

December 2014



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Wisconsin State FSA Newsletter

Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

8030 Excelsior Drive
Suite 100
Madison, WI 53717

www.fsa.usda.gov/wi

State Committee:

Bill Averbeck - Chair
Patty Edelburg
George Huber

State Executive Director:

Brad Pfaff

Division Chiefs:

Russ Raeder
Farm Programs

Andy Halada (acting)
Farm Loan Programs

Warren Hansen
Administrative Officer

From the Desk of FSA's State Director

Hello - Wisconsin FSA is busy implementing the 2014 Farm Bill. This month's electronic newsletter provides you with an update on farm bill programs and signup dates. Over the next few months, local FSA offices throughout the state will be hosting information meeting(s) regarding the new farm bill programs. For the dates and times of these county meetings, please review the following article.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Wisconsin agriculture.

Best wishes to you and your family during the Holiday season.

Brad Pfaff

Producers Invited to Attend Farm Bill Meetings Being Held Throughout WI

FSA Offices across the State are holding joint informational meetings with UW-Extension on the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Programs (PLC) safety net programs which were enacted by the 2014 Farm Bill. It is suggested that you try to make one of these meetings to find out from UW-Extension which of the program options will work best for your individual operation(s).

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

A list of all meetings that are being held across the State is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/wi . We update the "WISCONSIN FARM BILL INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS" link on a weekly basis and you can view the scheduled meetings by location or date.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in the meeting/event/function should contact the FSA County Executive Director for the County in which the meeting is scheduled or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 by no later than three days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Coverage Selection for New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs is Underway

Producers Have Until March 31, 2015, to Choose the Program Best for Their Operation

Farm owners and producers are reminded that the opportunity to choose between the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) continues through March 31, 2015. The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

USDA helped create online tools to assist in the decision process, allowing farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc, from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Covered commodities include barley, corn, grain sorghum, oats, dry peas, soybeans, sunflower seed, wheat and others.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

- Now through February 27, 2015: Farm owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- Now through March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015: Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- October 2015: Payments issued for 2014 crop year, if earned.

To learn more about which safety net options are most appropriate for specific farming operations, farmers can use new Web tools at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc, which can be accessed from the convenience of a home computer or a mobile device at any time. To learn more about upcoming educational meetings, farmers can contact their local Farm Service Agency county office at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

USDA Extends Application Deadline for Dairy Margin Protection Program to December 19th

Dairy producers urged to act now to protect their businesses against unpredictable market swings and take advantage of increased protections offered in first year of program.

The application deadline for the dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP) has been extended until December 19, 2014. The program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, protects participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below levels of protection selected by the applicant.

For just \$100, a farmer can cover 90 percent of their established production history at a \$4 margin, and with affordable incremental premiums, dairy farmers can cover up to \$8 margin swings. Those who apply this year will receive a slight increase in production protection that will not be available in the future. Farmers who do not sign up for the Margin Protection Program for 2015 will forfeit this 1 percent base production increase.

Producers can use the online Web resource at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. They can type in specific operation data and explore price projections and market scenarios to determine what level of coverage is best for them. The online resource is on a secure website that can be accessed from computers, mobile phones or tablets, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Farmers also have a chance to share comments and help shape the Margin Protection Program for the future. Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the extension of the opportunity for public comments on both the Margin Protection Program and the Dairy Product Donation Program until December 15, 2014. Comments can be submitted to USDA via the [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) website at <http://go.usa.gov/GJSA> or send them by mail to: Danielle Cooke, Special Programs Manager, Price Support Division, FSA, USDA, STOP 0512, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-0512.

To learn more about the Margin Protection Program for dairy, contact your local USDA Farm Service Agency county office at offices.usda.gov or visit us on the Web at www.fsa.usda.gov/wi

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

The 2014 Farm Bill implements a change that requires farmers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file at the local FSA Office.

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 certification form must be on file with the FSA. The Risk Management Agency (RMA), through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers.

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 most financial assistance such as the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans and most programs implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs implemented by NRCS.

Many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) programs already have implemented this requirement and therefore most producers should already have an AD-1026 form on file for their associated lands. If an AD-1026 form has not been filed or is incomplete then farmers are reminded of the deadline of June 1, 2015.

