

October 2016



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## Virginia FSA State Newsletter

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### Virginia FSA State Office

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#### Hours

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#### State Office Staff

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Connie Washburn-Marsh,  
Chief Administration Officer

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Public Relations/Outreach  
Specialist

#### Virginia FSA Internet

More Information about

### October Topics

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### USDA Reminds Producers of Nov. 1 ELAP Application Deadline

Eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who experienced losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs, have until Nov. 1, 2016, to submit an application and notice of loss under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased

Virginia FSA programs, activities and news can be found on the VA FSA Internet at

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/va>

To learn more about FSA programs you can also visit the National website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2016
- An application for payment by November 1, 2016

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at [www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets).

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## **FSA Offers Improved Program to Limit Losses on Forages**

Reduced forage quality is now considered a production loss for weather disaster assistance coverage under the new buy-up provisions of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

This safety net is important for cattlemen who produce non-insurable forages for feeding livestock. Previously, FSA only considered a decrease in overall forage tonnage produced when determining if the producer suffered a compensable loss after a qualifying weather event. Under FSA's new NAP buy-up provisions, a decrease in forage quality – such as protein content – is also considered.

To receive coverage for the 2017 crop year, producers must report their forage acreage to their local FSA by November 15 and enroll their eligible forage in NAP by February 15, 2017. Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers are eligible for a waiver of the NAP service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction in buy-up provisions.

For more information on NAP, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap).

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## **USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Farmers in Response to 2015 Market Downturn**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that beginning today, many of the 1.7 million farms that enrolled in either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs will receive safety-net payments due to market downturns during the 2015 crop year.

This fall, USDA will be making more than \$7 billion in payments under the ARC-County and PLC programs to assist participating producers, which will account for over 10 percent of USDA's projected 2016 net farm income. These payments will help provide reassurance to America's farm families, who are standing strong against low commodity prices compounded by unfavorable growing conditions in many parts of the country.

Unlike the old direct payment program, which issued payments during both weak and strong market conditions, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized the ARC-PLC safety net to trigger and provide financial assistance only when decreases in revenues or crop prices, respectively, occur. The ARC and PLC programs primarily allow producers to continue to produce for the market by making payments on a percentage of historical base production, limiting the impact on production decisions.

Nationwide, producers enrolled 96 percent of soybean base acres, 91 percent of corn base acres and 66 percent of wheat base acres in the ARC-County coverage option. Producers enrolled 99 percent of long grain rice and peanut base acres and 94 percent of medium grain rice base acres in the PLC option. Overall, 76 percent of participating farm base acres are enrolled in ARC-County, 23 percent in PLC and one percent in ARC-Individual. For other program information including frequently asked questions, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

Payments are made to producers who enrolled base acres of barley, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, oats, peanuts, dry peas, soybeans, wheat and canola. In the upcoming months, payments will be announced after marketing year average prices are published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for the remaining covered commodities. These include long and medium grain rice (except for temperate Japonica rice), which will be announced in November, remaining oilseeds and chickpeas, which will be announced in December, and temperate Japonica rice, which will be announced in early February 2017. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

The Budget Control Act of 2011, passed by Congress, requires USDA to reduce 2015 ARC and PLC payments by 6.8 percent. For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Extends Margin Protection Program for Dairy Enrollment Deadline

USDA announced that it will extend the deadline for dairy producers to enroll in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for Dairy to Dec. 16, 2016, from the previous deadline of Sept. 30. This voluntary dairy safety net program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer. A USDA web tool, available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool), allows dairy producers to calculate levels of coverage available from MPP based on price projections.

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## FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has launched a new tool to provide farmers and ranchers with remote access to their personal farm information using their home computers. Farmers and ranchers can now view, print or export their personal farm data all without visiting an FSA county office.

The program, known as **FSAfarm+**, provides you with secure access to view your personal FSA data, such as base and yields, Conservation Reserve Program data, other conservation program acreage, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation status information, field boundaries, farm imagery, name and address details, contact information and membership interest and shares in the operation. This data will be available in real time, at no cost to the producer and allow operators and owners to export and print farm records, including maps. Producers also can electronically share their data with a crop insurance agent from their own personal computer.

Farm operators and owners first will need "Level 2 eAuthentication" to access the webportal. This level of security ensures that personal information is protected for each user. Level 2 access can be obtained by going to [www.eauth.usda.gov](http://www.eauth.usda.gov), completing the required information and then visiting your local FSA office to finalize access.

For more information on **FSAfarm+**, the customer self-service portal, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, click <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Unveils New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting

*Update Lets Farmers and Ranchers Report Common Acreage Information Once*

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filing at one location, data that's important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

Since 2009, USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as **FSAFarm+**, gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) Program

FSA borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment/s needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale.

Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

For more information, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

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## **USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers**

*Free basic coverage and discounted premiums available for new and underserved loan applicants*

Producers who apply for FSA farm loans will be offered the opportunity to enroll in new disaster loss protections created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new coverage, available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), is available to FSA loan applicants who grow non-insurable crops, so this is especially important to fruit and vegetable producers and other specialty crop growers.

New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost, or higher coverage for a discounted premium.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered crops include “specialty” crops, for instance, vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. FSA allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

In addition to free basic coverage, beginning, underserved or limited income producers are eligible for a 50 percent discount on premiums for the higher levels of coverage that protect up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also may work with FSA to protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

FSA offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

Growers need not apply for an FSA loan, nor be a beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmer, to be eligible for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program assistance. To learn more, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans), or contact your local FSA office at <https://offices.usda.gov>.

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## **Selected Interest Rates for October 2016**

90-Day Treasury Bill - .250%

Farm Operating Loans — Direct - 2.125%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct - 3.125%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher - 1.50%

Emergency Loans - 3.125%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years) - 0.875%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years) - 1.125%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) - 1.500%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) - 1.625%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) - 1.750%

Commodity Loans 1996-Present - 1.625%

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## **Dates to Remember**

Nov. 1:

2017 ARC and PLC Enrollment Begins.

Nov. 15:

Deadline to report forage and grazed acreage for 2017

Nov. 20:

Deadline to file 2017 NAP Application for Coverage for fruit trees, bushes, strawberries, vines crops, pay administrative fee and buy up election.

Nov. 24:

Federal Holiday – USDA Offices Closed

Dec. 1:

Deadline to file 2017 NAP Application for Coverage for honey and maple sap, pay administrative fee and buy up election.

Cont.:

Submit AD-1026 for forest land to be cleared for agricultural use and new ground (hay and pasture) to be planted to a row crop or vegetable.

Cont.:

Submit CREP, Continuous CRP and Grassland CRP Enrollment Offers.

Cont.:

NAP notices of losses must be reported to the County Office within 72 hours of the loss for hand harvested crops and a signed notice of loss must be filed with 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

Cont.:

Timely report changes in your farming operation to the County Office in writing and update your CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

Cont.:

Need on farm grain, hay or cold storage consider FSFL contact, contact your local FSA Office for more details.

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For more information on bulletin subjects or details regarding your GovDelivery subscription with the Virginia FSA State Office, contact Diane Lenoir-Giles at [diane.lenoir-giles@va.usda.gov](mailto:diane.lenoir-giles@va.usda.gov) or call at 804-287-1537.

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