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Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

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www.fsa.usda.gov/wi

Patty's One Minute Message

If you have been in a local FSA office in the past few months, you may have been asked the question, "Would you like a receipt for your visit today?" This may seem strange at first, but before you know it, you will start to consider it part of your trip into the office.

Asking if you would like a Receipt for Service is not only law, but it is a way for the Farm Service Agency to provide you with better customer service. Recording the date of your visit as well as the items you requested or completed during your visit helps us to determine how we can better serve you in the future. This tracking system also improves communication between employees and allows us to look back to see a record of past visits and future needs.

This is a new process with our employees, so please be understand it will take some extra time when you are in the office. If you have any questions about the new Receipt for Service policy, please feel free to contact me or your local office staff.

Have a safe and exciting summer,

Patty Edelburg
State Executive Director

Dates to Remember

June 15, 2016: Nomination Period for County Committee election begins

July 4, 2016: Independence Day - Office Closed

July 15, 2016: Final date to report spring seeded crops and CRP

August 1, 2016: Final date to submit County Committee Election Nomination Form

August 1, 2016: Primary Nesting Season ends (CRP Maintenance and Management may resume)

August 1, 2016: Final date to request a reconstitution or farm transfer for 2016

August 1, 2016: Final date to enroll in 2016 ARCPLC

September 1, 2016: Deadline to purchase Noninsured Assistance Program(NAP) coverage for Value loss crops including ginseng, sod, aquaculture, and Christmas trees

September 30, 2016: Deadline to sign up for Dairy Margin Protection Program for 2017

September 30, 2016: Deadline to purchase NAP coverage for alfalfa, clover, grasses, mixed forages, rhubarb, rye, triticale, vetch, and wheat

USDA Extends Deadline for Recording Farm Structure

USDA announced a one-time, 30-day extension to the June 1 deadline for recording farm organization structures related to Actively Engaged in Farming determinations. This date is used to determine the level of interest an individual holds in a legal entity for the applicable program year. Farming operations will now have until July 1 to complete their restructuring or finalize any operational change. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued the extension in response to farmers and ranchers who requested more time to comply, and to assure that everyone has enough time to provide their information under the new rules.

The 2014 Farm Bill provided the Secretary with the direction and authority to amend the Actively Engaged in Farming rules related to management. The final rule established limits on the number of individuals who can qualify as actively engaged using only management. Only one payment limit for management is allowed under the rule, with the ability to request up to two additional qualifying managers operations for large and complex operations.

The rule does not apply to farming operations comprised entirely of family members. The rule also does not change the existing regulations related to contributions of land, capital, equipment or labor, or the existing regulations related to landowners with a risk in the crop or to spouses. Producers that planted fall crops have until the 2017 crop year to comply with the new rules. The payment limit associated with Farm Service Agency farm payments is generally limited to \$125,000 per individual or entity per year.

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. 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 filed at one location, data 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>.

Understanding FSA Direct and Guaranteed Loans

Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000. A down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan. To find your office contact visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Guaranteed Loan Program

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$1,399,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your lender or local FSA farm loan office for more information on guaranteed loans. To find your local office contact visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Conservation Local Work Group Meeting Schedule Announced for 2016

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin has announced the schedule for 2016 Local Working Group (LWG) meetings. Twenty one meetings will be held across Wisconsin in July and August to gather input and help set priorities for USDA conservation programs under the 2014 Farm Bill.

Local Working Groups offer a seat at the table for interested individuals and groups to advise NRCS on how best to set priorities and locally implement conservation programs. Members are diverse with an interest and focus on local agriculture and natural resource issues. Farmers representing a variety of crops and livestock raised within the local area, private woodland owners, representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations, and representatives of other agriculture and natural resource agencies are welcome and should be represented.

This year, LWGs will represent two or more counties grouped together by geography, similar land use, resources, and type of agriculture ([see map of Local Working Groups](#)). This will allow greater flexibility and access to funding for the groups.

The main program discussed at the meetings will be the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the primary federal conservation program for agricultural and forest lands. EQIP offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners with needed conservation practices for water quality, soil health, wildlife and other natural resources. As of May, Wisconsin has received \$19.4 million in EQIP funding for conservation practices this year. The program was re-authorized through 2019 in the federal Farm Bill, which was passed in February 2014.

Local Working Group meetings are open to the public. Anyone interested in becoming a member and participating in LWGs should contact the [NRCS District Conservationist](#) in their county. Contact your local NRCS District Conservationist if you are interested in participating. For detailed information on local work groups, see [What are Local Working Groups](#) and see the [Schedule of Meetings](#).

Useful links:

[Local Work Group 2016 Press Release](#)

[Local Work Group Details](#)

[Local Work Group Meeting Schedule](#)

[Map of Wisconsin Local Work Groups](#)

USDA's Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a comprehensive and detailed approach to support farmers, ranchers, and forest land owners in their response to address the causes of climate change in April 2015. The framework consists of 10 building blocks that span a range of technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon storage, and generate clean renewable energy through mitigation.

USDA's strategy focuses on climate-smart practices designed for working production systems that provide multiple economic and environmental benefits in addition to supporting resilience to extreme weather, reduced emissions and increased carbon storage.

Through this comprehensive set of voluntary programs and initiatives spanning its programs, USDA expects to reduce net emissions and enhance carbon sequestration by over 120 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MMTCO₂e) per year – about 2% of economy-wide net greenhouse emissions – by 2025. That's the equivalent of taking 25 million cars off the road, or offsetting the emissions produced by powering nearly 11 million homes last year.

For more information on the Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry click the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/documents/climate-smart-fact-sheet.pdf> . For additional information on ways to consider greenhouse gases when managing land, refer to the USDA Climate Hub webpage: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap that allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for their operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

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).

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