

November 2016



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## Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

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### Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

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Russ Raeder

To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi)

### A Message from Patty

I would like to take this time to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving. We all owe you a bit of thanks and gratitude for the time you spend in your barns and fields so that we all can enjoy the food before us, not only this Thanksgiving but on a daily basis. We have the most economical, safest and most abundant food supply in the world, and to that, we say "Thank You"!

During this season of thanks, I am also thankful for the amazing staff of the Farm Service Agency in Wisconsin. Your FSA employees work hard day in and day out providing a service to each and every producer that walks into our doors. This year alone, local FSA offices added over \$341 million into the local economies by providing payments and loans to our agriculture producers. Each dollar issued helps provide economic opportunities for people and communities throughout the state.

The national office has taken note of some of our top notch staff here in Wisconsin. Numerous employees have been recognized for their extra efforts this year across the state by receiving the Farm Service Agency Administrator's Award. The recipients of this award have made outstanding contributions above and beyond expectations. Please join me in congratulating the following employees:

**Non-Supervisor of the Year Award**

Christine Ewer

**The Grant County Farm Loan Team including:**

Dennis Hottenstein

Joanne Reynolds

Mitch Droeszler

Sandy Hauth

Katie Roth

Tammy Reynolds

Leslie Oppert

**The National Geographic Information System (GIS) Training Team including:**

Brenda Zachman, Wisconsin GIS Coordinator

**The National Environmental Compliance Task Force including:**

Carol Nagel, Wisconsin Management Analyst

Please have a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving holiday,

Patty

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## Dates to Remember

**Monday, December 26, 2016**

USDA Service Centers Closed

**Monday, January 2, 2017**

USDA Service Centers Closed

**Tuesday, January 3, 2017**

Acreage reporting deadline for 2017 honey

**Monday, January 16, 2017**

USDA Service Centers Closed

**Tuesday, January 17, 2017**

Acreage reporting deadline for 2017 crops including apples, asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, cranberries, currants, grapes, hops, huckleberries, pears, and strawberries

**Wednesday, February 2, 2017**

Acreage reporting deadline for 2017 maple sap

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## Multiple Counties in Wisconsin Eligible for Emergency Loans

The counties listed below were declared a primary/contiguous disaster due to severe storms, flooding, and mudslides. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

### Eligible Counties:

Adams, Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Columbia, Crawford, Dunn, Eau Claire, Grant, Iowa, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Marathon, Marquette, Monroe, Pierce, Pepin, Portage, Richland, Rusk, Sauk, Taylor, Trempealeau, Vernon, Waushara, Wood

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please find your local FSA office at <http://offices.usda.gov> or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans)

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## USDA Invests \$1.7 Billion to Protect Sensitive Agricultural Lands through Conservation Reserve Program

USDA will issue nearly \$1.7 billion in payments to more than half of a million Americans who have contracts with the government to protect sensitive agricultural lands. The investment, part of the voluntary USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), will allow producers to protect almost 24 million acres of wetlands, grasslands and wildlife habitat in 2016.

CRP provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who remove environmentally sensitive land from production to be planted with certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and increase wildlife habitat. In return for enrolling in CRP, USDA, through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. The contracts last between 10 and 15 years.

More than 1.3 million acres were newly enrolled in CRP in fiscal year 2016 using the continuous enrollment authority, triple the pace of the previous year. In fiscal year 2016, FSA also accepted 411,000 acres through its general enrollment authority, plus 101,000 acres in the new CRP-Grasslands program, which balances conservation with working lands. More than 70 percent of the acres enrolled in CRP-Grasslands are diverse native grasslands under threat of conversion, with more than 97 percent of the acres having a new, veteran or underserved farmer or rancher as a primary producer.

CRP has sequestered an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking nine million cars off the road, and prevented nine billion tons of soil from erosion, enough to fill 600 million dump trucks.

For more information about CRP, contact your local FSA office or online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp). Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crpis30](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crpis30) or follow Twitter at #CRPis30 for program anniversary background and success stories. To locate your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Announces Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2017

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop year, should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities 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. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Expands Working-Lands Conservation Opportunities through CRP

USDA will offer a new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations. Small livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing dairy cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm. USDA's goal is to enroll up to 200,000 acres.

The new practice for small-scale livestock grazers aims, in part, to encourage greater diversity geographically and in types of livestock operation. **This opportunity will close on Dec. 16, 2016.** Offers selected this fiscal year will be enrolled into CRP Grasslands beginning Oct. 1, 2017.

Participants in CRP Grasslands establish or maintain long-term, resource-conserving grasses and other plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. CRP Grasslands participants can use the land for livestock production (e.g. grazing or producing hay), while following their conservation and grazing plans in order to maintain the cover. A goal of CRP Grasslands is to minimize conversion of grasslands either to row crops or to non-agricultural uses. Participants can receive annual payments of up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land and up to 50 percent to fund cover or practices like cross-fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife.

USDA will select offers for enrollment based on six ranking factors: (1) current and future use, (2) new farmer/rancher or underserved producer involvement, (3) maximum grassland preservation, (4) vegetative cover, (5) environmental factors and (6) pollinator habitat. Offers for the second ranking period also will be considered from producers who submitted offers for the first ranking period but were not accepted, as well as from new offers submitted through Dec. 16.

Small livestock operations or other farming and ranching operations interested in participating in CRP Grasslands should contact their local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/CRP](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/CRP).

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## USDA Climate Hub Building Block: Nitrogen Stewardship

USDA Climate Hubs are working with farmers, livestock producers, and pasture and forest landowners to effectively partner in ways to help mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. Next in our series on the 10 Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry is Nitrogen Stewardship.

Within the United States, agriculture is a significant source of nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions—a greenhouse gas (GHG) that has a global warming potential 250 times more than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). In 2013, cropland agriculture released approximately 136 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e (Million Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide-Equivalent) in direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions. More than half of these N<sub>2</sub>O emissions are from synthetic fertilizers and organic amendments. Improved nitrogen management practices can reduce emissions from these sources.

The primary practice used in the Nitrogen Stewardship Building Block to reduce GHG emissions involves the 4Rs: right source, right rate, right time, and right place. The 4Rs come from the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Nutrient Management (590). To read more about Nitrogen Stewardship click the following link or copy and paste the link into your web browser: [http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate\\_change/building\\_blocks/2\\_NitrogenStewardship.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/building_blocks/2_NitrogenStewardship.pdf)

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

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## USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans).

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans).

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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).