Ohio FSA State Newsletter

- A Message from the State Executive Director
- Enrollment Deadline for ARC/PLC is March 16
- USDA's Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup Begins March 16
- USDA Opens Signup March 23 for Added Causes of Loss Under WHIP+
- USDA Announces Details of Risk Management Programs for Hemp Producers
- Microloans Available to Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property
- Dates to Remember
- March 2020 Loan and Interest Rates

Having trouble viewing this email? View it as a Web page.

Ohio Farm Service Agency State Office

200 North High Street
Room 540
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614-255-2441
FAX: 855-832-5100

State Executive Director:
Leonard Hubert

Administrative Officer:
Traci Garza

Conservation Chief:
Brandi Koehler

Farm Loan Chief:
David Drake

A Message from the State Executive Director

I cannot stress the importance of this enough but Monday, March 16th is a very important date you do not want to forget about! With less than 3 business days remaining before March 16, we need producers who have not yet started the ARC/PLC election and enrollment process to immediately contact their FSA County office today to setup an appointment. There will not be an extension of this deadline.

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

We have a great deal of activity going on in our county offices, including some program announcements and deadlines of which you should be aware. Please take a moment to consider whether you have business that needs to be addressed with your FSA.
Farmers and landowners may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands as signup begins March 16. The signup runs through May 15, while signup for continuous CRP is ongoing.

Producers that are interested in growing hemp this upcoming 2020 growing season are reminded that NAP coverage for hemp is available beginning with the 2020 crop year for licensed producers of commercial hemp meeting specific requirements, in addition to the general requirements that apply to all eligible crops. NAP provides coverage against loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, seed or CBD for the 2020 crop year where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. Producers may apply for NAP coverage through their FSA County office, as the deadline to signup for NAP coverage is March 16, 2020.

USDA recently announced additional disaster assistance available to agricultural producers, including producers impacted by drought and excess moisture. Through WHIP+ program, USDA is helping producers recover from losses related to 2018 and 2019 natural disasters. FSA will open signup on March 23 for producers to apply for eligible losses of excess moisture.

Many of Ohio’s producers have signed up for text alerts, which is a great way to keep up with those critical FSA deadlines reporting requirements and program updates from your FSA County office. FSA highly encourages producers to consider signing up to receive SMS text alerts. Producers that want to enroll in SMS text alerts for their county, must text a keyword consisting of the 2-letter state abbreviation and the county name OHCounty (insert your own county name) from which they want to receive alerts to FSANOW or the numeric keys, 372669 on their cell phone.

Please contact your FSA County office if you have questions regarding FSA’s email news service or the text message option.

While our offices and staff remain very busy 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.

Respectfully,

Leonard Hubert
Enrollment Deadline for ARC/PLC is March 16

FSA encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. March 16, 2020 is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year. To be eligible for payments, producers must annually enroll before the deadline.

FSA is asking that producers don’t delay in making an appointment to start the enrollment process, because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs; and to ensure FSA meets your program delivery expectations. 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!

Signup for the 2020 crop year closes June 30, 2020, while signup for the 2019 crop year closes March 16, 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.

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.

USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup Begins March 16

Farmers and landowners may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands signup beginning March 16. The signup runs through May 15.

Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds.

Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is either 10 or 15 years. FSA will rank applications using a number of factors including existence of expiring CRP land, threat of conversion or development, existing grassland, and predominance of native species cover, and cost.

The 2018 Farm Bill set aside 2 million acres for CRP Grassland enrollment. CRP is one of the largest conservation programs at USDA. CRP marks its 35-year anniversary in 2020 with 22 million acres currently enrolled.

For more information view the CRP Grasslands factsheet or contact your County FSA office.

USDA Opens Signup March 23 for Added Causes of Loss Under WHIP+

USDA announced additional disaster assistance available to agricultural producers, including producers impacted by drought and excess moisture. Through WHIP+, USDA is helping producers recover from losses related to 2018 and 2019 natural disasters.
USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will open signup on March 23 for producers to apply for eligible losses of drought (D3 or above) and excess moisture.

