

March 2016



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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:

Cletus Carter, Beaver
(Chairman)
Steve Nunley, Marlow
Brenda Neufeld, Fairview
Steve Butler, Wagoner
Jo Jennings, Depew

Deadline to Purchase NAP Coverage for Spring and Summer Planted Crops is March 15th

The Oklahoma Farm Service Agency would like to remind producers that they have until **March 15, 2016**, to sign-up for the Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for spring and summer planted crops. This deadline applies to warm season grasses intended for grazing as well as spring and summer planted crops such as: forage sorghum, peas, sunflowers, watermelons and other spring and summer planted specialty crops grown for food. The 2014 Farm Bill allows for higher coverage levels (50% to 65% yield protection at 100% of price) for non-grazing crops.

In order to meet eligibility requirements for NAP, crops must be noninsurable, commercially-produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available. If the Risk Management Agency (RMA) offers coverage for a crop in the county, NAP coverage is not available for that crop. Pilot policies of insurance are available for annually planted forage crops; therefore, NAP coverage can also be obtained but they are subject to multiple benefits exclusion. A

State Staff:
Phil Estes,
Farm Loan Programs

producer who obtains both pilot insurance coverage and NAP coverage must choose which payment to receive if both qualify for payment.

Carl Josefy (Acting),
Production & Payment
Eligibility

The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 per producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Higher levels of coverage also have a 5.25 percent premium cost. Socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers are eligible for a waiver of the NAP service fees and premium reduced by 50 percent.

Rod Wanger,
Conservation Programs

Danny Lee,
Compliance & Price Support

Krey Reimer,
Administration

Reporting Changes to CRP Enrolled Acres

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](#).

CRP participants are to report all commercial or residential developments on CPR prior to the destruction of the CRP vegetative cover (e.g. wind turbines, well sites, residential or commercial building sites, etc). Developments on acres enrolled in CRP may require a repayment of previous payments received on the impacted acres. Recreational hunting, consistent with state law, is permissible except during the May 1st to July 1st nesting season. If you have any questions or have made tentative plans involving the development of CRP acres, please stop by your local FSA office prior to any action so our staff can evaluate your situation.

CRP Management Responsibilities for Participants

The following outlines some of the general responsibilities required on CRP contract(s). These are general items and are not intended to be inclusive of all details or responsibilities. Monitoring the CRP practice(s) and ensuring compliance with all the terms and conditions of the CRP contract is the participant's responsibility.

- The approved practice for the CRP contract must be established by the deadline and maintained during the life of the contract. This requirement does include control of undesirable vegetation and noxious weeds. **Maintenance activities may not be performed during the primary nesting season of May 1 through July 1.** Contact your local FSA office if you have concerns regarding your practice, the practice status, or practice progression. NRCS and Extension Service will be consulted to address any concerns you may have and a revised conservation plan may be approved.
- Haying, grazing, or harvesting of CRP acres is not allowed, unless you have written approval by the local FSA office. You must request managed haying and/or grazing of your CRP and have approval from the FSA office prior to any activity. Specific provisions apply.
- Recreational hunting is permitted on CRP consistent with state law and bag limits for the appropriate game species.

- Some required or voluntary management activities to enhance the conservation practice, are eligible for cost-share assistance.
- Firebreaks may be installed according to NRCS technical standards when included in a revised conservation plan.
- CRP acreage may not be used for any type of storage including equipment, hay, etc. Unauthorized uses, such as the application of drilling fluids, municipal waste, livestock waste/by-products, etc may result in contract termination. The CRP acreage is intended only to support the practice approved for establishment with an emphasis on wildlife enhancement, erosion control, and water quality.
- Annual certification of CRP compliance must be completed before **July 15** by filing an acreage report.
- FSA completes continuous random inspections throughout the year to ensure CRP contracts are in compliance with program provisions. Anytime a compliance issue occurs, the terms and conditions outlined under the CRP-1 Appendix and CRP regulations will be used to resolve the compliance issue.

If you have any questions concerning CRP provisions or maintenance requirements please contact your local FSA office.

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 1st through July 1st.. 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.

Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. If the land is classified as Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) it will be required to satisfy the provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed action will be in compliance with the provisions. These areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators have to complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action. This allows FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is required for further review.

Update Your Records

FSA is always working to keep the most accurate data in our systems. If you have any unreported changes of address, zip code or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office.

Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

If you have any updates or corrections, please contact your local FSA office to update your records.

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. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) 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.

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.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Visit your local county office for help in preparing or processing the application forms.

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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