



**Montana  
Farm Service Agency  
State E-Newsletter**

**August 2012**

**Montana State FSA  
Committee:**

Steve Carney, *Chair*  
Floyd Dahlman, *Member*  
Kelly Flaherty-Settle, *Member*  
Hans McPherson, *Member*  
Patricia Quisno, *Member*

**State Executive Director  
Bruce Nelson**

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**Montana FSA Web site:**  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt)

**Hours:**

Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Upcoming 2012 State Committee  
Meeting:**

Oct. 10-11 in the Montana State  
Office located at 10 East Babcock  
on the 5th Floor of the Federal  
Building in Bozeman.

**FSA State Office Management:**

Dick Deschamps,  
*Chief Administrative Officer*  
Dave Pitts, *Farm Loan Chief*  
Amy Webbink,  
*Price Support/Conservation Chief  
Program Specialist*  
Shelly Rolando, *Disaster and  
Compliance Program Chief*  
Jennifer Perez Cole, *Public Affairs  
Specialist, Outreach Coordinator,  
State Civil Rights Coordinator*  
Cindy Coad,  
*Program/Management Analyst*

**Need accommodations?:**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, contact the State or County Executive Director directly or by phone at the county FSA Office or the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

## New 2013 Crop Acreage Reporting Dates for Montana

The goal of the Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI) is to have a common USDA framework for producer commodity reporting in support of USDA programs in order to simplify and standardize the reporting process. Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) have worked together to identify differences and recommend consolidation for as many acreage reporting dates as possible. The implementation of the new acreage reporting dates will be for the 2013 crop year. Although these common acreage reporting dates are now established, producers will be required to continue to report the specific crops/acreage to both FSA and RMA at this time. Prior to the ACRSI initiative, Montana producers were required to report all crops by a final reporting date of July 15<sup>th</sup>. Now most Montana producers will have at least two (2) crop reporting dates starting in crop year 2013; however, it is possible for some producers to have up to four (4) final reporting dates. The following are the common acreage reporting dates for Montana:

- **NOV. 15, 2012** – Apiculture, Perennial Forage, PRF, Fall Wheat (HRW), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains, and Native and Tame Pasture
- **JAN. 2, 2013** – (or 30 days after placement of colonies) Honey covered under NAP
- **JAN. 15, 2013** – Cherries, Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed
- **JULY 15, 2013** – Spring Alfalfa Seed, Barley, Canola, Corn, Dry Beans, Dry Peas, Flax, Forage Seeding, Mustard, Spring Oats, Potatoes, Safflower, Sugar Beets, Sunflowers, Spring Wheat, CRP, and all other crops

**Remember, producers with Apiculture, Perennial Forage, PRF, Fall Wheat (HRW), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains, and Native and Tame Pasture MUST report these crops by NOV. 15, 2012 in order to be considered timely filed.** County offices have been in the process of preparing the compliance maps for the 2013 acreage reporting process. The maps should be available for pickup in late-August or early September.

## USDA FSA Disaster Program Assistance

USDA FSA provides assistance for natural disaster losses resulting from drought, flood, fire, freeze, tornados, pest infestation and other calamities. For up-to-date listing of FSA disaster news visit the state FSA website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt). Here's a summary of FSA programs: [Emergency Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#) may be authorized for a limited time with prior FSA approval to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought. Fifty one (51) Montana counties approved as of Aug. 2. A CRP payment reduction will apply. Contact your FSA county office for details. **Emergency Use of CRP:** In cases of wildfire, livestock producers in the affected county may get approval to temporarily use CRP in order to protect their livestock. The [Emergency Loan Program](#) provides low-interest 2.25 percent loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine. A secretarial, presidential or FSA administrator's disaster declaration is required. The [Disaster Debt Set-Aside Program](#) is an option for direct-loan FLP borrowers. The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP) provides assistance to producers if their land was damaged by a natural disaster and needs conservation practices. Examples include removing debris; restoring fences and conservation structures; and providing water for livestock in drought situations. The [The Emergency Forest Restoration Program \(EFRP\)](#) provides cost-share for private forest land. [The Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) provides assistance for crop losses when federal crop insurance is not available. A policy must be purchased by sales closing date. Prior approval is required. For more info, contact your local FSA office.

*FSA DISASTER PROGRAMS CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*

## EMERGENCY CRP HAYING & GRAZING:

Producers in the Montana counties approved for emergency haying & grazing of CRP acres must sign up with their county office and be granted written approval. Authorized producers can use CRP acreage for their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage upon written approval. Under new provisions, CRP participants can sell or donate hay to any livestock producer or may lease the land for grazing. Producers previously approved for Managed Haying and Grazing of CRP acres may be able to switch to Emergency Haying & Grazing, which has a lower payment reduction, but must contact the county office. For more specific rules and information, contact your county office.

