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Washington State FSA Newsletter

Washington State Farm Service Agency

316 W. Boone, Ste. 568
Spokane, WA 99201-2350

www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

State Executive Director:
Judy Olson

State Committee:
Don Olmstead, Jr., Chair
Larry DeHaan, Member
Steve Hair, Member
Jesus Limon, Member
Sheryl Hagen-Zakarison,
Member

Division Chiefs:
Mike Mandere, Administration

Farm Service Agency Updates Communication Tools

The Farm Service Agency's website has a new look. FSA's national website (www.fsa.usda.gov) made the transition to a new format a few months ago. Transition of state FSA websites were completed in late September. The new Washington state website www.fsa.usda.gov/wa has a cleaner look. The major difference that site visitors will notice is the useful links that were in the "I Want To" and "Hot Links" sections on the old website now can be found on the Resources page. See the Resources link on the left side of the main page. A link for subscribing to FSA bulletins and news can be found on the center of the main page and on the newsletter page.

ELAP Application Deadline Nears

The deadline for submitting applications for the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) is **November 1, 2016**. Congress authorized \$20

Rod Hamilton, Programs
Mike Mykines, Loans

million annually for the program. After the application deadline, the money is apportioned based on the applications received.

Please contact your [local FSA office](#) for questions specific to your operation or county.

ELAP provides financial help to producers who experienced feed and grazing losses that were caused by weather events but not due to wildfire on federal lands or due to drought. ELAP can also help compensate financial losses due to the death of honeybees or farm-raised fish which resulted from weather-related disasters or colony collapse. The program helps cover the cost of extra feed needed for farm-raised fish or honeybees due to weather-related disasters also.

For questions about ELAP or to schedule an appointment, contact your [county FSA office](#).

County Committee Members in Washington Share Experiences

In a lead up to the annual FSA County Committee elections, county committee members in various parts of the state shared their committee experiences during video interviews. The video can be viewed online at <https://vimeo.com/179333687>

FSA county committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on committees help decide the kind of programs their counties will offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers and can settle producer appeals of FSA decisions.

Ballots will be sent to eligible voters starting November 7, 2016. If you do not receive a ballot and believe an error may have been made, contact your [county FSA office](#).

You are encouraged to get to know your committee members and what they do. Vote in the November elections. Contact your [county FSA office](#) for more information.

FSA Still Accepting Loan Applications

FSA in Washington state has started a list of loan applicants and will obligate loan funds as soon as they become available. Each year Congress appropriates money for FSA farm loans as part of the USDA budget. This is the amount FSA has to make loans between October 1 of one year and September 30 of the following year. FSA ran out of funds in most loan categories prior to September 30, 2016.

Obligations will continue as soon as a budget or a continuing resolution is passed and the loan funds are divided among states. Even when money has run out for a loan program, FSA still accepts, processes, and approves loan applications. Approved loans are held until money becomes available. Loans are funded in date order, based on the date that the application was received. Submitting an application sets your place in the waiting line for funds, so it is to your advantage to apply for a loan even when there is no money available.

FSA reserves loan money for two specific categories: under-represented groups and beginning farmers. The law requires FSA to reserve or target a portion of its direct and guaranteed operating

and farm ownership loan funds for use exclusively by socially disadvantaged applicants (SDA). SDAs are classified in one or more of the following categories: women, African Americans, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

The law also requires FSA to reserve or target loan funds for exclusive use by beginning farmers. Funds remain targeted for beginning farmers in the guaranteed programs until April 1 of each fiscal year. In the direct programs, funds are targeted for beginning farmers until September 1 of each fiscal year.

Please contact your FSA [county office](#) for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

Check Crop Coverage before Fall Deadlines

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to review available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the fall-seeded crop application deadline of **November 21, 2016**.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters to crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. The following crops in Washington have a NAP application deadline of **November 21, 2016**:

- All perennial crops not listed under the 9/30 category (see www.fsa.usda.gov/wa for complete list)
- asparagus;
- berries;
- grapes;
- honey;
- hops;
- tree fruits.

You may use a free online tool www.fsa.usda.gov/nap to determine whether your crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for your operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price available, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers. Crops intended for grazing are not eligible for additional NAP coverage.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

For more information on NAP, service fees, premiums and sales deadlines, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Report Perennial Forage and Fall-Seeded Crop Acreage (Grass Intended for Grazing or Hay)

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit your [county FSA office](#) to file an accurate crop certification report by **November 15, 2016** for perennial forage. Programs that require certification of perennial forage include the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage Program (PLC). Perennial forage includes but is not limited to grass, alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, clover and mixed forage intended for hay or grazing.

Fall-seeded crops have an acreage reporting date of **December 15, 2016**. These include fall-seeded alfalfa (for seed), canola, lentils, mint, onions, peas, and small grains.

These reporting dates align with the Risk Management Agency's and neighboring states' deadlines.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting date:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is complete.
- If you acquire additional acreage after November 15, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15.

NAP policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Conservation Reserve Program Status

In mid-September, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres nationwide neared the statutory acreage cap of 24 million acres. Currently, FSA is accepting applications for the Continuous CRP programs, including SAFE and CREP, but application approvals are on hold. National guidance is expected soon. Any information regarding acceptance of CRP contracts in Fiscal Year 2017 (begins Oct. 1, 2016) at this time is speculation. FSA will provide an update on the program when the Secretary has made a decision.

The 2016 CRP annual rental payments should start in October.

2015 ARCPLC Payments Expected to Start in October

The Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments should begin to show up in producer's accounts in October. Payments will continue to be made as information from crop marketing years becomes available. Although payments will start in October, typically payments will continue through January.

Producers who have made changes in their direct deposits must notify FSA of the changes. Forgetting to notify the FSA county office can delay your payments, or cause a payment mix-up. If you have questions or need to report a change, contact your [county FSA office](#).

The ARC-CO program provides revenue loss coverage at the county level. ARC-CO payments are issued when the actual county crop revenue of a covered commodity is less than the ARC-CO guarantee for the covered commodity. Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program payments are issued when the effective price of a covered commodity is less than the respective reference price for that commodity. The effective price equals the higher of the market year average price (MYA) or the national average loan rate for the covered commodity.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Nov. 1, 2016 – Deadline for 2016 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) applications.

Nov. 7, 2016 – County Committee election ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Nov. 15, 2016 – Acreage reporting deadline for perennial forage.

Nov. 21, 2016 – NAP application deadline for fall-seeded crops (see list in article above).

Dec. 5, 2016 – County Committee election ballots due to FSA county offices.

Dec. 15, 2016 – Acreage reporting deadline for fall seeded crops.

For previous issues of the FSA Washington newsletter and a list of annual program **reminders**, check the [newsletter page](#) on the FSA Washington website.