

September 2016



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## West Virginia FSA Newsletter

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### West Virginia Farm Service Agency

1550 Earl L. Core Road  
Morgantown, WV 26505

[www.fsa.usda.gov/wv](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wv)

**State Executive Director:**  
Richard V. Snuffer II

**State Committee:**  
Marjorie Burke, Chair  
G. Warren Mickey  
Remington Perkins

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

### USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers

Free basic coverage and discounted premiums available for new and underserved loan applicants

Producers who apply for FSA farm loans will be offered the opportunity to enroll in new disaster loss protections created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new coverage, available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), is available to FSA loan applicants who grow non-insurable crops, so this is especially important to fruit and vegetable producers and other specialty crop growers.

New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost, or higher coverage for a discounted premium.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered crops include "specialty" crops, for instance, vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. FSA allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

In addition to free basic coverage, beginning, underserved or limited income producers are eligible for a 50 percent discount on premiums for the higher levels of coverage that protect up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also may work with FSA to protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their

fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

FSA offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

Growers need not apply for an FSA loan, nor be a beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmer, to be eligible for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program assistance. To learn more, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans), or contact your local FSA office at <https://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Attention Apple Users

If you are an Apple user who receives online communications through GovDelivery from your state or local FSA office using the mail app on your iPhone or iPad, you may have noticed a problem with hyperlinks in the table of contents. The GovDelivery vendor is working to resolve the issue. In the meantime, you can use the macro to view the newsletter or bulletin as a web page and will be able to use the hyperlinked table of contents. To open the macro, look for the statement below in the bulletin or newsletter and click “View it as a Web page.”

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

There are no reported problems from android mobile device users at this time.

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## USDA Climate Hub Building Block: Conservation of Sensitive Lands

USDA Climate Hubs are working with producers, ranchers, pasture and forest landowners to effectively partner in ways to help reduce climate change. To aid in this partnership, USDA established the 10 Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry.

One such Building Block is the “Conservation of Sensitive Lands”. The term “sensitive lands” denotes soils and landscapes that are valuable due to properties (e.g., high organic matter, wet hydrology) and/or function (e.g., wildlife habitat, filtration, and hydrologic storage). Typical examples of these soils are organic rich histosols, floodplains, or wetlands along riparian areas. Properties and functions of these soils are easily disrupted from agricultural or urban land use.

Sensitive lands that are used for agricultural production can be protected by changes in land use (long-term cover). This reduction in land use intensity can provide multiple environmental benefits, including substantial GHG mitigation that occurs as carbon is sequestered or preserved in soils and vegetation. When land is removed from crop production, several activities—including tillage,

nitrogen fertilization, and energy use—are substantially reduced or eliminated, generating additional GHG mitigation.

FSA and NRCS are committed to identifying these sensitive lands and encouraging landowners, farmers, and ranchers to voluntarily adopt conservation systems--using financial and technical assistance--to generate GHG benefits. To read more about Conservation of Sensitive Lands, click the following link: [http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate\\_change/building\\_blocks/4\\_SensitiveLands.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/building_blocks/4_SensitiveLands.pdf)

For more information about the USDA Climate Hubs click here:  
<http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>

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## **USDA Extends Margin Protection Program for Dairy Enrollment Deadline**

USDA announced that it will extend the deadline for dairy producers to enroll in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for Dairy to Dec. 16, 2016, from the previous deadline of Sept. 30. This voluntary dairy safety net program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer. A USDA web tool, available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool), allows dairy producers to calculate levels of coverage available from MPP based on price projections.

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## **USDA Unveils New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting**

Update Lets Farmers and Ranchers Report Common Acreage Information Once

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filing at one location, data that's important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

Since 2009, USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common

data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as **FSAFarm+**, gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Results

More Than 800,000 Acres Selected Through Highly Competitive Application Rounds

USDA announced the enrollment of more than 800,000 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through CRP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) helps farmers offset the costs of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and strengthen wildlife habitat. Farmers' and ranchers' participation in CRP continues to provide numerous benefits to our nation, including helping reduce emissions of harmful greenhouse gases and providing resiliency to future weather changes.

A nationwide acreage limit was established for this program in the 2014 Farm Bill, capping the total number of acres that may be enrolled at 24 million for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. At the same time, USDA has experienced a record demand from farmers and ranchers interested in participating in the voluntary program. As of March 2016, 23.8 million acres were enrolled in CRP, with 1.7 million acres set to expire this fall.

Over three million acres have been offered for enrollment this year across the three main categories within CRP, with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) receiving over 26,000 offers to enroll more than 1.8 million acres during the general enrollment period, and over 4,600 offers to enroll more than one million acres in the new CRP Grasslands program. Coming off a record-setting 2015 continuous enrollment of over 860,000 acres, more than 364,000 acres already have been accepted for 2016 in the CRP continuous enrollment, triple the pace of last year.

FSA will accept 411,000 acres in general enrollment, the most competitive selection in the history of the program, with the acreage providing record high conservation benefits. USDA selected offers by weighing environmental factors plus cost, including wildlife enhancement, water quality, soil erosion, enduring benefits, and air quality.

The results of the first-ever enrollment period for CRP Grasslands, FSA will also accept 101,000 acres in the program, providing participants with financial assistance for establishing approved grasses, trees and shrubs on pasture and rangeland that can continue to be grazed. More than 70 percent of these acres are diverse native grasslands under threat of conversion, and more than 97 percent of the acres have a new, veteran or underserved farmer or rancher as a primary producer. FSA continues to accept CRP Grasslands offers and will conduct another ranking period later this year.

Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

To learn more about FSA’s conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation) or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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