### Continuous CRP Opportunities

#### *Highly Erodible Land & Pollinator Habitat Practice*

The Continuous CRP allows participants to enroll acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources. Several new Continuous CRP practices have recently been announced. Continuous CRP offers are now being accepted under the Pollinator Habitat practice, which supports a variety of pollinator species. Pollinator habitats are areas of permanent vegetation located in an agricultural landscape: field edges, field middles, odd corners, or any agricultural location that is suitable for establishing pollinator habitat. A new initiative for highly erodible lands has also been announced.

**Montana has 45,000 acres of Highly Erodible Land available for land with an Erodibility Index of 20 or greater. The acres are available through Continuous CRP signup until the 45,000 acres are allocated or Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, whichever is first.** Continuous CRP program participation is voluntary. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment. For more info on Continuous CRP see page 3 of this issue and contact your local FSA office and visit the website [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

### Preparing to Return CRP Acres to Crop Production

Producers whose CRP contracts are in the final year and who are planning to return the ground to crop production can request to begin preparing the fields prior to the end of the CRP contract. There are several options depending on whether you are going to plant the acres to fall seeded crops or spring seeded crops. Payment reductions may apply depending on the date you plan to start the preparation activities. Early land preparation activities must be requested and approved prior to the destruction of any CRP cover. Contact the office and set up an appointment if you would like to discuss CRP Early Land Preparation in detail.

## FSA Disaster Programs, cont. from page 1

**DISASTER PROGRAMS:** Authority for five disaster programs (LIP-Livestock Indemnity Program, LFP-Livestock Forage Program, ELAP-Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program, TAP-Tree Assistance Program & SURE-Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program) was only authorized for natural disasters occurring before Sept. 30, 2011. Signup for the SURE crop disaster program for the 2011 crop year is expected to occur this winter/fall.

**RECORDKEEPING:** While we do not know what the program requirements will be for any new disaster programs in the new farm bill, FSA encourages producers with losses for natural disasters occurring Oct. 1, 2011 and thereafter to keep records, including photos of dead livestock, receipts, inventories, description of cause of loss, dates of loss, etc., in anticipation of a future disaster programs. For more info on FSA programs, contact your county FSA office.

### 1st Annual Rocky Mountain Intertribal Agriculture Council Symposium scheduled for Aug. 22-23 in Polson

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Montana Food & Agriculture Council and Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) announce that registration is open for the 1st Annual Rocky Mountain Intertribal Agriculture Council Symposium that will be held in Polson on Aug. 22-23.

“We have a full agenda in store for American Indian farmers and ranchers and those involved in Indian agriculture,” said IAC Executive Director Ross Racine. “We hope that folks can get away for a few days and take part of our first annual regional symposium. Scholarships are available.”

Highlights include discussions about the Carbon Coalition Workshop by the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, Animal Disease Traceability and Trichomoniasis Policy by the Montana Department of Livestock, a keynote address by Bruce Nelson, Montana Farm Service Agency State Executive Director and former FSA administrator, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Easements on Tribal Lands, report from Montana Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Beef Marketing Options, tour of a local USDA Slaughterhouse, Roundtables on Lending Opportunities with FSA, NRCS programs and Farm Bill Updates for Indian Country and an update on the Montana USDA Tribal Strategic Plan.

To help deter registration and travel costs, scholarships are available through IAC. Those interested should contact Becky Standing Bear, of IAC, at (406) 259-3525 or [bstandingbear@indianaglink.com](mailto:bstandingbear@indianaglink.com) no later than Aug. 12. Scholarships are limited.

The event is held conjunction with the Flathead River Indian National Finals Rodeo (INFR) Tour Rodeo on Aug. 23-26.

Registration forms, agenda and scholarship applications are available on the Montana FSA State Website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt) - under State Events. For more information, contact Kole Fitzpatrick at (406) 450-8704 or [kole@indianaglink.com](mailto:kole@indianaglink.com).

# Montana FSA: USDA announces signup for two new Continuous CRP practices - Highly Erodible Land & Pollinator Habitat

(Bozeman, Mont., - July 25) - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sign-up began the week of July 23rd, for the Highly Erodible Land Initiative under the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). In addition, the pollinator habitat practice, which supports a variety of pollinator species, is now accepted as a Continuous CRP practice. Producers interested in these two new continuous signup practices may enroll eligible land at their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office, said Bruce Nelson, Montana FSA State Executive Director.

CRP is a voluntary program designed to help agricultural producers protect their environmentally-sensitive land through 10 to 15-year contracts. Continuous CRP signup allows participants to submit offers for selected continuous signup practices to enroll in CRP at anytime instead of waiting for a General CRP signup period. Participants and offered lands must meet certain eligibility requirements to be accepted into the program.

