

April 2017



Farm Service Agency

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NEWSLETTER



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Washington State FSA Newsletter

Washington State Farm Service Agency

316 W. Boone Ave., Ste 568
Spokane, WA 99201

Phone: 509-323-3000

Fax: 855-843-1172

www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

State Executive Director:

Vacant

State Committee:

Don Olmstead, Jr., Chair
Larry Dehaan, Member
Jesus Limon, Member

Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs Can Provide Relief from Severe Winter Weather and Spring Flooding

The Livestock Indemnity Program (**LIP**) offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, tropical storms, tornadoes, lightning, extreme heat, and extreme cold.

To apply for LIP, you will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event. Also, you must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.

Sheryl Hagen-Zakarison,
Member

To find contact information for
your local office go to
www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

If you have lost hay due to flooding, you may be able to receive a payment to offset a portion of your losses under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (**ELAP**). ELAP provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs.

ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed feed that was purchased, or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for eligible livestock. In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled – for example, a haystack damaged or destroyed by flooding. Forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. You must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.

ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days during the normal grazing period for the county. If you have been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to floodwaters, contact the county FSA office for dates of normal grazing periods for the county.

For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds and tornadoes.

For more information about disaster relief programs, contact your local [county FSA office](#).

Has Winter or a Delayed Spring Affected Your Farm? FSA May Be Able to Provide Assistance

Producers who lose crops or livestock due to severe weather conditions must report those losses timely in order to retain FSA program eligibility. If the lost crop is insured, your first priority is to contact your insurance agent. They will assist you in filing a notice of loss. You are encouraged to report these insured losses to FSA also. Providing a copy of your insurance loss filing may greatly reduce your time at the FSA office.

If your losses are to a Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) covered crop, you must file a notice of loss to FSA within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of loss within 72 hours of a loss event. Identify the affected acreage for each weather-related event that caused damage or loss. Replanting of a failed crop within the same planting period when it is determined customary for the area is required to maintain loss coverage of the crop. To file a

loss notice, complete Part B of form CCC-576 at your [county FSA office](#).

What you do with the crop after the damaging event can impact your eligibility for NAP assistance. If you choose not to harvest the crop, all eligible acres and crop units must be left intact until the affected acreage has been appraised and/or released. If you elect to harvest the crop, you must provide acceptable documentation of the crop's production.

As you begin your spring planting, you may experience conditions which restrict or even prevent you from planting crops. FSA and Risk Management Agency final planting dates are established to provide an adequate growing season in which you should expect normal yields for the planted crop. If you are not able to physically plant your spring crops during the established planting period, you may qualify for Prevented Planting Credit. Prevented planting of insured crops must be timely reported to your insurance agent. Also filing a similar claim with FSA is helpful as the two agencies typically work together when acreages need to be verified. Prevented planted NAP covered crops must be reported to your county FSA office within 15 calendar days of the final planting date. Failing to meet this requirement can greatly affect your potential payment. Prevented planting claims require site verification that an approved disaster condition prevented the planting.

Save yourself time with preparation before filing your notice of loss. Bring evidence that a natural disaster prevented the planting and you made the necessary preliminary efforts to plant the crop. You should be prepared to demonstrate that seed, fertilizer, equipment, and labor were available to complete the seeding.

You may begin filing spring acreage reports as soon as practical after planting is completed. Although the final reporting date for crops is early summer, completing this requirement as soon as possible helps ensure records are intact if a disaster event occurs later in the growing season.

To learn more about the NAP program or to file a Notice of Loss, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Plant CRP Timely to Avoid Penalties

When producers enroll land in CRP that needs a vegetative cover planted or enhanced, the contract conservation plan provides the time frame during which the planting needs to occur. It is critical that you meet these deadlines. If there are environmental reasons that prevent this, contact your [county FSA office](#). The FSA County Committee must approve a deadline extension for you to remain in compliance with the contract. Failure to meet the timing requirements in the conservation plan is usually considered a contract violation and can result in substantial payment reductions. In general most conservation plans call for the cover to be planted within the first 1-2 years of the

contract. Counties Committees, in conjunction with NRCS, can approve plans or plan revisions that allow up to 36 months to plant the cover, but only under limited circumstances.

If you fail to install the cover within 36 months of the contract start date, the County Committee and State Committee have no further authority to grant extensions. In most cases when this occurs, the contract must be terminated and all payments issued to-date must be refunded with interest.

If you are unsure about the deadlines in your conservation plan for a specific contract, or if you have concerns about meeting those deadlines, please contact your [county FSA office](#) to get the specifics and find out what your obligations are and any options that may be available. The best solution is to establish the cover by the date provided in your conservation plan.

Financing Begins With a Business Plan

Whether you obtain farm financing from FSA or a commercial lender, you will be asked to submit your financial homework when you seek a loan. Here are several things you will need to complete before applying for a farm loan:

- A business plan
- A balance sheet, this will be a start date of where you are at financially
- An income and expense statement that shows your history for the past three years
- An income and expense statement that shows your projected income and expenses for the next year.

It is most important to have a business plan. All lenders will want to know what your plan is. This will be your guide to follow from where you are currently to where you want to be in the future. A good plan will describe your financial goals and will help you to evaluate your operation as you move along in your farming career. Your plan should describe your mission, vision and goals for your farm, and your current assets and liabilities.

Your business plan should include a marketing plan: what will your operation produce, where will you sell your product, what are the costs associated with the production? You should also consider if your income from your production will generate enough to pay all your business and family living expenses. Will you still need to have an off the farm income in the beginning to pay for your expenses? Are you willing to do this? At the very least, a business plan helps you to get organized and lines out in black and white what it costs to begin, or maintain, a farm in production agriculture.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/index> or contact your local [county FSA office](#).

Create a Home for Pollinators with CRP

Agriculture's productivity relies on pollinators, especially honey bees, to pollinate more than one-third of our food products. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides farmers and landowners a tool to increase habitat for pollinators. Producers can get paid for planting and maintaining pollinator habitat as a CRP practice on land enrolled in either General CRP signups or under the Continuous CRP.

The CRP pollinator habitat practice is called CP-42. Producers who adopt the practice as part of CRP receive ten years of annual rental payments and cost-share payments covering 50% of

establishment and mid-contract management expenses. Under the Continuous CRP, you may also receive a Sign-up Incentive Payment (SIP) up to \$75/acre.

The Washington State Beekeepers Association has numerous local organizations of beekeepers, many of whom would be interested in your CRP pollinator habitat.

To find a listing of beekeeping organizations in Washington, check the Association's listing

<https://wasba.org/local-beekeeping-organizations/>.

For questions about CRP, contact your local [county FSA office](#).

Important Dates and Deadlines

May 29, 2017 – FSA offices will be closed in honor of Memorial Day.

May 31, 2017 – Final date to request a 2016 crop Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) for corn, chickpeas, dry peas, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, soybeans, sunflower seed, grain sorghum, and rice.

April 1 – July 1, 2017 – Primary nesting season. During this time period, prior approval of the County Committee is required to spot treat weeds by mowing, burning, or spraying after the stand is established

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

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