



NEBRASKA FSA NEWS



Producers Should Note Program Policy Changes

As we reach late June and head toward the later half of the production season, there is still a great deal of anticipation in the air. The crops and calves have a good start on the growing process, but we've a way to go before everything matures. I hope your season so far has been a good one.

Just like your crops and livestock, the programs implemented by Nebraska FSA continue to grow and change. Over the past several months, we have seen rules changes for both the Livestock Indemnity Program, or LIP as it's commonly

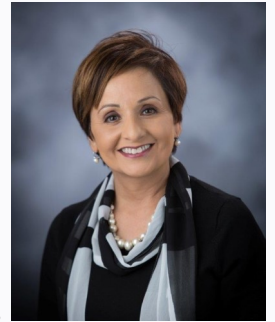
known, and the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program, or NAP. In this edition you'll find information about these important policy changes.

Specifically, the application window for LIP is tightening, while at the same time, your veterinarian now will be able to provide certification for livestock deaths tied to a weather disaster event.

For the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program, if you utilize its coverage on alfalfa, grass or mixed forages, pay special attention to the new policy sales closing dates, as outlined below. They

have moved up by as much as six months, and we don't want you to miss the opportunity to sign up for coverage.

Both LIP and NAP are important safety net programs, and while I hope you never need to use them, it's nice to



Nancy Johnner,
State Executive Director

** See: Policy Change, Page 10*



New Sales Deadline Announced for NAP Coverage for Alfalfa, Forages, Grapes, Aronia Berries

The Nebraska Farm Service Agency (FSA) is announcing new policy sales deadlines for several crops covered through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

NAP provides disaster assistance coverage for crops that are ineligible for federal crop insurance coverage. In Nebraska, this can include crops such as alfalfa, perennial grass forage and grazing crops, honey, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture and turf grass, among others.

Nebraska FSA recently made changes to the policy sales closing dates for several crops for the 2019 season. In some cases,

the policy sales closing deadline is six months earlier than in the past. These new deadlines include:

- Alfalfa and mixed forages, deadline to apply for 2019 coverage: Oct. 1, 2018
- Grass, deadline to apply for 2019 coverage: Nov. 15, 2018
- Aronia berries and grapes, deadline to apply for 2019 coverage: Nov. 20, 2018.

Producers of these crops who wish to have NAP coverage in 2019 must visit their local FSA office prior to the policy sales

** See: NAP Deadline, Page 10*

Summer Edition: June 2018

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For Mailing Address Changes and More Information

For mailing address changes or more specific information about any of the programs listed in this newsletter, your best resource is your local FSA County Office. To find a County Office near you, type offices.usda.gov in your internet browser. To see more information about FSA programming, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Window Closing on Acreage Reporting Deadline

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

For Nebraska, the acreage reporting date for 2018 spring-seeded crops, such as corn and soybeans, is July 16, 2018. Acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) must also be certified to FSA by this date.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting date:

- 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

*Deadline for spring-seeded crops:
July 16*

*Deadline for fall-seeded crops
(for 2019):
Nov. 15*

no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county 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 16.

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

FSA requires that a producer’s report of acreage and specific crop data be provided on a map showing FSA’s field boundaries and acres. In most cases, FSA provides producers with a map of their farming interests representing that crop year.

To ensure an accurate acreage report is filed, producers are reminded to review the map to verify the field boundaries are accurately delineated. Producers should notify FSA of any changes or corrections needed prior to filing the acreage report with FSA.

Conservation Compliance Critical to Maintain Farm Program Eligibility

Agricultural producers and land owners are reminded that conservation compliance is required on annually tilled acres considered to be Highly Erodible Land (HEL) or that fall under Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. A violation of the requirements could put eligibility for federal farm programs and crop insurance premium benefits in jeopardy.

To comply with the HEL and WC provisions, producers must fill out and sign FSA form AD-1026 certifying they will not:

- Plant or produce an agricultural commodity on highly erodible land without following a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)-approved system;
- Plant or produce an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland; or
- Convert a wetland which makes the production of a commodity possible.

In general, producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects, to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria. Actions such as clearing any trees to create new cropland will need to be reviewed. Once form AD-1026 is complete, FSA will work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to complete the process as NRCS is responsible for conducting compliance reviews on HEL in the state.



Landowners should contact their local FSA office prior to any land clearing activities in order to maintain conservation compliance. *Nebraska FSA photo*

NRCS has an outreach effort called “Fix It, Don’t Disc It,” to educate farmers and landowners on a particular conservation compliance issue known as ephemeral gully erosion. Ephemeral gullies are small ditches in fields that occasionally can have concentrated water flow, resulting in soil erosion. Farmers often smooth these areas with a disc, temporarily making the land more farmable so that it can be planted to crops. Such activity, if the erosion continues, could be considered a conservation compliance violation and put a producer’s farm program and crop insurance premium benefits in jeopardy.

