

July 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Washington State FSA Newsletter

Washington State Farm Service Agency

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USDA Announces Jon Wyss as State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Washington State



June 10, 2019 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced Jon Wyss as the new State Executive Director (SED)

**State Executive Director:
Jon Wyss**

**State Committee:
Jesus Limon, Member
Maureen Harkcom, Member
Bruce Nelson, Member
Robyn Meenach, Member**

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

for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), serving as an appointee of President Donald J. Trump. FSA State Directors help implement U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policies in planning, organizing, and administering FSA programs in their respective states. They are also responsible for running the day-to-day activities of the state FSA office.

“Serving as State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Washington State, Jon Wyss will help ensure that USDA is offering the best customer service to our farmers, ranchers, foresters, and agricultural producers across the country,” said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. “FSA plays a critical role in helping the people of agriculture and are able to connect with people in their home states. They are the initial points of contact for millions of our USDA customers. Our goal is to help rural America prosper, and Jon Wyss will be of great assistance in that task.”

Prior to his appointment, Wyss served over a decade as government affairs director and analyst for Gebbers Farms. He also served as a state senator for Washington’s 6th Legislative District and as chief deputy assessor for Spokane County.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Learn the warning signs. These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

Suicide is preventable. The Lifeline is FREE, confidential and always available. Help a loved one, a friend or yourself. Call the Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Or visit the website at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Annual Acreage Reporting Deadline Approaching

Producers are reminded that all programs administered by the Farm Service Agency have a component which requires producers to annually report their planted acreages and similar land uses. July 15, 2019 is our States final reporting date and growers of spring planted crops and perennial forage crops are strongly encouraged to contact their local county offices to arrange an appointment to report your acreage before this deadline. Missing the deadline makes producers ineligible for certain benefits.

Yes, you can regain your eligibility by filing a late filed acreage report, but this action comes with a penalty. Producers filing late must make a request for the County Committee to accept the late filed acreages and pay the costs for an FSA representative to visit your farm and verify your reported acreages. This is a per farm fee and depending on the size of your farm operation could be on the expensive side.

Producers with CRP are also required to certify their contract acreages before July 15th each calendar year. Changes during the previous Farm Bill made it so producers were only required to certify the acreage once for the length of the CRP contract, unless there are changes to the contract which would affect the accuracy of the previous filing. County Office work hard to ensure affected contracts are recertified, but it is your responsibility to ensure program compliance, and as such, if you have made changes to your CRP contracts, you may find it beneficial to contact the County Office to ensure your farm's compliance.

Growers of perennial fruit, nut, and berry crops along with any fall seeded crops, although your deadline to report has past, you can also still file a late filed acreage report for the 2019 growing season. This comes with a farm fee unless you can provide evidence that you timely filed your acreages with the Risk Management Agency through your crop insurance agent. In these situations, your late filed report can be considered timely filed and the fees waived.

To avoid long waits at the county office, please make your appointments now. New Farm Bill programs are beginning to be released and implemented which will limit the number of available appointment slots for acreage reporting. You can greatly assist us by requesting an acreage reporting appointment as soon as possible.

Sign Up for Dairy Margin Coverage

Signups for the 2019 [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program have begun. DMC is a voluntary risk management program for dairy producers which replaces the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). This new program offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

The 2018 Farm Bill allows producers who participated in MPP-Dairy from 2014-2017 [to receive a repayment or credit for part of the premiums paid into the program](#). FSA has been providing premium reimbursements to producers since May and those that elect the 75 percent credit option will now have that credit applied toward 2019 DMC premiums. The deadline to make an election is September 20, 2019.

The DMC program provides coverage retroactive to January 1, 2019, with applicable payments following soon after enrollment. At the time of signup, dairy producers can choose between the \$4.00 to \$9.50 coverage levels. [Learn more about coverage levels and premiums](#).

Margin calculations have been adjusted to include a 50% blend of premium and supreme alfalfa hay prices that more closely aligns with hay rations used by many producers. **At a margin of \$9.50, payments are possible for January through May of 2019.** With the updated alfalfa blend, the revised margins for January, February, March, April, and May are \$7.71, \$7.91, \$8.66, \$8.82, and \$9.00, respectively. This would trigger a DMC payment each month if the \$9.50 coverage level were selected.

DMC offers catastrophic coverage at no cost to the producer, other than an annual \$100 administrative fee. Producers can opt for greater coverage levels for a premium in addition to the administrative fee. Operations owned by limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers may be eligible for a waiver on administrative fees. Producers have the choice to lock in coverage levels until 2023 and receive a 25-percent discount on their DMC premiums.

To assist producers in making coverage elections, USDA partnered with the University of Wisconsin to develop a [DMC decision support tool](#), which can be used to evaluate various scenarios using different coverage levels through DMC. The tool currently does not work using Internet Explorer 11 but will work with other browser options, such as Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Microsoft Edge.

All dairy operations in the United States are eligible for the DMC program. An operation can be run either by a single producer or multiple producers who commercially produce and market cows' milk. Eligible dairy operations must have a production history determined by FSA. For most operations, production history is based on the highest milk production in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Newer dairy operations have other options for determining production history. Producers may contact their local FSA office to get their verified production history.

The 2018 Farm Bill allows for dairy operations to participate in both FSA's DMC program and the Risk Management Agency's [Livestock Gross Margin \(LGM-Dairy\)](#) program. There are no restrictions from participating in DMC in conjunction with any other RMA insurance products.

The deadline to sign up for the 2019 DMC program is September 20, 2019. Research your options by visiting the [farmers.gov DMC webpage](#) or make an appointment at your local FSA office today. To locate an office near you, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](#).

