



WEST VIRGINIA FSA NEWSLETTER



June 2015

West Virginia Farm Service Agency

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Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

State Executive Director

Richard V. Snuffer II

West Virginia Farm Service Agency State Committee

Marjorie Burke, Chair

G. Warren Mickey

Remington Perkins

Please contact your local office with questions specific to your operation. To locate your local office contact information, visit: <http://offices.usda.gov>.

From the Desk of Richard V. Snuffer II, State Director



Spring has finally sprung! After a very rough winter, like most of you, I'm more than ready for the change. I've been excited these past few months, while

traveling throughout our beautiful state.

I have seen many of you with the promise of a new season; crops being planted, new baby calves and lambs playing in the greening fields, and the hay fields starting to dance in the breeze.

We in FSA have had a very busy winter with the Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the Farm Bill. The new bill has charged FSA with delivering many new and exciting programs for you, our West Virginia producers.

As you read the rest of this newsletter, please take time to see how each of these new programs affects your farming enterprises and how we in FSA can assist you. Be careful out there this summer, farming can be a dangerous business.

Enjoy our wonderful West Virginia land and if you need any information or assistance on any USDA programs, just contact your local FSA office. We are always there to help. Thanks for all you do daily to help feed West Virginia and the world.

Loans Available to Purchase or Improve Farms in West Virginia

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has loan funds available to purchase and/or improve farms in West Virginia. FSA makes and guarantees loans for family farmers to establish, purchase or expand their farming operation.

Direct loans can be made up to \$300,000 and can be combined with other lenders loan funds, if needed. In general, loan funds can be used to purchase a farm, construct farm buildings, or develop other improvements essential to the farming operation. Interest rates for the Farm Ownership loans are made at a fixed rate and can be amortized for up to 40 years.

This year, Congress allocated a record amount of funding to states to meet the growing needs of our family farmers.

West Virginia was allocated over 14 million dollars to be used in Fiscal Year 2015, which ends September 30.

West Virginia farmers are encouraged to contact their local FSA County office to discuss specific loan eligibility requirements and to obtain assistance in filing an application for these loans.

FSA also makes loans for farm operating purposes for such items as purchase of livestock, farm equipment, and annual farm operating expenses.

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Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000. Loan funds can be used to purchase livestock, feed, seed, fertilizer, and most other expenses related to the project. Loan payments can be scheduled to be paid when income is received from the project. In most cases, parents are not required to co-sign for these loans.

Disaster Assistance Payments Available

As we approach the time of year of frequent lightning strikes, extreme heat situations, and other adverse weather events, please be aware that financial assistance is available to reimburse producers for various farming losses. Listed below are some of the active disaster assistance programs that FSA offers and provides:

LIP - The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather or attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Livestock death losses include losses due to lightning, extreme heat or cold, hurricanes, floods, winter storms (lasting at least 3 days), blizzards, wildfires, etc. Deaths caused by eligible animal or avian predator attacks include deaths from wolves, black vultures, eagles, etc. Coyote attacks are currently ineligible.

Important for 2015:

- Eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2015, and no later than December 31, 2015.
- For eligible death losses, a notice of loss must be filed with your FSA office within 30 days of when the death of livestock is apparent.
- For normal mortality deaths, reports may be filed with your FSA office at any time, through January 30, 2016.
- Participants must request payment and provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than January 30, 2016;
 - Proof of death documentation (may also require proof of inventory documentation)
 - Copy of growers contracts, if applicable

- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock. These established percentages reflect annual losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. As an example, WV’s normal mortality percentages include: Adult Beef Cow = 1.5%; Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 5%. A full list of established percentages is available at your local FSA office.

ELAP - The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program

(ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include, but are not limited to, grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), losses of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, and additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought.

Eligible honeybee losses include colony (bee) losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including Colony Collapse Disorder, hive (structure) losses due to eligible adverse weather event, losses of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, and cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition.

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 between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015 must:

- File a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent (at your FSA office)
- File an application for payment and provide supporting documentation to your FSA Office no later than November 1, 2015

NAP – The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields/ grazing loss, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters including drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes.

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In order to meet eligibility requirements for NAP, crops must be noninsurable, commercially-produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill) allows producers to choose higher levels of NAP coverage. Previously, the program offered coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Producers may now choose higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. It is important to note that the higher coverage is not available on grazing crops.

Eligible producers must file an application for coverage and pay a service fee by the appropriate application closing date. Producers also pay a fixed premium for higher coverage. Beginning, limited resource, and underserved producers may request a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction when the application for coverage is filed.

2016 Application Closing Date	Crops
September 1, 2015	Aquaculture, Christmas trees, Floriculture, Ginseng, Mushrooms, Ornamental Nursery, Strawberries, Turfgrass Sod
September 30, 2015	Barley, Garlic, Rye, Triticale, Wheat
November 20, 2015	Apples, Blueberries, Caneberries, Cherries, Grapes, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums
December 1, 2015	Honey, Maple Sap
March 15, 2016	Alfalfa, Clover, Grass, Mixed Forage, All Other Annual Crops

To learn more about the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and how it can help you, USDA, in partnership with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, created an online resource. The Web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, allows you to determine whether your crops are eligible for coverage. It also provides an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for your operation.

Filing for NAP Losses – Timely filing an acreage report and Notice of Loss is required for all crops

including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must contact your local FSA within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

USDA Safety Net Programs are Available

ARC/PLC - Farm owners and producers were recently provided an opportunity to make decisions for reallocating crop yields and bases, and for election choices between the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. ARC and PLC are also known as USDA safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill.

The next step in the ARC/PLC process is to complete the annual program enrollment requirements. Any calculated annual payment amounts may only be issued if an acceptable enrollment is completed each year through the end of the Farm Bill. The exact beginning and ending signup dates for 2014 and 2015 enrollments should be announced very soon. Please watch and listen for additional information in local newspapers, radio, and/or email announcements, or you may communicate with your local FSA office for further updates and details.

These safety-net programs provide important financial protection against unexpected changes in the marketplace. To receive calculated annual payments, plantings of covered commodities are not required for all program options. Covered commodities under ARC and PLC 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.

2015 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the local County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for West Virginia:

- January 15: Apples and Peaches
- July 15, 2015: All other crops
- December 15: Fall-Seeded Small Grains

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The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- 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 completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, 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 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (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.

Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP)

Established by the 2014 Farm Bill, DMPP protects participating dairy producers when the margin (the difference between the price of milk and feed costs) falls below levels of protection selected by the applicant.

For just \$100, dairy farmers can cover 90 percent of production at \$4 margin swings, and with affordable incremental premiums, producers can cover up to \$8 margin swings.

An online Web resource tool found at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool may be used to calculate the best levels

of coverage for the dairy operation. Producers can type in specific operation data and explore price projections and market scenarios to determine what level of coverage is best for the operation. The online resource is on a secure website that can be accessed from computers, mobile phones or tablets, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The 2016 MPP registration period is July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015.

Selected Interest Rates for June 2015	
Farm Operating Loan (Direct)	2.375%
Farm Ownership Loans (Direct)	3.5%
Farm Ownership Loans (Direct Down Payment)	1.50%
Farm Ownership Loans (Direct Beginning Farmer/Rancher)	1.50%
Farm Ownership Loans (Direct Joint Financing)	2.50%
Emergency Loans	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	1.875%
Commodity Loans (1996-Present)	1.250%