The purpose of the Highly Erodible Land Initiative, announced by Secretary Vilsack in February, is to protect up to 750,000 acres of the nation's most highly erodible croplands. Croplands with an Erodibility Index of 20 or greater can be eligible for non-competitive enrollment.

"Montana has 45,000 acres available through the Highly Erodible Land Initiative," Nelson said. "These acres are limited so producers who are interested in enrolling highly erodible land should contact their local FSA office right away to determine their land has an Erodibility Index of 20 or greater. Those interested in enrolling land or re-enrolling land through the pollinator habitats practice also should contact their local FSA office."

Approved offers in Montana will be accepted on a first-come-first served basis and will continue until acres are allocated or Sept. 30, 2012 whichever occurs first. Eligible landowners will receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible cropland for a period of 10 years.

As with general CRP, eligibility is based on several factors. Eligible land must have been planted to an annual crop or conserving use between 2002 and 2007. Land currently in CRP that will expire Sept. 30, 2012 may also be enrolled under the new provision.

"Leaving the most highly erodible soils in CRP and farming the rest of the land may be an option for some producers with expiring CRP contracts," Nelson added.

## **Pollinator Habitat Now a CRP Continuous Sign-up Practice**

Effective June 2012, the pollinator habitat practice is an eligible Continuous Sign-up CRP practice. Pollinator habitats are areas of permanent vegetation located in an agricultural landscape: field edges, field middles, odd corners or any agricultural location that is suitable for establishing pollinator habitat.

Pollinators provide a very important ecological service. Approximately three quarters of all flowering plants rely upon external assistance to pollinate their flowers. In addition to agricultural crops such as fruits and many vegetables, these plants include seed producing wildflowers, fruit producing shrubs and nut producing trees which provide a source of food for many wildlife species. Studies indicate that birds, bees, bats and other pollinators are in significant decline across the country and the world. Nearly 80 percent of the crops grown in the world require pollination. In the United States, insects pollinate crops that produce \$40 billion worth of products annually.

Participants of newly enrolled pollinator habitat practices are eligible to receive up to a \$150 CRP Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) per acre. The SIP is a one-time payment issued to CRP participants after the contract is approved. A Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) provides up to a 40 percent cost share for practice installation.

The SIP for all other continuous sign-up practices remains unchanged at \$100 per acres. Highly erodible land is ineligible for a SIP or a PIP.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on CRP and other FSA programs or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp) or [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt).

### FSA: Upcoming Important Dates to Remember:

- Aug. 1: Last day to file County Committee nomination forms
- Aug. 1: Farm/Tract Reconstitution Deadline
- Sept. 13: CRP Managed Summer/Fall Grazing Period Ends
- Nov. 5: County Committee Election Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters
- Nov. 15: Apiculture, Perennial Forage, PRF, Fall Wheat (HRW), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains, and Native and Tame Pasture
- Nov. 12 All hay bales must be removed from CRP acres.
- Dec. 3: Last day to return voted County Committee ballots to FSA county office
- Jan. 1: New County Committee Members and Alternates take office.
- Continuous - Continuous CRP Signup
- Jan. 2, 2013 – (or 30 days after placement of colonies) Honey covered under NAP
- Jan. 15, 2013 – Cherries, Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed
- July 15, 2013 – Spring Alfalfa Seed, Barley, Canola, Corn, Dry Beans, Dry Peas, Flax, Forage Seeding, Mustard, Spring Oats, Potatoes, Safflower, Sugar Beets, Sunflowers, Spring Wheat, CRP, and all other crops

### Selected Interest Rates- August 2012

Loan Type	Current Rate (%)
Farm Operating	1.25
Farm Ownership	3.00
Farm Ownership – Down Payment	1.50
Emergency – Actual Loss	2.25
Farm Storage Facility Loan - 7 year	1.00
Farm Storage Facility Loan -10 year	1.625
Farm Storage Facility Loan -12 year	1.875
Commodity Loans	1.250

### ANNUAL MONTANA USDA SUMMER FOOD DRIVE

June - Aug. 31, 2012



USDA Service Centers and NRCS Tribal Offices across Montana are accepting canned good donations from the public that will be donated to local community food banks at the end of each month. For more information, contact the local Service Center or NRCS tribal office.

### 2012 Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium Scheduled for Sept. 25-27 in Great Falls



For more information, contact Lori Valadez at (406) 587-6969 or [lori.valadez@mt.usda.gov](mailto:lori.valadez@mt.usda.gov). Registration form, booth registration, agenda and lodging information are available at: [www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/womenag.html](http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/womenag.html).

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