

September 2017



Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency **A Message from the SED**

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As I drive through the state, harvest has begun, which means that slow moving farm equipment is on the roads. Please keep this in mind and be especially careful over the coming months.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension offers the following tips to keep in mind while driving on rural roads:

- Farm machinery that goes less than 25 miles per hour (mph) should display an orange 'slow moving vehicle' or SMV emblem on the back. Alternatively, the equipment may have an amber strobe light.
- New high-speed tractors can travel up to 40 mph. Wisconsin has no special sign or symbol to identify these high speed tractors, though many operators use amber strobe lights on these tractors.
- A road sign to watch for is a yellow and black warning sign with the symbol of a farmer driving a tractor. The signs are within 500 feet of the driveway to alert motorists of an farm or field drive with an obstructed view such as on a hill or around a curve.
- A farm vehicle operator may not be able to see around the equipment, so don't assume that the operator knows you are approaching. Similar to semi-trucks, many tractors and other farming equipment use large extended mirrors. When a driver follows too closely, their vehicle isn't visible to the farm equipment operator. Keep a sufficient distance behind farm vehicles.
- A majority of farm equipment and motor vehicle crashes occur when the farm equipment operator slows down to turn left and the motorist moves around to pass. When passing farm machinery, make sure the driver is not about to turn left. Before you decide to pass, look for driveways into farm fields where the farm vehicle operator could be turning.

- Farm machinery crossing the road moves slowly and may be pulling equipment that will take longer to clear the road. Don't try to pass on the left, as the equipment may swing out differently than you expect.

As a final reminder, make sure that you have enough time and distance to pass safely. It is illegal to pass farm equipment in no passing zones.

The Wisconsin Farm Service Agency wishes you a safe and plentiful harvest,

Russ Raeder

*To read more about farm safety, visit the article referenced above by [clicking here](#).

Dates to Remember

September 30, 2017:

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Application deadline for 2018 crops including alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, clover, grasses, mixed forages, rhubarb, rye, triticale, vetch, wheat, and other winter seeded small grains and perennial forage

October 9, 2017:

USDA Service Centers Closed in observance of Columbus Day

November 1, 2017:

Enrollment begins for 2018 Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage (**ARC/PLC**) contracts

November 10, 2017:

USDA Service Centers Closed in observance of Veteran's Day

November 15, 2017:

Acreage reporting deadline for 2018 crops including fall-seeded crops, perennial forage, fall mint, pasture, rangeland, and forage

November 20, 2017:

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) application deadline for 2018 crops including apples, asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, cranberries, currants, grapes, honey, hops, maple sap, pears, and strawberries

November 23, 2017:

USDA Service Centers closed in observance of Thanksgiving

December 15, 2017:

Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP) deadline to enroll in coverage for the 2018 program year

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Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2018 Coverage

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced that starting Sept. 1, 2017, dairy producers can enroll for 2018 coverage in the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy). Secretary Sonny Perdue has utilized additional flexibility this year by providing dairy producers the option of opting out of the program for 2018.

To opt out, a producer should not sign up during the annual registration period. By opting out, a producer would not receive any MPP-Dairy benefits if payments are triggered for 2018. Full details will be included in a subsequent Federal Register Notice. The decision is for 2018 only and is not retroactive.

The voluntary 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.

Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2018 Coverage (continued)

MPP-Dairy gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation. Enrollment ends on Dec. 15, 2017, for coverage in calendar year 2018. Participating farmers will remain in the program through Dec. 31, 2018, and pay a minimum \$100 administrative fee for 2018 coverage. Producers have the option of selecting a different coverage level from the previous coverage year during open enrollment.

Dairy operations enrolling in the program must meet conservation compliance provisions and cannot participate in the Livestock Gross Margin Dairy Insurance Program. Producers can mail the appropriate form to the producer's administrative county FSA office, along with applicable fees, without necessitating a trip to the local FSA office. If electing higher coverage for 2018, dairy producers can either pay the premium in full at the time of enrollment or pay 100 percent of the premium by Sept. 1, 2018. Premium fees may be paid directly to FSA or producers can work with their milk handlers to remit premiums on their behalf.

USDA has a web tool to help producers determine the level of coverage under the MPP-Dairy that will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The online resource, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine unique operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs based on price projections. Producers can also review historical data or estimate future coverage based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, Smartphone, tablet or any other platform, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For more information, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop by a local FSA office to learn more about the MPP-Dairy.

USDA Reminds Producers of Nov. 1 ELAP Application Deadline

Eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who experienced losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs, have until Nov. 1, 2017, to submit an application and notice of loss under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

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

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 from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2017
- An application for payment by November 1, 2017

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets.

Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently launched a free mobile app that will instruct the public on what to do before, during and after emergencies. The app is available for download for Apple, Android and Blackberry mobile devices.

Download the app to:

- Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations
- Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters and customize your emergency checklist
- Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone)
- Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders

For more information about the FEMA app, visit fema.gov/mobile-app. To download the FEMA app from the Apple Store visit <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8>. To download the FEMA app on Google Play for Android visit: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en>

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How Do I Know if I Qualify for a Farm Loan

Both traditional and non-traditional family farms and ranches may be eligible for FSA financing. Interested parties are encouraged to contact their local office or USDA Service Center to learn more about the eligibility requirements for Farm Operating and Farm Ownership loans available. To find your local office visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Applicants must have sufficient managerial ability to assure reasonable prospects of success. This requirement may be satisfied with a combination of education, on-the-job training, and farm experience. The level of managerial ability required will depend on the type of loan, the complexity of the operation, and the amount of the loan request. Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Additional general eligibility requirements include:

- must not have Federal or State conviction(s) for planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting, storing, trafficking, or possession of controlled substances,
- have the legal capacity to incur the loan obligation,
- be able to show an acceptable credit history,
- is a citizen, non-citizen national or legal resident alien of the United States, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and certain former Pacific Trust Territories,
- have no previous debt forgiveness by the Agency, including a guarantee loan loss payment,
- be unable to obtain sufficient credit elsewhere, with or without an FSA loan guarantee,
- not be delinquent on any Federal debt, other than IRS tax debt, at the time of loan closing,
- not be ineligible due to disqualification resulting from Federal Crop Insurance violation.

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2017 Census of Agriculture Coming in December

America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them.

2017 Census of Agriculture Coming in December (continued)

The Census of Agriculture highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and other topics. The 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that over three million farmers operated more than two million farms, spanning over 914 million acres. This was a four percent decrease in the number of U.S. farms from the previous census in 2007. However, agriculture sales, income, and expenses increased between 2007 and 2012. This telling information and thousands of other agriculture statistics are a direct result of responses to the Census of Agriculture.

To learn more visit www.agcensus.usda.gov. NASS defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

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