

November 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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A Message from the State Executive Director

Thanksgiving is just around the corner and with it brings a time when we reflect on what we are truly thankful for. As you sit down with your friends and family this Thanksgiving, what will you be thankful for? I am truly thankful for being a part of this agency, and for being on a team that provides programs and loan assistance to support Ohio farmers.

Once you get a break in your farm activities, please take a moment to consider whether you have business that needs to be addressed with your [FSA County office](#). We have a great deal of activity going on in our county offices, including:

Sign-up is ongoing through Dec. 6 for the 2019 Market Facilitation Program. Make an appointment today to take care of this, if you haven't already done so. [Secretary Perdue's announcement Friday of the 2nd tranche of MFP payments](#) will begin the week before Thanksgiving. Producers of MFP-eligible commodities will now be eligible to receive 25% of the total payment expected, in addition to the 50% they have already received from the [2019 MFP](#).

**Production Adjustment,
Compliance and Risk
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Matt Kleski

State Committee Members:
Trish Levering, Chair
Ronnie Clifton
Daryl Knipp
Chase Powell
Joe Steiner

Visit the Ohio FSA website for
additional information at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

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

[Current FSA Farm Loan
Interest Rates](#)

[Current Commodity Credit
Corporation \(CCC\) Interest
Rates](#)

Please call ahead to your [FSA County office](#) and schedule an appointment before stopping in. It helps us prepare for your visit, so you can complete your FSA business and be on your way.

I just want to remind everyone to be safe as you work to bring in the harvest and complete other fall chores ahead of the winter months.

Respectfully,

Leonard Hubert

Payments are going out for the 2018 crop year for those enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net programs.

Speaking of ARC and PLC, both programs were reauthorized under the 2018 Farm Bill, and sign up for the 2019 and 2020 crop years is ongoing in our offices. If you already know into which program you would like to enroll your farm(s), please make an appointment to stop in and complete the paperwork.

If you would like to learn more about these options, the FSA and the Ohio State Extension Service are hosting several ARC/PLC education meetings across the state over the next coming months. These meetings are designed to help you understand the changes in ARC/PLC from the 2014 Farm Bill to 2018 Farm Bill and learn how to use tools available to aid in your decision-making process. [Here's a link to Ohio FSA's Farm Bill Meeting scheduled throughout Ohio](#). Additional information on these meetings are provided in the article below.

This week, our staff from NRCS and FSA will jointly meet and learn about the conservation programs changes in the 2018 Farm Bill. FSA is still planning a CRP general signup in December 2019, with a CRP Grasslands signup to follow. Additional conservation details should be available soon.

Ohio FSA and OSU Extension Service to Host Farm Bill Educational Meetings

The Ohio State University Extension Service and FSA County offices are planning a series of 2018 Farm Bill education meetings across the state. All producers are invited to attend these informational meetings, which are designed to provide important information to assist producers as they begin to make farm-bill related program decisions. The 2018 Farm Bill, signed into law last December, reauthorized the existing Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net programs that were in the 2014 Farm Bill, however producers will need to make new program enrollment decisions over the coming months.

More information on these meetings can be found online at Ohio FSA's website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Ohio/state-events/index> or the Ohio State Extension Service website: <https://aede.osu.edu/research/osu-farm-management/2018-farm-bill/county-meetings> . The

meetings are scheduled from November to early February in advance of the coming ARC/PLC enrollment deadlines in 2020.

There also are resources available online that can educate producers in their ARC/PLC decision-making process. Links to these resources are available from FSA at https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc_program/index.

FSA Reminds Producers of Approaching NAP Deadlines for 2020 Crops

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FSA reminds producers who are interested in the 2020 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), of the need to apply for coverage by the following crop deadline dates.

- **November 20, 2019** is the deadline for 2020 NAP coverage on apples, asparagus, blueberries, caneberrries, cherries, chestnuts, forage for hay and pasture, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, honey, maple sap and hops. NOTE: Hops is a perennial crop and the application deadline moved from spring to fall for coverage.
- **March 15, 2020** is the deadline for 2020 NAP coverage on forage sorghum, oats, potatoes, Soybeans, Sunflowers and all spring planted specialty crops grown for food.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. For all coverage levels, the new NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. These amounts reflect a \$75 service fee increase for crop, county or multi-county coverage. Eligible producers can apply for 2020 NAP coverage at their local FSA Office using form CCC-471, Application for Coverage.

To help producers learn more about the NAP program and how it can help them, USDA, offers an online Web tool at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap. The webtool allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage and gives producers an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

The 2018 Farm Bill NAP amendments specify that qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are now eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification*.”

For a NAP application, eligibility and related program information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, view the [NAP factsheet](#) or contact our [County FSA office](#).

