

February 2015



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## Washington FSA Newsletter

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### Washington Farm Service Agency

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### Deadline Nears for Updating Bases and Yields

Landowners and producers who wish to update your bases and yields should make appointments to visit your [county FSA office](#), if you have not already done so. The 2014 Farm Bill allows the rare opportunity to update bases and yields for commodity crops. The deadline is February 27, 2015. FSA offices expect to be busy as the deadline nears.

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### New Restrictions Placed on Returning CRP Land to Production

As part of implementing the new Farm Bill, FSA has placed new restrictions on returning land to production when the contract expires. In short, no cover destruction is permitted until after July 1, and if the cover is destroyed, the last annual payment on the contract will be eliminated from

Mike Mykines, Loans

Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions specific to your operation or county.

the date of cover destruction through Sept. 30.

In the past, producers who were going to plant a fall crop shortly after expiration of the contract could start seedbed preparation as early as May 1, and only lose up to 2 months of rental payments. That option is no longer available.

Under the new provisions, cover destruction cannot begin until after July 1 whether the land will be planted to a fall or spring planted crop. No cover destruction is permitted prior to that. If the cover is destroyed July 2-Sept. 30, the contract payment will be eliminated from the date cover destruction commences through Sept. 30. Burning in the last year of the contract is also not permitted until after July 1.

Early land preparation is generally limited to general CRP practices, and prior approval by FSA is required before cover destruction begins.

The only exception to these new provisions is for producers who signed up for the 2015 CRP “early out,” the one-time opportunity provided in the Farm Bill to exit CRP before the contract expires. Producers who signed up for the CRP early out can begin cover destruction after the effective date of their contract termination. Signup for the early out ended on Jan. 30.

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## Enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program

An announcement on whether there will be a general CRP signup this year is not expected until late spring or early summer. Continuous CRP (CCRP) and CREP enrollment is available now. In addition to enrollment in the many CCRP practices available, such as grass filter strips, grass water ways, contour buffer strips, riparian buffers, field windbreaks, and others, a few other practices are now available.

Producers may enroll land in “field borders” that allow a 30’-120’ grass strip around a field. There is also the Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI) which allows enrollment of the most erosive land. All or portions of a field may be enrolled if they qualify. Enrollment is limited to land not currently in CRP. Enrollment of land in a wildlife cover is allowed in certain State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) projects in portions of

Adams, Benton, Franklin, Grant, Lincoln and Whitman counties. Pollinator habitat plantings are also available under the CCRP, and no size restrictions apply.

A new CRP provision allows producers with irrigation center pivots to enroll pivot corners in CRP even when the corners are disconnected. Previously, the corners had to be connected by a grass strip.

For all of the CCRP practices mentioned above except HELI, producers qualify for a \$100/ac signing incentive payment (SIP) and an effective 90% cost share rate (PIP) for cover establishment.

The CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP) program pays retiring farmers with CRP contracts an additional two years of CRP payments as incentive to sell or lease CRP land to a beginning or traditionally underserved farmer who returns the land to sustainable grazing or cropping operations. The CRP TIP now includes eligibility for military veterans who farm.

For more information about CRP provisions or signup [county FSA office](#).

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## **Marketing Assistance Loans and LDPs Still Available**

Short-term financing is available by obtaining low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month marketing assistance loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing. The crop may be stored on the farm or in the warehouse.

You may choose a loan deficiency payments (LDP) in lieu of a loan. The LDP payment amount is determined by comparing the posted county price (PCP) for a commodity to the county loan rate for that commodity in the county. If the PCP is less than the county loan rate, you may file for a payment of the difference between the two prices on the date of application, or the date beneficial interest is lost. You must have beneficial interest when applying for an LDP.

Loans and LDPs are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the

crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, you are ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest. The 2014 Farm Bill included the provision that producers or legal entities whose adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds \$900,000 are not eligible for LDPs.

The deadline to apply for a marketing assistance loan or a loan deficiency payment for barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, wheat, or sesame seed crops harvested in 2014 is March 31, 2015. The deadline to apply for marketing assistance loans or LDPs for corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seeds is June 1, 2015.

For more information or to apply for a marketing assistance loan or LDP, contact your [county FSA office](#).

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## FSA - Lender of First Opportunity

The Farm Service Agency offers farm loan assistance to farmers and ranchers who have the experience and desire to own and operate their own farm or ranch, but who don't yet meet the qualifications to obtain financing from a traditional lender. FSA makes both direct and guaranteed loans. The current loan limit for a direct loan is \$300,000 and for a guaranteed loan the limit is \$1,392,000 (Amount adjusted annually for inflation).

FSA has a variety of loans, including Microloans, Farm Ownership, Farm Operating, Emergency and Youth loans.

- FSA offers farmers and ranchers the following:
- Agricultural loans at lower interest rates and longer repayment terms. [Link](#) to current rates.
- Individualized financial planning and expertise.
- A wide range of financial products and services to meet your needs.
- Experienced loan officers familiar with cashflow lending.

To find out more about FSA's lending programs, contact your [county FSA office](#) or view FSA's farm loan [webpages](#).

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## The Farm Service Agency is Hiring!

After years of a hiring freeze and declining staff due to attrition, the Farm Service Agency is hiring in Washington state. FSA is looking for qualified applicants who are interested in living in rural communities and assisting farmers and ranchers. As vacancies arise, they are posted on the [USAJobs](#) website.

Or contact Mitzi Stephens at the FSA State Office at [mitzi.stephens@wa.usda.gov](mailto:mitzi.stephens@wa.usda.gov) or (509) 323-3007.

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## Important Dates and Deadlines

- **Feb. 27, 2015** – Deadline to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- **March 16, 2015** - Deadline to purchase 2015 crop year Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for beet seed or fresh, buckwheat, camelina, carrots fresh or processing, mustard, radish for seed or fresh, small grain forages (wheat, barley, oats, peas), and other spring planted crops.
- **March 31, 2015** – Deadline to make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- **March 31, 2015** - Deadline to request a commodity marketing assistance loan (MAL) or loan deficiency payment (LDP) for harvested crops of barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, wheat, or sesame seed crop.
- **Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015** – Sign ARC and PLC contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- **June 1, 2015** - Deadline to request a commodity marketing assistance loan (MAL) or loan deficiency payment (LDP) for 2014 harvested crops of corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seeds.

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