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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Kansas FSA March Newsletter

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Dates to Remember

March 22-24 - [3i Show](#) (Dodge City)
March 27-29 - [Mid America Farm Expo](#) (Salina)
March 31 - Deadline to request 2017 Crop Marketing Assistance Loans/Loan Deficiency Payments
March 31 - Deadline to apply for 2017 LIP (Livestock Indemnity Program) payments (see article below)
April 4-6 - [Great Bend Farm and Ranch Expo](#)
April 15 - CRP primary nesting period begins (see article below)

Musings from the Desk

An eye to the sky, is a term we start to hear as we get closer to the spring season, and of course as the lack of moisture continues to dominate our concerns. The most recent drought map now has D4 level starting to enter the southern regions of our state, and the dryness has also triggered our Livestock Forage Program in areas as well. In the attitude of following Secretary Perdue's vision of 'do

To find your local FSA county office, check <http://offices.usda.gov>

Need more info about a specific program? Read FSA program fact sheets [here](#), or watch recorded webinars [here](#).

Click [here](#) for current interest rates on various farm loans.

Sign up for important text message alerts from your local county FSA office!

Text kyourcounty (ex: ksriley) to 372669. You will receive a subscription confirmation text.

right, and feed everyone', the Kansas FSA State Committee has approved emergency haying and grazing of CRP when requested by our counties in order to 'do right' and help our producers deal with the drought conditions.

I also want to share that I have been able to get away from the office and visit all of our county FSA offices in District 4 in southeast Kansas. It was great to be able meet the people serving our producers. I was also able to attend our county committee orientation meetings and meet the producers who are now new members serving on the committees.

Well, it looks like we have some chances of rain in the forecast for a large part of the state. I hope we get the much needed moisture, and that the rains will continue throughout the growing season!

Thank you for growing the food, fiber, and fuel that you do, and keep on keepin' on!

--David Schemm

National Agriculture Day, March 20, Celebrates American Food and Fiber Production

March 20 is National Agriculture Day, a day designated each year by the [Agriculture Council of America \(ACA\)](#) to celebrate the accomplishments of agriculture. Kansas [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) joins the council in recognizing farmers, ranchers and foresters for their contributions to the nation's outstanding quality of life.

This year's theme, **Agriculture: Food for Life**, spotlights the hard work of American producers who diligently work to provide food, fiber and more to the United States and countries around the world. To ensure a prosperous future for American agriculture, FSA provides continuous support to agriculturalists across the country.

FSA is rural America's engine for economic growth, job creation and development, offering local service to millions of rural producers. In fiscal year 2017, [USDA Farm Loan programs](#) provided \$6 billion in support to producers across America, the second highest total in FSA history. FSA also distributed \$1.6 billion in [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#) payments to over 375,000 Americans to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.

For agricultural producers who suffered market downturns in 2016, USDA is issuing approximately \$8 billion in payments under the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\) programs](#). USDA also continues to provide extensive assistance in response to natural [disasters](#) throughout the country, including last year's hurricanes in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, drought in the northern high plains, wildfires in the west and central plains, floods, tornados, freezes and other catastrophic weather events.

To support [beginning farmers and ranchers](#), Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue signed a Memorandum of Understanding with officials from [SCORE](#), the nation's largest volunteer network of expert business mentors, to support new and beginning farmers. The agreement provides new help

and resources for beginning ranchers, veterans, women, socially disadvantaged Americans and others, providing new tools to help them both grow and thrive in agribusiness.

CRP Grazing and Harvesting Only Allowed Outside Primary Nesting Season

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants can utilize routine grazing and managed harvesting as outlined in their conservation plan. Managed harvesting and routine grazing are authorized under certain conditions to improve the quality and performance of the CRP cover.

Routine grazing is authorized every other year. Contracts approved prior to July 28, 2010, and still considered managed grazing can only participate in grazing one out of every three years.

Managed harvesting for hay is authorized no more frequently than one in three years.

Under normal conditions, managed haying and routine grazing can be requested at the local FSA office by the landowner or producer on the CRP contract. The same acreage cannot be hayed and grazed.

CRP acres must be considered fully established before haying or grazing can be authorized. In addition, haying or grazing CRP acres is not authorized during the primary nesting season. For Kansas, the primary nesting season is April 15 through July 15. Producer must request approval before haying or grazing the acreage.

For routine grazing, the authorization expires September 30 and all livestock must be **removed within one day of this date**. CRP participants must report the number of acres grazed to FSA by no later than October 10.

Before grazing eligible acreage, CRP participants must request approval and obtain a modified conservation plan to include routine grazing requirements. CRP participants are not permitted to graze any acreage hayed or grazed under managed or emergency provisions. Participants must report the number of acres routine grazed by Oct. 10, 2017.

For haying, the authorization expires August 15 and all hay bales must be **completely removed** from CRP contract acres by no later than September 15. CRP participants must report the number of acres hayed to FSA by no later than August 31. Haying is limited to one cutting.

Routine grazing and managed harvesting will result in an annual rental payment reduction of no less than 25 percent based on the number of acres actually grazed or harvested. Producers who qualify as a beginning farmer or rancher, who are grazing CRP acres, will not be assessed a payment reduction. This waiver only applies to routine grazing.

All hayed and grazed acres are subject to FSA spot-check at any time during or after the authorization period.

It is important to contact your local FSA office prior to any haying or grazing activities on CRP acres to ensure your contract remains in compliance.

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Producers, Including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office.

March 31 Deadline for 2017 Livestock Loss Payment Application

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.

Eligible losses are recorded and compensated by calendar year. Losses due to adverse weather events through December must occur no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the event. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.

Participants must file a complete application for payment and provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days (March 31) 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 = 1.1% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 2.7%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$300,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Offers Wildfire Recovery Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts following wildfires or other qualifying natural disasters.

Available programs and loans include:

- **Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including excessive wind and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2018 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by wildfires, hurricanes, floods, blizzards, tropical storms, tornados, lightning, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.

- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disasters including excessive wind and qualifying drought.
- **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. 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 wildfire and 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. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- **Emergency Loan Program** – available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Presidential or Secretarial disaster designation. These low interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses.
- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.
- **HayNet** - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze. www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet.

For more information on these programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster or contact your local FSA office.

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