

November 2015



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Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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State Committee:

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State Executive Director:

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Division Chiefs:

Russ Raeder
Tom Brandt
Warren Hanson

Please contact your
[local FSA office](#) for questions
specific to your operation or
county.

Appointments: Please call your
local office ahead of your visit to set an
appointment and to discuss any
records or documentation that you
may need to bring along.

Important Dates to Remember

- Nov. 16.....2016 Acreage Reporting Deadline for
Perennial Forage, Pasture, Rangeland
& Forage (PRF) including Native
Grass, Fall Wheat and all other
Fall-Seeded Small Grains
- Nov. 16.....Deadline for 2015 NAP Production
Reports for Annual Fall-Seeded
Crops, Perennial Forage, Mixed
Forage Crops, Rye, Speltz, Triticale,
Wheat and Garlic
- Nov. 20.....**EXTENDED!** Last day of the
Registration/Coverage Election Period
for 2016 MPP-Dairy Program
- Nov. 20.....Application Deadline for CRP Working
Grass, Range & Pasture Lands
Initiative
- Nov. 20.....2016 NAP Application Closing Date
for fruit and other crops such as
apples, pears, blueberries, grapes,
strawberries, honey, maple sap,
asparagus and other perennial fruits
- Dec. 1.....CRP General Signup Begins
- Dec. 1.....2016 ARCPLC Signup Begins
- Dec. 7.....Last Day to Return Voted County
Committee Election Ballots to FSA
at the local USDA Service Center.

Nov. 16 Deadline to Report Forages, Pastures, and Fall Seeded Crops

Call now to make an appointment if you don't have one yet!!!!

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline. Producer with perennial forages, pastures and fall seeded crops **only have until Nov. 16 to make an appointment to report these fields and acreages.**

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 15.

For questions regarding crop certification, please contact the [local County FSA Office](#).

Nov. 20 Extended Deadline to Enroll in Dairy Margin Protection Program

The deadline to enroll for 2016 coverage under the Dairy Margin Protection Program has been extended until Nov. 20, 2015. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating farmers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

Producers are encouraged to use the online Web resource at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. The secure website can be accessed via computer, smartphone or tablet.

Producers who were enrolled in 2015 are required to make a coverage election for 2016 and pay the \$100 administration fee by the Nov. 20 deadline. Although any unpaid premium balances for 2015 must be paid in full by the enrollment deadline to remain eligible for higher coverage levels in 2016, premiums for 2016 are not due until Sept. 1, 2016. Also, producers can work with milk marketing companies to remit premiums on their behalf.

To enroll in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Payments under the program may be reduced by a certain percentage due to a sequester order required by Congress and issued pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Should a payment reduction be necessary, FSA will reduce the payment by the required amount.

USDA Issues Safety-Net Payment to Farmers Facing Market Downturn

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that nearly one half of the 1.7 million farms that signed up for either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs nationwide will receive safety-net payments for the 2014 crop year.

Unlike the old direct payments program, which paid farmers in good years and bad, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized a new safety-net that protects producers only when market forces or adverse weather cause unexpected drops in crop prices or revenues.

The ARC/PLC programs primarily allow producers to continue to produce for the market by making payments on a percentage of historical base production, limiting the impact on production decisions.

Statewide, approximately 75,000 farms participated in ARC-PLC programs. Maps showing the Wisconsin price and yield information used to calculate the 2014 financing assistance from the ARC-CO safety-net program are now available on the Wisconsin FSA homepage website at www.fsa.usda.gov/wi.

Crops receiving assistance include barley, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, oats, dry peas, soybeans, and wheat. In the upcoming months, disbursements will be made for other crops after marketing year average prices are published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. ARC-individual payments will begin in November.

The Budget Control Act of 2011, passed by Congress, requires USDA to reduce payments by 6.8 percent. For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local Farm Service Agency office. To find a local Farm Service Agency office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Consider Storing Your Harvested Grain and Obtain a Low-Interest Crop Loan

FSA is now accepting requests for 2015 [Marketing Assistance Loans \(MALs\)](#) for all eligible commodities after harvest. Marketing Assistance Crop Loans provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows.

Eligible crops include wheat, feed grains, soybeans and other oilseeds, pulse crops, wool and honey.

Interest rates for 9-month 2015 crop year loans are announced monthly. **The interest rate is 1.250% for loans disbursed in November.** The national loan rates for 2015 crops are \$1.95/bu for corn, \$5.00/ bu for soybeans, and \$1.94/bu for winter wheat. Local loan rates vary by county.

Producers will need to certify or provide evidence of their harvested production. Loans are calculated using the certified bushels, not to exceed the county committee established maximum yields per acre, times the local county loan rate. Monthly spot-checks are conducted to ensure the quantity and quality of the crop being stored.

For more details contact your [local FSA office](#).

Make Your Voice Heard at FSA and Vote by December 7

USDA encourages farmers to make their voices heard by voting in the current Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections. Around Nov. 9, 2015, USDA mailed ballots for the 2015 elections to eligible producers throughout the state. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA offices by the Dec. 7, 2015, deadline to ensure that their vote is counted.

