



NEWSLETTER



September 2014
Rhode Island County
Office

60 Quaker Lane Suite 49
 Warwick, RI 02886

Hours

Monday-Friday
 8:00 am-4:30 pm

Phone

401-828-3120 Option 2
 Farm Loan: Option 3
 Fax: 855-924-4567

County Committee

Doreen Pezza-Chairperson
 Gilbert W Rathbun Jr.-Vice
 Chairperson
 Victor Hoogendoorn-
 Member
 Joseph Silveira-Member
 Lauri Roberts-Member

County Office Staff

Ingrid Fratantuono, CED
 Anne Belleville, PT
 Leila Naylor, KPT
 Sheryl Michener, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Roxanne Boisse, FLM

Next County Committee Meeting:

October 1, 2014 at 10:00 am

Rhode Island FSA Updates

Rhode Island staff is currently working on preparing a training session later this month to discuss the Margin Protection Program.

Dairy Product Donation Program

The Dairy Product Donation Program (DPDP) assists dairy operations when margins are low by using Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds to purchase dairy products for donation to public and private nonprofit organizations that provide nutrition assistance to low-income populations. Purchases are only made by USDA during periods of low margins. Dairy operators do not have to enroll to benefit from DPDP. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will administer the program when FSA determines that the actual dairy production margin has been \$4 or less per hundredweight (CWT) for each of the preceding two months.

Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy) for dairy producers. The new, voluntary risk management program replaces the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which expires on Sept. 1, 2014.

MPP-Dairy offers protection to dairy producers when the difference (the margin) between the all-milk price and national average feed cost falls below a certain producer selected amount.

Eligible producers may purchase coverage for their dairy operation by paying an annual administrative fee of \$100 and a premium, as applicable, for higher levels of coverage. Producers in the dairy operation will have to select a desired coverage level ranging from \$4.00 to \$8.00, in \$0.50 increments and a desired coverage percentage level ranging from 25 to 90 percent, in 5 percent increments. Producers will also have to decide whether or not to participate in the MPP-Dairy Program or the Livestock Gross Margin program administered by the Risk Management Agency (RMA), but they will not be allowed to participate in both.

A decision tool will be made available in the fall of 2014 to help producers make coverage level decisions. Enrollment will also begin this fall. Dairy operators will establish their production history during signup. Verification of the production records will be required. The regulations for MPP-dairy are still being developed. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

Changes mandated through the 2014 Farm Bill require producers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file.

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 form must be on file with the FSA. Since many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCs) programs have this requirement, most producers should already have an AD-1026 on file. If producers have not filed, they must do so by June 1, 2015.

When a farmer completes the AD-1026, FSA and NRCs staff will outline any additional actions that may be required for compliance with the provisions. The Risk Management Agency, through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers and ranchers.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues the requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA and NRCs. This includes the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs.

FSA recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: www.fsa.usda.gov. USDA will publish a rule later this year that will provide details outlining the connection of conservation compliance with crop insurance premium support. Producers can also contact their local USDA Service Center for information. A listing of service center locations is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/local/.

USDA Farm Service Agency Reminds Producers:

Farm Bill Allows Early Termination for Certain CRP Contracts

USDA Farm Service Agency reminds producers that as of Aug. 6, producers with acres under contract through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) can apply for early contract termination, as required by the 2014 Farm Bill. The deadline to request early CRP contract termination is Jan. 30, 2015.

The effective date for early termination is no earlier than October 1, 2014. The CRP contract must be in effect for at least five years and other conditions must be met. The 2014 Farm Bill identifies 10 exceptions whereby land will not be eligible for the early-out provisions. For a complete list of these exceptions, please view the program fact sheet online at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp_opt_out_fact_sht.pdf

Once a CRP contract termination request is approved by the FSA County Committee, the decision cannot be reversed and the contract cannot be reinstated. Producers must meet conservation compliance provisions for all land that will be returned to production.

For more information on or to determine eligibility for early termination of existing CRP contracts, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Livestock Producers Urged to Enroll in Disaster Assistance Program by Oct. 1

Producers who have suffered eligible disaster-related losses are encouraged to act to secure assistance by Sept. 30, 2014, as congressionally mandated payment reductions will take place for producers who have not acted before that date. Livestock producers that have experienced grazing losses since October 2011 and may be eligible for benefits but have not yet contacted their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office should do so as soon as possible.

The Budget Control Act passed by Congress in 2011 requires USDA to implement reductions of 7.3 percent to the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) in the new fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, 2014. However, producers seeking LFP support who have scheduled appointments with their local FSA office before Oct. 1, even if the appointment occurs after Oct.1, will not see reductions in the amount of disaster relief they receive.

USDA is encouraging producers to register, request an appointment or begin a Livestock Forage Disaster Program application with their county FSA office before Oct. 1, 2014, to lock in the current zero percent sequestration rate. As an additional aid to qualified producers applying for LFP, the Farm Service's Agency has developed an online registration that enables farmers and ranchers to put their names on an electronic list before the deadline to avoid reductions in their disaster assistance. This is an alternative to visiting or contacting the county office. To place a name on the Livestock Forage Disaster Program list online, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster-register>.

Producers who already contacted the county office and have an appointment scheduled need do nothing more.

The Livestock Indemnity Program, the Tree Assistance Program and the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program Frost Freeze payments will also be cut by 7.3 percent on Oct. 1, 2014. Unlike the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, applications for these programs must be fully completed by Sept. 30. FSA offices will prioritize these applications, but as the full application process can take several days or more to complete, producers are encouraged to begin the application process as soon as possible.

The Livestock Forage Disaster Program compensates eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire between Oct. 1, 2011 and Dec. 31, 2014. Eligible livestock includes alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland. Producers forced to liquidate their livestock may also be eligible for program benefits.

Additionally, the 2014 Farm Bill eliminated the risk management purchase requirement. Livestock producers are no longer required to purchase coverage under the federal crop insurance program or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program to be eligible for Livestock Forage Disaster Program assistance.

To learn more about USDA disaster relief program, producers can review the 2014 Farm Bill fact sheet at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill, the LFP program fact sheet, <http://go.usa.gov/5JTk>, or contact their local FSA office.

USDA Announces New Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Department Implementing New Farm Bill Programs, Unveiling New Centralized Online Resource to Support Next Generation of Farmers.

USDA has announced the implementation of new Farm Bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA also unveiled www.USDA.gov/newfarmers, a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

USDA's www.usda.gov/newfarmers has in depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.

Today's policy announcements in support of beginning farmers and ranchers include:

Waiving service fees for new and beginning farmers or ranchers to enroll in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the 2014 crop year. NAP provides risk management tools to farmers who grow crops for which there is no crop insurance product. Under this waiver, announced via an official notice to Farm Service Agency offices, farmers and ranchers whom already enrolled in NAP for the 2014 crop year and certified to being a beginning farmer or social disadvantaged farmer are eligible for a service fee refund.

Eliminating payment reductions under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans. Previously, farmers and ranchers grazing on CRP land were subject to a reduction in CRP payments of up to 25 percent. Waiving these reductions for new and beginning farmers will provide extra financial support during times of emergency like drought and other natural disasters.

Increasing payment rates to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). Under this provision, beginning farmers can claim up 90 percent of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a fifty percent increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

In the near future, USDA will also announce additional crop insurance program changes for beginning farmers and ranchers – including discounted premiums, waiver of administrative fees, and other benefits.

Additional information about USDA actions in support of beginning farmers and ranchers is available [here](#).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).