

October 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

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

### Message from Russ Raeder, Acting SED

While Wisconsin farmers are busy in the fields this harvest season and county FSA office employees are busy in the offices processing various annual program payments and loan repayments. We are proud to contribute to the Wisconsin agriculture economy and wish all of the state's farmers and ranchers a safe and successful harvest.

We understand this is a busy season, but we want to remind you of a few important details:

- Call to make an appointment with your local FSA office before **November 15** to complete your fall acreage report. Crops to report include fall-seeded crops, perennial forage, mint, and pasture, rangeland, and forage.
- Thinking about more on-farm storage for next year's crop? Ask your local office about a **Farm Storage Facility Loan**. These loans offer a great interest rate for many farm storage and handling needs.
- County Committee (COC) election ballots will be mailed out beginning November 6. Participate in your local election and vote. Ballots must be returned to the local office by **December 4**. To learn more about COC elections visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

- The deadline to make a Dairy Margin Protection Program election is **December 15**.

Please feel free to contact your local office at any time with questions about any of the coming dates. To find your local office visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Thanks,

Russ Raeder

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## Dates to Remember

### **November 1, 2017:**

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

### **November 6, 2017:**

**County Committee Election** ballots will be mailed to Local Administrative Areas up for election

### **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 4, 2017**

**County Committee Election ballots** must be postmarked or returned to the local FSA office

### **December 15, 2017:**

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

### **December 25, 2017**

**USDA Service Centers closed** in observance of Christmas

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## USDA Issues Farm Safety Net Payments to Wisconsin Farmers

USDA Wisconsin Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that approximately 51,045 Wisconsin farms that enrolled in safety-net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill will receive financial assistance for the 2016 crop year. The programs, known as Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), are designed to protect against unexpected drops in crop prices or revenues due to market downturns.

Producers in 72 Wisconsin counties have experienced a significant drop in prices or revenues below the benchmark established by the ARC or PLC program and thus, will receive payments totaling \$57.3 million. Payments related to corn, oats, soybeans and wheat crops made up much of those payments. There were also payments for canola and grain sorghum crops.

Payments by county for an eligible commodity can vary because average county yields will differ.

Statewide, over 45,840 farms participated in ARC-County and nearly 5,205 farms participated in PLC. More details on the price and yield information used to calculate the financial assistance from the safety-net programs is available on the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc) and [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi).

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## USDA Processing Pending Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment Offers

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will process many pending eligible offers for land enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and will temporarily suspend accepting most new offers until later in the 2018 fiscal year.

All current, eligible CRP continuous enrollment offers made through Sept. 30, 2017, except for those made under the Pollinator Habitat Initiative (CP42), will be approved. FSA is temporarily suspending acceptance of most offers going forward to provide time to review CRP allocation levels, and to avoid exceeding the statutory cap of 24 million acres.

The CRP acreage cap is a provision of the 2014 Farm Bill. Current enrollment is about 23.5 million acres nationwide. USDA is accepting all pending continuous enrollment offers made beginning on May 4, 2017, extending through Sept. 30, 2017, except Pollinator Habitat Initiative offers. Pollinator acreage offers are being declined because the program has met its acreage enrollment goal. Effective immediately, USDA is suspending acceptance of all new CRP continuous offers received or submitted after Sept. 30, 2017. The suspension will continue until later in the 2018 fiscal year.

However, FSA will continue to accept eligible offers for state-specific Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP Grasslands enrollment. Offers received on or after Oct. 1, 2017, are subject to fiscal year 2018 rental rates which have been adjusted to reflect current market conditions and were established after careful review of the latest USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) cash rent data.

In return for enrolling in CRP, USDA, through FSA, provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP pays farmers and ranchers who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat. Payment totals for 2017 were announced earlier this week totaling over \$1.6 billion.

For more information about CRP, contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp). To locate your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Beginning Farmer Loans

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:

- Meets the loan eligibility requirements of the program to which he/she is applying
- Has operated a farm for no 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
- For Farm Ownership loans, 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 <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans/index>.

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## Census of Agriculture Countdown Begins for America's Farmers and Ranchers

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

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.

Producers who are new to farming can learn about the Census of Agriculture report form by visiting [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://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). Law requires all those who receive a Census of Agriculture report form to respond even if they did not operate a farm or ranch in 2017.

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## Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2018 Coverage

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).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) 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 would be for 2018 only and is not retroactive.

## **Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2018 Coverage (continued)**

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.

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](http://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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy) or stop by a local FSA office to learn more about the MPP-Dairy.

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