FSA County Committee members provide an important link between the local agricultural community and USDA. Farmers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity support programs; conservation programs; indemnity and disaster programs; emergency programs and eligibility. County committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program by being on their farm record system. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters who did not receive ballots for the county or portion of the county holding the election this year, may pick one up at their local USDA Service Center or FSA office. The deadline to submit ballots is Dec. 7, 2015. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than Dec. 7, 2015. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office Jan. 1, 2016.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2015 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. You may also contact your local USDA Service Center or [local FSA office](#).

CRP Grasslands Initiative for Livestock Grazing Lands

First Ranking Period Ends November 20

Farmers can now apply for financial assistance to help conserve working grasslands and pastureland while maintaining the areas as livestock grazing lands under the CRP-Grasslands initiative.

The CRP-Grasslands initiative will provide participants who establish long-term, resource-conserving covers with annual rental payments up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land. Cost-share assistance also is available for up to 50 percent of the covers and other practices, such as cross fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife.

Participants may still conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production, conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences. FSA will accept applications on an ongoing basis with those applications scored against published ranking criteria, and approved based on the competitiveness of the offer. The ranking period will occur at least once per year and be announced at least 30 days prior to its start. The end of the first ranking period will be November 20, 2015.

To learn more about CRP-Grasslands, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp or contact your [local County FSA Office](#).

New USDA Commitments to Help Build Up Next Generation of Farmers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced a commitment to prioritize \$5.6 billion over the next two years within USDA programs and services that serve new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Deputy Secretary Harden also announced a new, tailored web tool designed to connect new farm entrepreneurs with programs and resources available to help them get started.

The new web tool is available at www.usda.gov/newfarmers. The site was designed based on feedback from new and beginning farmers and ranchers around the country, who cited unfamiliarity with programs and resources as a challenge to starting and expanding their operations. The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to grow their business, to filing taxes as a new small business owner. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the site's Discovery Tool to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs.

Using the new web tool and other outreach activities, and operating within its existing resources, USDA has set a new goal of increasing beginning farmer and rancher participation by an additional 6.6 percent across key USDA programs, which were established or strengthened by the 2014 Farm Bill, for a total investment value of approximately \$5.6 billion. USDA will provide quarterly updates on its progress towards meeting its goal. A full explanation of the investment targets, benchmarks and outcomes is available at: [BFR-Commitment-Factsheet](#).

As the average age of the American farmer now exceeds 58 years, and data shows that almost 10 percent of farmland in the continental United States will change hands in the next five years, we have no time to lose in getting more new farmers and ranchers established. Equally important is encouraging young people to pursue careers in industries that support American agriculture. According to [an employment outlook report](#) released by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Purdue University, one of the best fields for new college graduates is agriculture. Nearly 60,000 high-skilled agriculture job openings are expected annually in the United States for the next five years, yet only 35,000 graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher in agriculture related fields are expected to be available to fill them. The report also shows that women make up more than half of the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and environment higher education graduates in the United States. USDA recently released a [series of fact sheets](#) showcasing the impact of women in agriculture nationwide.

This program builds on USDA's ongoing work to engage its resources to inspire a strong next generation of farmers and ranchers by improving access to land and capital; building market opportunities; extending conservation opportunities; offering appropriate risk management tools; and increasing outreach and technical support. To learn more about USDA's efforts, visit the [Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Results Page](#).

Beginning Farmer Loans and November Interest Rates

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

November 2015 Interest Rates:

Farm Operating Loans - Direct 2.50%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.875%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer 1.50%

Emergency Loans — 3.50%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) — 1.750%

Producers are Reminded to Complete NASS Crop Surveys

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Field Offices are currently completing 2015 small grain yield surveys. They will contact growers in December to complete row crop yield surveys. If you are one of the producers contacted to complete a 2015 yield survey, we encourage your participation and cooperation as many USDA agencies including the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) use the NASS yield data for their programs.

FSA uses NASS county yield data for farm credit, conservation, disaster programs, farm loan, and commodity programs. Under the 2014 Farm Bill, FSA uses the NASS county yield data to calculate Agriculture Risk Coverage – County (ARC-CO) benchmark revenues and current year county revenues. For example, the 2014 NASS county yield, along with the crop's marketing year average price (MYA), are used to determine the county's current year revenue to determine if the county will trigger an ARC-CO payment. An ARC-CO payment is triggered for a county when the current year revenue falls below the guarantee revenue for the crop and crop year. In cases where NASS county yield data is not available, the FSA State Committee must determine a county yield using RMA yield data or the best available yield data, including assigning a county yield using neighboring county yields from NASS or RMA.

Any information that producers provide to NASS is kept confidential and protected by federal law. NASS publishes only aggregate-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified. All reports will be available at www.nass.usda.gov.

FSA to Provide Receipt for Service

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form –serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter. To learn more about FSA, visit www.fsa.usda.gov . To find your local USDA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.