Signups Available Now for Several Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Options

Signups are going on now through August 23, 2019 for the following options under the CRP:

- Contracts set to expire this fall, except for CREP, can be extended one year to September 30, 2020, provided the contract will be 14 years old or less on September 30, 2019. The current contract's provision will remain in effect, including the current payment rate.
- Continuous CRP (CCRP) contracts set to expire this fall can be re-enrolled in a new contract taking effect October 1, 2019. This option is limited to contour grass strips (CP15A), grass filter strips (CP21), riparian buffers (CP22), wetland restoration (CP23), and pasture land wetland buffers (CP30). Signup incentives, rental rate incentives and enhanced cost sharing above 50% will not be available on contracts offered under this provision.
- New land, not currently in CRP, can be offered for the CCRP practices listed above. These offers would be eligible for rental and cost share payments. Like re-enrolled offers above, these offers would not be eligible for any of the signup, cost share or rental incentives.
- General CRP contracts expiring this fall can be enrolled in the Transition Incentive Program (TIP) if the land will be leased or sold to a beginning farmer/rancher, a limited resource producer or socially disadvantaged producer. Under TIP, the land can be returned to production in 2020 in accordance with a NRCS plan, but the current contract participants will receive annual rental payments, equal to the current CRP payments, for two additional years. The beginning farmer/rancher, a limited resource producer or socially disadvantaged producer who buys or leases the land cannot be an immediate family member of the CRP participants, such as a child or grandchild. The TIP application must be initiated before a sales agreement or lease is agreed upon.
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts set to expire this fall can be offered for re-enrollment in a new contract. Normal payments, including enhanced rental rates, signup incentives, and 100% cost sharing on eligible costs, continue to be available. Rental rates may be less than the rate on the current contract. Your local FSA office can determine the exact rate for your land. CREP contracts are not eligible for the 1-year extensions discussed in the first bullet above.
- New land, not currently in CREP, can be offered under the same provision as re-enrolling CREP land.

Offers to enroll in any of these options must be completed and signed by at least one producer by August 23 to be eligible. Eligibility determinations will need to be made on the land before an offer can be signed. Contact your local FSA office timely about your CRP signup options to ensure determinations can be made and a signed offer submitted by the August 23, 2019 deadline.

After the deadline, no CRP offers will be accepted until the regulations from the 2018 Farm Bill are implemented. More details on CRP implementation under the new Farm Bill are expected to be available later in the year.

Potential for First General CRP Signup in Three Years in December

Although the final decision is contingent on implementation of the CRP regulations resulting from the 2018 Farm Bill, the Secretary has indicated a general CRP signup will be held this winter, likely starting around December 1, 2019, and running into early 2020. Details will be announced as they become available

Market Facilitation Program (MFP) Signup Anticipated

The Secretary has announced a second round of MFP will be implemented to assist producers potentially impacted by tariffs. The new program will be for 2019 crops and will work differently than the 2018 program. Signup will begin sometime after July 15, 2019. Although most details are unknown today, it appears that for most crops a 2019 crop acreage report must be filed. The deadline has already passed for many fruits and fall seeded crops, but for most other crops the deadline is July 15. To be eligible for 2019 MFP, be sure to report your acreages to your local FSA office by the July 15 acreage reporting deadline. Acreage reports can be accepted after the deadline, but a late-filed fee will be charged and an FSA field visit required.

Eligible commodities for the 2019 MFP include the following.

Alfalfa	Cranberries	Rapeseed
Barley	Dairy	Safflower
Beans, Dry	Peas, Dry	Sesame Seed
Canola	Flaxseed	Sorghum
Cherries	Hogs	Soybeans
Chickpeas	Lentils	Sunflower Seed
Corn	Mustard Seed	Wheat
Crambe	Oats	

Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Launch June 14

The nomination period for USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees runs June 14 through Aug. 1, 2019, and elections will take place starting in November.

County committees are unique to FSA and serve as a direct link between agricultural communities across the country and USDA. Committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Their input is vital on how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

Throughout the nomination period, we'll introduce you to county committee members from around the nation. To see their stories and to learn more on FSA county committees, visit fsa.usda.gov/elections.

The Farm Service Agency is Hiring

The Farm Service Agency is announcing Program technician positions across Washington state. These positions will be open externally to the public. FSA is looking for qualified applicants who are interested in living in rural communities and assisting farmers and ranchers. Vacancies with FSA are posted on the USAJobs website. www.usajobs.gov. An online resume, built on the USAJobs website, and an online application will be necessary for applying for the position.

The following video will allow interested parties to hear employees talk about what it is like to work for FSA in Washington state: <https://vimeo.com/182866334>. For more information about these positions, please contact Mitzi Stephens at 509-323-3007 or mitzi.stephens@usda.gov.

Important Dates and Deadlines

April 1 – July 1, 2019 – CRP primary nesting season during which most activities on CRP are prohibited on contracts with an established cover. Some exceptions to this limit can be approved by FSA if a request is submitted in advance.

June 3, 2019 - Continuous CRP and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sign up starts.

July 1 - September 30, 2019 – Producers with expiring general CRP contracts can request authority to destroy the CRP cover if the land will be returned to production in 2020.

July 15, 2019 – Deadline to report 2018 crop year production for NAP covered crops

July 15, 2019 – Final acreage reporting date for 2019 crops

August 1, 2019 - Deadline for COC Election Nominations

August 23, 2019 – Deadline to request a CRP extension, re-enroll CRP land, or offer new land for CCRP or CREP.

September 20, 2019 – Deadline to sign up for 2019 DMC and select a cash or credit option for 2014-2017 MPP-Dairy premium refunds.

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).