In June 2019, more than $3 billion was made available through a disaster relief package passed by Congress and signed by President Trump. In December 2019, Congress passed, and President Trump signed the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 that provides an additional $1.5 billion for the continuation of disaster assistance program delivery.

**WHIP+ New Qualifying Disaster Events**

The bill added excessive moisture and D3 and D4 drought as qualifying losses for WHIP+ assistance. Beginning March 23, producers who suffered either of these types of loss in 2018 and/or 2019 can apply for WHIP+ assistance at their FSA County office.

**WHIP+ for Quality Loss**

In addition, producers have reported widespread crop quality loss from eligible disaster events that results in price deductions or penalties when marketing the damaged crops. The Appropriations bill expands WHIP+ to include assistance for crop quality loss. FSA is gathering data and input from producers and stakeholders regarding the extent and types of quality loss nationwide.

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for WHIP+, producers must have suffered losses of certain crops, trees, bushes, or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for the following named natural disaster events; hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms, wildfires, and now excessive moisture that occurred in 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary county may be eligible if the producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event.

Because livestock losses are covered by other disaster recovery programs offered through FSA, these losses are not eligible for WHIP+.

---

**USDA Announces Details of Risk Management Programs for Hemp Producers**

The USDA recently announced the availability of FSA’s Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) to help protect hemp producers’ crops from natural disasters.

NAP coverage for hemp is available beginning with the 2020 crop year for licensed producers of commercial hemp meeting specific requirements, in addition to the general requirements that apply to all eligible crops. NAP requires hemp to be grown for commercial use by providing FSA with a copy of the license and processor contract.

NAP provides coverage against loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, seed or CBD for the 2020 crop year where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. Producers may apply for NAP coverage through their FSA County office, as the deadline to sign up for NAP coverage is March 16, 2020.

A producer is not required to have a history of growing hemp before basic 50/55 NAP coverage will be available. NAP basic 50/55 coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some
cases however, to obtain buy-up coverage for hemp, a producer must have successfully produced the crop in a previous year. The 2018 Farm Bill allows for buy-up levels of NAP coverage from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage. For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is $325 per crop or $825 per producer per county, not to exceed $1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Eligibility Requirements

Under a regulation authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill and issued in October 2019, all growers must have a license to grow hemp and must comply with applicable state and federal regulations.

Producers must report hemp acreage to FSA after planting to comply with federal and state law enforcement. The Farm Bill defines hemp as containing 0.3 percent or less tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) on a dry-weight basis. Hemp having THC above the federal statutory compliance level of 0.3 percent is an uninsurable or ineligible cause of loss and will result in the hemp production being ineligible for production history purposes.

For more information on USDA risk management programs for hemp producers, visit www.farmers.gov/hemp to read our frequently asked questions. For more information on the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program, visit USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Services’ website to read their frequently asked questions.

Microloans Available to Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

The FSA offers farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans will be especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations. Microloans have helped farmers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farmland and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to $50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the FSA.

Individuals interested in applying for a FSA microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact their FSA County office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official.

Dates to Remember

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. 23** --- FSA opens signup for WHIP+ for producers who suffered losses in either 2018 and/or 2019 due to excessive moisture.

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

**May 15** --- CRP Grasslands Signup Ends.

**May 25** --- **Memorial Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.**

**May 31** --- **Deadline to** apply for 2019 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.

**July 3** ----- **Independence Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.**

---

**March 2020 Loan and Interest Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Operating Loans, Direct</td>
<td>2.625%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Direct</td>
<td>3.250%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Resource Loans</td>
<td>5.000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment</td>
<td>1.500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Loans</td>
<td>3.625%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year</td>
<td>1.375%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year</td>
<td>1.375%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year</td>
<td>1.500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year</td>
<td>1.625%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year</td>
<td>1.625%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year</td>
<td>1.750%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodity Loans</td>
<td>2.500%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

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).