President's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

**Feb. 28** ---- **Deadline** to sign-up for General CRP.

**Mar. 1** ----- Primary Nesting Season begins.

**Mar. 16 --- Deadline** to obtain 2020 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.

**Mar. 16 --- Deadline** to purchase NAP coverage for hemp. NAP will be available for 2020 to provide insurance-type coverage due to adverse weather conditions. NAP provides coverage against loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, seed, or cannabidiol (CBD) for the 2020 crop year where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

**Mar. 16 --- ARC/PLC signup deadline for the 2019 Program Election and Enrollment Closes.** Producers who fail to elect either Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) by **March 16, 2020** will **NOT** receive a 2019 payment and their 2020 election will default to the prior farm bill election.

**Mar. 16 --- CRP Grasslands Signup Starts.**

**Mar. 31 --- Final Availability** for 2019 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDPs.

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).