

October 2014



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### Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

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### Comments from the State Director, Brad Pfaff

Fall is here; the leaves have turned color and are falling from the trees. The weather in September and October has allowed our state's farmers to get a good start on their fall harvest.

We at FSA are busy implementing the new farm bill. Meetings have or will be held regarding the new Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP), Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. For those producers that are doing fall seeding, please do not forget to contact your local FSA office and report your fall seeded and perennial crop acreage by November 17th.

This month's electronic newsletter provides you with a greater understanding of the various FSA programs that may be of interest and assistance to you.

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**QUESTIONS?** Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county. [Click here](#) for contact information.

## Key Dates for New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs

USDA announced key dates for farm owners and producers to keep in mind regarding the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). 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.

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

- Until February 27, 2015: Land owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- November 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election of either ARC or 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 for 2014 crop year, if needed.

County offices are holding Farm Bill informational meetings throughout the state to share information and answer questions on the ARC and PLC programs. **A listing of local FSA informational meetings is posted on the WI FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi). This document is updated weekly as more meetings are planned throughout the state.**

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. The new tools are now available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc). Farm owners and producers can access the online resources from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, dry peas, rapeseed, safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Producers can contact their local FSA office for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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## Report Perennial Forages and Fall Seeded Crops to FSA by November 17th

Producers are reminded of the requirement to report their perennial forages and fall seeded crops by November 17, 2014 to their local FSA county office to meet FSA program eligibility requirements. FSA and the Risk Management Agency (RMA), which oversees the Federal Crop Insurance Program, now have common acreage reporting dates. Due to this, perennial forages and fall seeded small grains for harvest in 2015 must be reported to FSA by November 17, 2014.

Perennial forages include alfalfa, alfalfa grass mixtures, red clover, and others that are intended for harvest in 2015. This also includes pasture acreage and cover crops. Fall seeded small grains include winter wheat, rye and others. Producers who are interested in participating in any 2015 USDA farm programs or just want to keep their acreage history up to date need to report the location, acreage and planting date of the applicable crop.

Producers with crop insurance must also report their applicable forages and fall seeded small grains to their insurance company.

Late-filed provisions may be available to producers who are unable to meet the reporting deadline as required. Filing an acreage report on these crops after the November 17, 2014 deadline will require the payment of a late-filing fee which amounts to a minimum of \$46.00 per FSA established farm number.

Producers should contact their county FSA office immediately to make an appointment to complete perennial forage and fall seeded crop acreage reporting by the November 17th deadline. More information on FSA programs is at [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi).

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## Upcoming Important Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Deadlines

FSA reminds producers interested in participating in the 2015 Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) of the upcoming application deadline dates that must be met for NAP qualification. The NAP program is designed to cover losses caused by damaging weather conditions.

**November 20, 2014:** Application closing date for perennial crops of fruit and other crops such as apples, pears, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, honey, maple sap, asparagus and other perennial crops.

**March 16, 2015:** Application closing date for spring seeded crops.

The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include buy-up protection for 2015. Details regarding the buy up coverage options are still being developed.

Until these buy-up options are available, producers are encouraged to enroll in NAP under the basic coverage, 50 percent of the yield and 55 percent of the established price, by the applicable crop application deadlines. The NAP service fee for this coverage is \$250 per crop per county not to exceed \$750 per producer and not to exceed \$1875 nationally.

A waiver of the basic service fees for NAP coverage is available for limited resource farmers (income determination based on total household income and income from farming, beginning farmers (someone is considered a beginning farmer if they have not operated or not substantially participated in the operation of a farm for more than 10 years) and socially disadvantaged (SDA) farmers (someone is considered socially disadvantaged if they are a member of a group whose members have been subject to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identities as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) Females are considered SDA producers.

In addition, when available, the premiums for buy-up coverage will be reduced by 50 percent for limited resource, beginning farmers and SDA farmers.

Producers interested in NAP are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for additional information or to schedule an appointment to apply for coverage. Visit the Wisconsin FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi) for more details.

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## Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers - November 28th Signup Deadline

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 expired on September 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.

**Signup for the 2014 and/or 2015 MPP-Dairy program continues through November 28, 2014.** An online decision tool is available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool) to assist producers in determining the best coverage levels for their operation. Interested parties should contact the FSA office soon if they have questions or want to schedule an appointment.

County offices are holding Farm Bill informational meetings throughout the state to share information and answer questions on the MPP-Dairy program. **A listing of local FSA informational meetings is posted on the WI FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi). This document is updated weekly as more meetings are planned throughout the state.**

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## 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 required by the 2014 Farm Bill. The deadline to request early CRP contract termination is Jan. 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](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.

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## Livestock Disaster Assistance Sign-up Underway

Livestock disaster program enrollment opened on April 15, 2014. These disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after Oct. 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 should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

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

The enrollment deadline for the 2014 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) is Nov. 1, 2014. The deadline for 2012 and 2013 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 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the Farm Bill webpage at [www.fsa.uds.gov](http://www.fsa.uds.gov). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

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## **Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Sign-up Continues**

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011, can sign up for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters. The TAP signup, for losses that occurred from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014, ends on January 31, 2015.

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 15 percent 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.

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## 2014 Crop Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and LDP Requests

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting requests for marketing assistance loans (MALs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) for eligible 2014 commodities.

MALs and LDPs for the 2014 crop year become available to eligible producers beginning with harvest/shearing season and extending through a specific commodity's final loan availability date.

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, wool, mohair and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

The 2014 Farm Bill also establishes payment limitations per individual or entity not to exceed \$125,000 annually on certain commodities for the following program benefits: price loss coverage payments, agriculture risk coverage payments, marketing loan gains (MLGs) and LDPs. These payment limitations do not apply to MAL loan disbursements.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions were modified by the 2014 Farm Bill, which states that a producer whose total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds \$900,000 is not eligible to receive an MAL or LDP.

National and county loans rates for 2014 crops are posted on the FSA website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).

For more information, please visit your local FSA office or FSA's website [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

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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:

- \* 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 FSA office. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi).

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### Dates to Remember

**November 1st:** Deadline to apply for assistance from the 2014 ELAP program

**November 11th:** Offices closed in observance of Veteran's Day

**November 17th:** Deadline to timely file 2015 acreage reports on perennial forages and fall-seeded grains

**November 20th** - Deadline to apply for 2015 NAP coverage on perennial crops

**November 27th:** Offices closed in observance of Thanksgiving

**November 28th:** Deadline to enroll for coverage in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers for 2014 and/or 2015

**December 1st:** Deadline for completed County Committee election ballots to be returned or postmarked

**December 25th:** Offices closed in observance of Christmas

**January 1st:** Offices closed in observance of the New Year

**January 19th:** Offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King 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 contracts

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

**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

**March 31st:** Deadline to obtain a Marketing Assistance Loan or LDP on stored 2014 small grain crops or honey

### Ongoing:

- Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enrollment
- Farm Storage Facility Loan program applications
- Farm Loan program applications

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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).