NRCS is asking producers to visit its field offices to receive assistance on identifying ephemeral gully erosion. NRCS will work with producers on conservation practices and management options available for repairing the erosion, including no-till, seeding cover crops or installing terraces.

Farmers and land owners with questions regarding how conservation compliance issues could impact farm program benefits and insurance premiums should contact their county FSA office. To learn more about ephemeral gully erosion and the “Fix It, Don’t Disc It” NRCS initiative, producers can visit the NRCS website www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov or stop in at a local NRCS office. To find a local USDA office go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Producers Required to Report Prevented Plant, Failed Crop, Grass Acres

FSA reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for certain programs.

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit and can assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, for reporting purposes.

Producers with certain Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance-covered (NAP-covered) crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or when the loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone.

Producers of NAP-covered crops 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. Contact your county FSA office for details regarding these specific crops.

Producers must timely file a *Notice of Loss* for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

Complete ARC, PLC Sign-up by August 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 2018 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2018.

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 2018 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 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 2018 enrollment period. Signatures for all producers having a share of base acres must be returned by the deadline.

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. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Report Farm Ownership, Operation Changes

It is important to report when changes in farm ownership or operation take place, as a farm reconstitution may be necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

To be effective for the current Fiscal Year (FY), farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the FY** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. A reconstitution is considered to be requested when all of the required signatures are on form FSA-155 and other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or

* See: *Report Changes*, Page 11

Direct, Guaranteed Loans Offer Options

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans also can be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farm or ranch land, enlarge an existing farm or ranch, construct and repair buildings and to make farm or ranch improvements. The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership

and operating loans is \$300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers or ranchers who do not meet the lender's normal under-writing criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee.

FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan.

Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm/ranch ownership and operating purposes. Guaranteed farm ownership loans

can be used to purchase farm or ranch land, construct or repair buildings, develop farm or ranch land to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt. Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$1,399,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

For information on either the direct or guaranteed farm ownership or operating loan options, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

Programs Place Emphasis on Beginners, Underserved, Young Farmers

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 to purchase or improve farms or ranches. There is special programming available for beginners, youth and "underserved," a classification that includes women.

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 any loan assessment and borrower training required by the agency; and
- For farm ownership loan purposes, does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.



FSA youth loans are available to those aged 10 to 20 years of age. The loan must be tied to an agricultural income-producing project. *Nebraska FSA photo*

Underserved Farmer Loans

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

Youth Loans

FSA makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization adviser, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Among the requirements are that the youth must be 10 years to 20 years of age, be unable to get a loan from other sources, and demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance from a project adviser.

Loan Program Provides for Storage, Handling Needs

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum FSFL loan amount is \$500,000 per loan.

Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility or permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 3, 5, 7, 10 or 12 years are available, depending on the amount of the loan. FSFL security requirements have been eased for loans in the amount of \$100,000 and less.

The list of commodities that are included in the FSFL program are: aquaculture, floriculture, fruits (including nuts) and vegetables, corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas, sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass.

The FSFL program includes specific program provisions to make it more accessible to farms of all types and sizes. For example, the purchase of portable storage and handling equipment and trucks is included as eligible items under the loan



program. These items can be new or used.

Other potential uses include conveyers, scales or refrigeration

* See: FSFL, Page 10

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans.

If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written ap-

proval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

To find the nearest FSA office to discuss your proposed project, type <http://offices.usda.gov> in your internet browser and select your state and nearest county.

Resources Available for Producers Under Stress

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.

Farmers and ranchers also can access assistance through other entities in Nebraska that offer services during financially challenging times. The Rural Response Hotline provides referral and support services for farmers, ranchers and rural residents and their families. The number to call is (800) 464-0258.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture manages the Negotiations Program, which offers mediation services for agricultural borrowers, creditors and USDA program participants. Through this program, participants also can access free one-on-one education on agricultural financial and legal matters. For information, call (800) 446-4071.

Timely Livestock Loss Reporting Critical For Assistance Through Indemnity Program

New option allows veterinarian certifications of disaster deaths

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, such as floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates eligible livestock owners and contract growers.

For 2018, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2018, 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.

A recent administrative policy change now allows local FSA county committees to accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable



through good animal husbandry and management. The committees may then use this certification to allow eligibility for producers on a case-by-case basis for LIP.

