

July 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Washington State FSA Newsletter

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### Washington State Farm Service Agency

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**State Executive Director:**  
Vacant

**State Committee:**  
Don Olmstead, Jr., Chair  
Larry DeHaan, Member  
Jesus Limon, Member

### Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP) Annual Coverage Election for 2018 Begins

Beginning on Monday July 3, 2017, dairy operations can submit 2018 calendar year MPP-Dairy annual election coverage forms to your local FSA county office. Dairy operations enrolled in previous years are obligated to participate in MPP for the 2018 calendar year, with at least the basic coverage level of \$4.00 per hundredweight on 90 percent of the dairy operation's established production history. The basic coverage costs \$100 for an annual administrative fee. Dairies have the option to enroll at a higher level of coverage by paying the administrative fee plus a premium based on level of coverage selected. The higher levels of coverage range from \$4.50 up to \$8.00 per hundredweight, in \$0.50 increments for the margin trigger. Higher coverage levels also

Sheryl Hagen-Zakarison,  
Member

To find contact information for  
your local office go to  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/wa](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa)

range from 25 up to 90 percent, in 5 percent increments for the covered production history.

A web-based decision tool is available to help you compare options and decide what level will provide the best coverage to manage your financial risk associated with low milk prices or high feed costs that may occur during the 2018 calendar year. This decision tool also calculates the premium cost that would be associated with selection of a higher level of coverage. The decision tool can be found at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool). This web-based tool allows you to quickly and easily combine unique operation data and other key variables to calculate your coverage needs based on price projections. You can also review historical data or estimate future coverage based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, Smartphone, tablet or any other platform, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

You can submit your 2018 MPP-Dairy coverage election and pay the required \$100 annual administrative fee anytime during the enrollment period, which will end on December 15, 2017. Contact your [county FSA office](#) for more information about the MPP-Dairy program, or the web-based decision tool.

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## FSA Seeks Local Farmer and Rancher Representatives

Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices are continuing to accept nominations for County Committee elections until **August 1, 2017**.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs. Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

Hear from FSA committee members in Washington state about their experiences by viewing a 3-minute [video](#).

Contact your county office for a map of LAAs open for this election or see the [map online](#).

You may submit a nomination, including a self-nomination, at your [county FSA office](#). For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

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## Keep Neighbors Happy by Maintaining Your CRP

Now that the primary nesting season has ended in the state, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract holders may commence mid-contract management without prior approval from FSA. (However, prior approval is still needed for cost-share money). The primary nesting season for Washington was April 1 through July 1. During that time period, prior approval by the County Committee was required to treat weeds by mowing, burning, or spraying on contracts that had received final stand certification.

Activities such as harrowing or chopping of dried mustards and Russian thistle after the nesting period has ended can be a valuable tool to keep these weeds, and others, from getting on your neighbor's property. They also help maintain grass vigor and ensure that you have a viable cover for the entire CRP contract period. Fifty percent cost-sharing is available if these activities are approved by FSA before work begins.

These rules only apply to contracts that have been certified as being established. If your stand has not been certified, you may, and are contractually required to perform any weed control activities necessary, at any time of the year as called for in your conservation plan. Failure of your stand due to lack of weed control may lead to payment reductions or contract termination.

For questions about CRP, or your CRP contract, call your [county FSA office](#).

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## FSA Loan Security Interests

Farm Service Agency loan programs are based on supervised credit. As you get closer to harvest, FSA loan borrowers are reminded of the conditions of your loan agreements. If you have borrowed money using the FSA Farm Loan Program for the production of your crop, or the purchase of machinery or other eligible loan program purposes, FSA likely has a security interest in your crops which are to be used to make scheduled loan payments. Each farm has a unique plan, so be sure to review your specific plan that was prepared and discussed with your loan officer.

When you sell your crops, FSA may be listed on your commodity sales checks. You will need to bring your checks into the FSA office either to be applied to your loans, or released in accordance with an operating budget. FSA will work with you to monitor sales and production and help you track your financial progress. As crops are sold and proceeds are obtained, you are encouraged to contact your loan officer prior to stopping in the office. Making an appointment with your loan officer is important since not all FSA personnel have the authority to apply crop funds or endorse crop checks.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Final Date Draws Near for 2017 Acreage Reporting

The final acreage reporting date in Washington is **July 15, 2017**, which is for spring-seeded crops and includes Conservation Reserve Program acres. In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, you must file acreage reports timely. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

A complete list of crop acreage reporting dates may be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/wa](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa).

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 days to change the intended use. Producer share interest changes alone will not allow for revisions to intended use after the acreage reporting date. The revision must be performed by either the acreage reporting date or within 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

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.

For more information or to set up an acreage reporting appointment, contact your local [county FSA office](#).

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## Report Production for ARC-IC Programs

Agriculture Risk Coverage-Individual Coverage (ARC-IC) farms must report annual production of all covered commodities. **July 15, 2017 is the final date to report 2016 production for ARC-IC farms.**

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## Enrollment Period for 2017 Safety Net Coverage Continues Through August 1

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit their local FSA office to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until August 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit your [county FSA office](#).

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## Organic Producers and Handlers May Apply for Certification

Organic producers and handlers may visit Farm Service Agency offices to apply for federal reimbursement to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification. USDA reimburses organic producers up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification.

Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a [USDA-accredited certifying agent](#). Application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/ arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage are all eligible for a cost-share reimbursement from USDA.

Once certified, producers and handlers are eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 75 percent of certification costs each year up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope—crops, livestock, wild crops and handling. State organic program fees are included.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture administers a USDA-approved organic certification program. WSDA has offered cost-share to producers for organic certification costs. WSDA expects to continue to offer certification cost-share. FSA will collaborate with WSDA to enhance efforts instead of duplicating efforts.

To learn more about organic certification cost-share, please visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/organic](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/organic) or contact your [county FSA office](#).

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## Important Dates and Deadlines

**July 4, 2017** – USDA Service Centers closed in commemoration of Independence Day.

**July 15, 2017** – Final date to report 2016 production for ARC/IC programs.

**July 15, 2017** – Final acreage reporting date for spring-seeded crops. (See article above)

**August 1, 2017** - Deadline for ARC/PLC enrollment.

**August 1, 2017** – Deadline, to be effective for the 2017 year, to request farm reconstitutions or farm transfers to another administrative county due to changes in farm.

**August 1, 2017** – Deadline to submit nominations for County Committee elections.

**September 30, 2017** – Deadline to enroll in MPP-Dairy for 2018.

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