

April 2017



Farm Service Agency

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## NEWSLETTER



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## South Carolina Farm Service Agency April Newsletter

### South Carolina Farm Service Agency

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[www.fsa.usda.gov/sc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sc)

#### State Committee:

Robert Battle, Chairperson  
Warren Dixon  
Mary Frances Koon  
Don Sharp  
Tom Trantham

### Earth Day and Every Day, American Farmers and Ranchers are Stewards of the Earth

Farmers and ranchers are stewards of the Earth. Understanding the fragility of the land, agricultural producers want to sustain and protect the land they operate on to ensure its availability generations to come.

According to the 2012 Agriculture Census, there are 3.2 million farmers and ranchers in the United States. These producers are always looking for new and sustainable ways to operate to help preserve our natural resources.

**Acting State Executive Director:**

W. Jack Nettles

**Administrative Officer:**

Toni Turner

**Farm Programs Chief:**

Amy Turner

**Acting Farm Loan**

**Programs Chief:**

Larry Rogers

Producers can contact their [local FSA Office](#) for more information or to schedule an appointment.

**Important Dates and**

**Deadlines:**

**May 15:** Acreage

Reporting Deadline for Tomatoes (planted 3/15 - 4/30).

**May 29:** Offices Closed for Memorial Day

Through their voluntary participation in the various conservation programs the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) oversees, farmers and ranchers help protect drinking water, reduce soil erosion, and help preserve and restore wildlife habitats, forests and wetlands. Thanks to American agricultural producers, there are currently more than 23 million acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.

As we recognize Earth Day on April 22, we thank our farmers and ranchers for caring for the land, and ensuring the air we breathe and the water we drink is safe and clean.

For more information on FSA conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

W. Jack Nettles

Acting State Executive Director

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## **Census of Agriculture Countdown Begins for America's Farmers and Ranchers**

America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them.

The Census of Agriculture highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and other topics. The 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that over three million farmers operated more than two million farms, spanning over 914 million acres. This was a four percent decrease in the number of U.S. farms from the previous census in 2007. However, agriculture sales, income, and expenses increased between 2007 and 2012. This telling information and thousands of other agriculture statistics are a direct result of responses to the Census of Agriculture.

Producers who are new to farming or did not receive a Census of Agriculture in 2012 still have time to sign up to receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture report form by visiting [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) and clicking on the 'Make Sure You Are Counted' button through June. NASS defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

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## Enrollment Period for 2017 Safety Net Coverage Continues Through Aug. 1

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit their local FSA office to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Baled Hay and the Imported Fire Ant

If you buy, sell, or produce baled hay, check out USDA's new factsheet titled "Questions and Answers: Moving Baled Hay From Areas Under Quarantine for Imported Fire Ant." This publication contains useful information for farmers, ranchers, hay growers, and suppliers as they respond to recent wildfires in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Its goal is to help support commerce and the movement of hay, while guarding against the further spread of the imported fire ant. Click [here](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/baled-hay) to open the factsheet. The Web address is <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/baled-hay>.

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## Report Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for 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. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2017, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2017, and no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event or attack. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.0% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 4.0%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2017 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent
- An application for payment by March 31, 2018.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Filing a Notice of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

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

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed that was purchased or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for the **producer's** eligible livestock.

In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled; forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office **within 30 calendar days** of when the loss is apparent.

ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to floodwaters.

For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds and tornadoes.

Additional Information about ELAP is available at your local FSA office or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan

application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation;
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses;
- The development of problem situations;
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security.

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

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## USDA NRCS Offers Renewal Options for Expiring Conservation Stewardship Program Contracts

*NRCS is accepting applications for agricultural producers wanting to renew existing Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts.*

Participants with existing CSP contracts that will expire on Dec. 31 can access the benefits of the recent program changes through an option to renew their contracts for an additional five years if they agree to adopt additional activities to achieve higher levels of conservation on their lands. **Applications to renew expiring contracts are due by May 5.**

NRCS made several updates to the popular program last fall to help producers improve the health and productivity of working lands.

Through CSP, agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, buffer strips, pollinator and beneficial insect habitat, and soil health building activities – all while maintaining active agricultural production on their land. Benefits to producers can include:

- Improved cattle gains per acre;
- Increased crop yields;
- Decreased inputs;
- Wildlife population improvements; and
- Better resilience to weather extremes.

Producers interested in contract renewals or applying for CSP for the first time should visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp) or contact their local [USDA service center](#) to learn more.

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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).