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 = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 5%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2018 must file both of the following: a notice of loss by the earlier of 30 calendar days of the event or when the loss was apparent; and an application for payment.

For more information on LIP and associated program deadlines, contact your county FSA office.

Tree Assistance Program Offers Aid for Orchardists, Tree Growers

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experience losses from natural disasters should consider the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

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.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 prescribed several changes to the program, including the removal of the \$125,000 per person and legal entity payment limitation. The Act also altered when producers should file applications for any recent losses, given the changes to the program. Eligible producers should file for TAP assistance by the later of these two dates:

- 90 days from the disaster or when damages from the disaster are noticed; or
- 60 days after the regulation is published in the Federal Register (anticipated late this summer).

The following producers can file applications:

- Producers who did not previously apply for TAP for 2017 or 2018 losses; and
- Producers who had applied and received an adverse determination that their 2017 or 2018 TAP application was filed late.

Additionally, producers with 2017 losses also can file an application or revise an original application because of the changes made through the Act.

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, plus an adjustment for normal mortality. 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.

For more information on TAP, and the program changes through the Bipartisan Budget Act, producers should contact their county FSA office.

Price Support/Disaster Programs

Marketing Assistance Available for 2018 Crops

Retaining 'beneficial interest' one requirement for accessing Marketing Assistance Loans, LDPs

Nonrecourse Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) may be available to eligible producers for the 2018 crop year on several crops, including wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, soybeans, other oilseeds (including sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe and sesame seed), dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, graded and non-graded wool, mohair, unshorn pelts, honey and peanuts.

To be eligible for a MAL or LDP, producers must comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements and submit an acreage report to account for all cropland on all farms. Additionally, they must have and retain beneficial interest in the commodity until the MAL is repaid or the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) takes title to the commodity while also meeting Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations.

In addition to producer eligibility, the commodity must have been produced, mechanically harvested, or shorn from live animals by an eligible producer and be in storable condition. It also must be merchantable for food, feed or other uses, as determined by CCC. Nonrecourse MALs must meet specific CCC minimum grade and quality standards.

If beneficial interest in the commodity is lost, the commodity loses eligibility for a MAL or LDP and remains ineligible even if the producer later regains beneficial interest. To retain beneficial interest, the producer must have control and title to the commodity. The producer must be able to make all decisions affecting the commodity including movement, sale and the request for a MAL or LDP. The producer must not have sold or delivered the commodity or warehouse receipt to the buyer.

Producers are responsible for any loss in quantity or quality of commodities pledged as collateral for a farm-stored or warehouse stored loan. CCC will not assume any loss in quantity or quality of the loan collateral regardless of storage location.

The 2014 Farm Bill sets national loan rates. County and regional loan rates are based on each commodity's national loan rate, and they vary by county or region and are based on the average prices and production of the county or region where the commodity is stored.

For all loan-eligible commodities except extra-long staple (ELS) cotton, a producer may repay a MAL any time during the loan period at the lesser of the loan rate plus accrued interest and other charges or an alternative loan repayment rate as determined by CCC.

Producers may obtain MALs or receive LDPs on all or part of their eligible production anytime during the loan availability period. The loan availability period runs from when the commodity is normally harvested (or sheared for wool) until speci-

National loan rates for 2014-2018 crops (per production unit) are as follows:

Commodity	Production Unit	2014-2018
Wheat	bushel	\$2.94
Corn	bushel	\$1.95
Grain Sorghum	bushel	\$1.95
Barley	bushel	\$1.95
Oats	bushel	\$1.39
Upland Cotton	pound	\$0.52
ELS Cotton	pound	\$0.7977
Long Grain Rice	cwt	\$6.50
Medium Grain Rice	cwt	\$6.50
Soybeans	bushel	\$5.00
Other Oilseeds	cwt	\$10.09
Dry Peas	cwt	\$5.40
Lentils	cwt	\$11.28
Small Chickpeas	cwt	\$7.43
Large Chickpeas	cwt	\$11.28
Wool, graded	pound	\$1.15
Wool, nongraded	pound	\$0.40
Mohair	pound	\$4.20
Honey	pound	\$0.69
Peanuts	ton	\$355.00

NOTE: The upland cotton loan rate is subject to change for 2017 and 2018.

fied dates in the following calendar year. The final loan/LDP availability dates for the respective commodities are:

- Jan. 31 - Peanuts, Wool, Mohair and LDP only for Unshorn Pelts
- April 1 - Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Sesame seed and Wheat
- May 31 - Corn, Dry peas, Grain sorghum, Lentils, Mustard seed, Long grain rice, Medium grain rice, Safflower, Small chickpeas, Large chickpeas, Cotton, Soybeans and Sunflower seed

Maintain Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases. Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

Conservation Programs

CRP TIP, Early Termination Aids Transition to Beginners, Veterans

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers two opportunities through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for landowners willing to transition property to the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

These policy provisions were put in place following the Tenure, Ownership and Transition of Agricultural Land survey, conducted by USDA in 2014. According to that survey, U.S. farmland owners expect to transfer 93 million acres to new ownership during 2015-2019. This represents 10 percent of all farmland across the nation.

