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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Oklahoma FSA Newsletter

Oklahoma Farm Service Agency

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State Executive Director

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Hours:
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

State Committee Members:
Gary Crawley, McAlister

Message from the SED

Happy New Year!

2017 closed with Oklahomans celebrating the largest cotton harvest since 1933, as well as, many other notable accomplishments. Your achievements in the field and on the ranch, inspire us at Oklahoma Farm Service Agency to set big goals in 2018. In this New Year, we strive to invest in the future of agriculture by focusing on increasing opportunity and awareness for youth and beginning producers. At the same time, we will continue to provide our established producers with conservation, financial, production safety-net and price support tools to promote continued success. As always, knowledgeable and dedicated professionals in our county offices make customer service the top priority. We look forward to assisting you in reaching your farming and ranching goals in 2018.

(Chairman)
Sarah Dorsey, Bixby
Karen Eifert Jones, Waukomis
Don Allen Parsons, Idabel

-Scott Biggs, Oklahoma State Executive Director

State Staff:
Phil Estes,
Farm Loan Programs

J.D. Elwood
Production & Payment
Eligibility

Joy Alspach,
Conservation

Danny Lee,
Compliance & Price Support

Krey Reimer,
Administration

Janlyn Hannah,
Public Relations/Outreach

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county. FSA Office contact information can be located on our [online Directory](#)

Perdue Names Appointees to the Oklahoma USDA Farm Service Agency State Committee

U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue recently announced the individuals who will serve on the Oklahoma USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) state committee. The state committee is responsible for the oversight of farm programs and county committee operations, resolving appeals from the agriculture community, and helping to keep producers informed about FSA programs.

Each state committee has five members, one chairperson and four members. Additional appointees will be named at a later date. The individuals appointed to serve on this committee include:

- Committee Chair Gary Crawley - McAlester
- Sarah Dorsey - Bixby
- Karen Eifert Jones - Stillwater/Waukomis
- Don Allen Parsons - McCurtain County

The Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs. The agency offers farmers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. FSA continues to conserve natural resources and also provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including special emphasis on beginning, underserved and women farmers and ranchers.

Under the direction of Secretary Sonny Perdue, the USDA will always be facts-based and data-driven, with a decision-making mindset that is customer-focused. Secretary Perdue leads the USDA with four guiding principles: to maximize the ability of American agriculture to create jobs, sell food and fiber, and feed and clothe the world; to prioritize customer service for the taxpayers; to ensure that our food supply is safe and secure; and to maintain good stewardship of the natural resources that provide us with our miraculous bounty. Understanding that we live in a global economy where trade is of top importance, Secretary Perdue has pledged to be an unapologetic advocate for American agriculture.

Fire Management on CRP Acres

Landowners who participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are responsible for fire management on their CRP acreage. Fireguard technical practices should be outlined in the Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO).

Landowners must complete the necessary management activities outside of the Primary Nesting Season. In Oklahoma, the Primary Nesting Season is May 1 through July 1 for grazing benefits and all other activities. The goal is to suppress the amount of fuel in the event of a wildfire while still promoting the diversity of the conservation cover.

FSA encourages producers to be proactive in preventing the spread of wildfire. Fire management includes installing firebreaks, which should be included in the contract support document and installed according to NRCS firebreak standards.

Barren firebreaks will only be allowed in high risk areas, such as transportation corridors, rural communities, and adjacent farmsteads. A conservationist must certify that there will not be an erosion hazard from the barren firebreak. If erosion becomes a problem, remedial action will be taken.

Deadlines Approaching for FSA Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs

Livestock producers are reminded that deadlines for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) are quickly approaching.

The deadline to apply for LFP benefits for 2017 grazing losses is Jan. 30, 2018. Eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and submit the required supporting documentation by the deadline. LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land.

Producers with eligible livestock losses must submit a LIP application for payment by March 31, 2018. LIP provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

For 2017, eligible LIP losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2017, and no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event or attack. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

Please contact to your local FSA office to make an appointment to apply for LFP or LIP benefits.

Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years

- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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Filing CCC-941 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certifications

Many producers have experienced delays in receiving Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Gains on Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) because they have not filed form CCC-941, Adjusted Gross Income Certification. LDPs will not be paid until all eligible producers, including landowners who share in the crop, have filed a valid CCC-941.

Producers without a valid CCC-941 certifying their compliance with the average adjusted gross income provisions will not receive payments that have been processed. All farm operator/tenants/owners who have not filed a CCC-941 and have pending payments should IMMEDIATELY file the form with their recording county FSA office. Farm operators and tenants are encouraged to ensure that their landowners with payment shares have filed the form. FSA has been issuing 2016 ARC/PLC payments and 2017 CRP payments.

FSA can accept the CCC-941 for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. Unlike the past, producers must have the CCC-941 certifying their AGI compliance before any payments can be issued.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Payment Limitations by Program

The 2014 Farm Bill established a maximum dollar amount for each program that can be received annually, directly or indirectly, by each person or legal entity. Payment limitations vary by program for 2014 through 2018.

Below is an overview of payment limitations by program.

Commodity and Price Support Programs

The annual limitation for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Loan Gains is \$125,000 total.

Conservation Programs

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payment and incentive payment is limited to \$50,000. CRP contracts approved before Oct. 1, 2008, may exceed the limitation, subject to payment limitation rules in effect on the date of contract approval.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) has an annual limit of \$200,000 per disaster event. The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) has an annual limit of \$500,000 per disaster event.

Disaster Assistance Programs

The annual limitation of \$125,000 applies to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). The total payments received under ELAP, LFP and LIP may not exceed \$125,000. A separate limitation of \$125,000 applies to Tree Assistance Program (TAP) payments. There is also a separate \$125,000 payment limit for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

Payment limitations also apply to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. Contact your local NRCS office more information.

For more information on FSA payment limitations by program, visit

https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2015/payment_eligibility_payment_limitations.pdf.

ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators

Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers. The program, called EZ Guarantee Loans, uses a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to \$100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

A new category of lenders will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to \$50,000

of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to \$100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

More information about the available types of FSA farm loans can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or by contacting your local FSA office.

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).

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