When a farmer completes and submits the AD-1026 certification form, FSA and NRCS staff will review the associated farm records and outline any additional actions that may be required to meet the required compliance with the conservation compliance provisions.

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 <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa/>.

2015 Acreage Reporting Dates

The deadline to report 2015 crops to FSA that had a November 15, 2014 reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee has been extended for producers who **do not** have federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) coverage on a crop. . Crops under this waiver include alfalfa, perennial forages, wheat, fall-seeded small grains and pasture. The late-filed report can be accepted as long as FSA can confirm the existence of the crop. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops. Late-fees will be charged by FSA for producers who have loss coverage on the above listed crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to contact our office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following are upcoming applicable acreage reporting dates:

January 2, 2015: Honey
February 2, 2015: Maple Sap
July 15, 2015: All other spring seeded 2015 crops

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to our office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before harvesting of the crop begins.

Late filed acreage reports can be accepted after the aforementioned dates, however a late-filing fee will be assessed. At a minimum, this fee amounts to at least \$46.00 per FSA established farm number.

For questions regarding acreage reporting please contact the local FSA office.

Farm Bill Allows Early Termination for Certain CRP Contracts

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

This is a unique opportunity to request early termination afforded by the 2014 Farm Bill. The requesting CRP contract must have been in effect for at least five years and additional eligibility conditions must be met to qualify. The 2014 Farm Bill identifies a list of 10 exceptions whereby land will not be eligible for the early termination 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 may not be reversed and the terminated contract will not be reinstated. Once the land is no longer considered under the CRP contract all participants must meet HEL/WC and other conservation compliance provisions for all associated lands.

For more information or to verify eligibility for early termination (opt-out) for 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 Disaster Assistance Sign-up Underway

These livestock disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after October 1, 2011.

Eligible producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP): LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation by January 30, 2015. 33 counties in Wisconsin are eligible for LFP in 2012. No counties in Wisconsin met the drought eligibility conditions required for the program in 2013 or 2014.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP): LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Producers who suffered livestock death losses in calendar year 2014 should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

For calendar year 2015 losses, the notice of loss must be reported by the earlier of: 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent; or 30 calendar days after the end of calendar year which is January 30, 2016 for 2015 losses

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP):

The enrollment deadline for the 2015 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) is November 1, 2015. The deadline for 2012, 2013 and 2014 ELAP has already passed.

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by LFP and LIP. For 2015 program year losses, a notice of loss must be filed by the earlier of; 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the participant, or November 1, 2015. An application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2015.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Sign-up Continues

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters that occurred on or after October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014, can sign up for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) by no later than January 31, 2015. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of normal mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

For losses that occur on or after January 1, 2015 producers must provide an application and supporting documentation to FSA within 90 calendar days of each disaster event or date when the loss of trees, bushes, or vines is apparent to the producer.

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:

- Has operated a farm for not 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
- 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 www.fsa.usda.gov.

Loans for the Underserved

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for underserved applicants.

An underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Dates to Remember

December 19th - Deadline to enroll for coverage in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers for 2014 and/or 2015

December 25th-26th - Offices closed in observance of Christmas Holiday

December 31 - Deadline to late-file a 2014 acreage report

January 1st - Offices closed in observance of the New Year Holiday

January 2nd - Deadline to timely file 2015 acreage report and colony inventory for honey

January 19th - Offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 30th - Deadline to apply for assistance from the LIP program for eligible livestock losses from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014

January 30th - Deadline to apply for assistance in eligible counties for the 2012 Livestock Forage Disaster Program

January 30th - Deadline to request early termination for certain CRP contacts

January 31st - Deadline to apply for assistance from the TAP program for eligible tree losses from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014

February 2nd - Deadline to timely file 2015 acreage report for maple sap

February 16th - Offices closed in observance of Presidents Day

February 27th - Deadline for ARC/PLC base reallocations and/or yield updates on an FSA farm number basis

March 16th - Deadline to apply for 2015 NAP coverage on spring planted crops

March 31st - Deadline for ARC or PLC election on an FSA farm number basis

Ongoing - Continuous Conservation Reserve program enrollment
Farm Storage Facility Loan program applications

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).