Market Facilitation Program Signup Ends Dec. 6, 2019

Signup continues for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program to assist farmers who continue to suffer from damages because of unjustified trade retaliation from foreign nations. Through MFP, USDA will provide up to \$14.5 billion in direct payments to impacted producers, part of a broader trade relief package announced in late July. **The sign-up period runs through Dec. 6.**

MFP payments will be made to producers of certain non-specialty and specialty crops as well as dairy and hog producers.

Non-Specialty Crops

MFP payments will be made to producers of alfalfa hay, barley, canola, corn, crambe, dried beans, dry peas, extra-long staple cotton, flaxseed, lentils, long grain and medium grain rice, millet, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, rye, safflower, sesame seed, small and large chickpeas, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, temperate japonica rice, triticale, upland cotton, and wheat.

MFP assistance for 2019 crops is based on a single county payment rate multiplied by a farm's total plantings to the MFP-eligible crops in aggregate in 2019. Those per acre payments are not dependent on which of those crops are planted in 2019. A producer's total payment-eligible plantings cannot exceed total 2018 plantings. [View payment rates by county.](#)

Dairy and Hogs

Dairy producers who were in business as of June 1, 2019, will receive a per hundredweight payment on production history, and hog producers will receive a payment based on the number of live hogs owned on a day selected by the producer between April 1 and May 15, 2019.

Specialty Crops

MFP payments will also be made to producers of almonds, cranberries, cultivated ginseng, fresh grapes, fresh sweet cherries, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts. Each specialty crop will receive a payment based on 2019 acres of fruit or nut bearing plants, or in the case of ginseng, based on harvested acres in 2019.

More Information

The second of up to three tranches of MFP payments was authorized. The third tranche will be evaluated as market conditions and trade opportunities dictate. If conditions warrant, the third tranche will be made in January 2020. The first tranche was comprised of the higher of either 50 percent of a producer's calculated payment or \$15 per acre, which may reduce potential payments to be made in tranche three. USDA will begin making the second tranche payments the week before Thanksgiving.

MFP payments are limited to a combined \$250,000 for non-specialty crops per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined \$250,000 for dairy and hog producers and a combined \$250,000 for specialty crop producers. However, no applicant can receive more than \$500,000. Eligible applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) for tax years 2015, 2016, and 2017 of less than \$900,000, or 75 percent of the person's or legal entity's average AGI for those tax years must have been derived from farming and ranching. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

More information can be found on farmers.gov/mfp, including payment information and a program application.

FSA Offers Safety Net Programs for Honeybee Producers

FSA administers two programs that have specific safety net benefits for producers of honeybees and honey. The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) assist producers when disasters impact honey production or damage or destroy colonies, hives or honeybee feed.

NAP is designed to reduce financial losses when natural disasters result in lower yields or crop losses, including honey. NAP coverage is equivalent to catastrophic insurance, meaning it covers up to 50 percent of a producer's normal yield (must have at least a 50 percent loss) at 55 percent of the average market price. The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind, hurricanes, earthquake, flood, and conditions related to damaging weather such as excessive heat, plant disease, volcanic smog or insect infestation.

Producers must apply for NAP coverage by Nov. 20 prior to the year for which they are seeking coverage.

ELAP covers colony losses, hive losses and the loss of purchased feed intended for honeybees. For colony losses, producers must have losses in excess of normal mortality (normal mortality is 22 percent) as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition. For hive losses, the hive must have been damaged or destroyed as a result of an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition. Eligible adverse weather or loss conditions include Colony Collapse Disorder (for colony losses only), earthquake, eligible winter storm (colony loss only), excessive wind, flood, hurricane, lightning, tornado, volcanic eruption and wildfire. For purchased feed, the program covers feed purchased above normal quantities to sustain bees during an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition. Under ELAP the producer must provide documentation that best management practices are being followed.

Both the NAP and ELAP programs require producers to report the number of colonies they have in production to FSA by Jan. 2, 2020. Honeybee producers must notify FSA within 30 calendar days of changes in the total number of colonies or when honeybees are moved to another county.

For ELAP, producers must notify FSA within 30 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent. Producers with NAP coverage must file a *Notice of Loss* within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

To learn more about programs for honey and honeybee producers, contact your [County FSA office](#).

USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

Dates to Remember

Nov. 20 --- Last day to apply for coverage for asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, chestnuts, forage for hay and pasture, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, honey, hops and maple syrup.

Nov. 28 --- Thanksgiving Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.

Dec. 2 ----- Last day to return voted Ballots in county committee election.

Dec. 6 ---- Deadline to sign up for the 2019 [Market Facilitation Program \(MFP\)](#).

Dec. 13 --- Election period deadline for 2020 [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) Program.

Dec. 15 --- Deadline to report the 2020 Fall Seeded Crops for fall barley, fall wheat and all other fall-seeded small grains.

Dec. 25 ---- Christmas Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).