Early Termination

USDA is offering an early termination opportunity for certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. The land that is eligible for the early termination is among the least environmentally sensitive land enrolled in CRP.

Normally if a landowner terminates a CRP contract early, they are required to repay all previous payments plus interest. The land tenure policy put in place at the

beginning of 2017 waives this repayment if the land is transferred to a beginning farmer or rancher through a sale or lease with an option to buy.

With CRP enrollment close to the Congressionally-mandated cap of 24 million acres, the early termination will also allow USDA to enroll other land with higher conservation value elsewhere.

Acres terminated early from CRP under these land tenure provisions will be eligible for priority enrollment consideration into the CRP Grasslands, if eligible; or the Conservation Stewardship Program or Environmental Quality Incentives Program, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Transition Incentive Program

Under a different policy provision, retired or retiring land owners or operators are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or underserved farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the

retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires, provided the transition is not to a family member. Enrollment in TIP is on a continuous basis.

Beginning, veteran or underserved farmers and ranchers and retiring CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning one year before the expiration date of the CRP contract or Aug. 15. For example, if a CRP contract is scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2018, the land may be offered for enrollment in TIP beginning Oct. 1, 2017, through Aug. 15, 2018.

The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands. New land owners or renters must return the land to production using sustainable grazing or farming methods.

To find out if your acreage is eligible for either of these program options, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. To find a local office, go to <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about CRP, go online at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

CRP Migratory Birds, Butterflies, Pollinators Initiative An Option

Contracts available in designated program areas

Select Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in Nebraska currently are accepting Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract offers under the Kansas-Nebraska CRP Migratory Bird, Butterfly, and Pollinator State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project. Sign-up began last year and will be ongoing until the acres are filled. In Nebraska there are 10,000 acres available for enrollment.

The Migratory Bird SAFE project is designed to improve habitat by restoring playas for migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds and water birds. Playas are round, shallow depressions that often fill with water after spring rainstorms or fill from underlying aquifers.

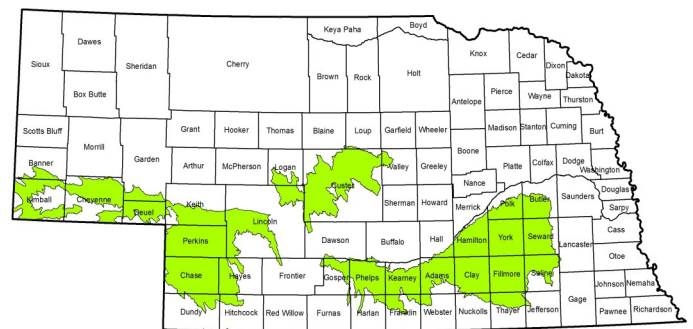
The minimum enrollment per offer is two acres, and the maximum enrollment per offer is 160 acres. The process for enrollment will be by competitive bid, and the offers will be reviewed periodically, ranked and contracts offered.

Contracts will only be made available for acres that are located within designated playa areas.

To learn more about the project and find out if your land is



Migratory Bird State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Eligible Areas of Nebraska



0 35 70 105 140 Miles

Produced by the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Grand Island, NE

located within a designated playa area, call or visit your county FSA office.

To find an office near you, go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Conservation Programs

CRP Enrollment Open Under Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the State of Nebraska currently are taking applications for enrollment in the Platte-Republican Resources Area Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP is a voluntary program that is part of the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) operated by FSA.

CREP allows states to develop projects with specific end goals, and its costs are shared between the federal government and state resources.

FSA and the State of Nebraska launched the Platte-Republican Resources Area CREP in 2005. It is designed to reduce irrigation water use, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat through the establishment of vegetative cover using approved CRP practices.

Requirements Outlined for CRP Emergency and Managed Haying, Grazing

Haying and grazing of land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is authorized under certain conditions to improve the quality and performance of the CRP cover or to provide emergency relief to livestock producers due to certain natural disasters. There are two types of haying and grazing authorizations: emergency and managed.

In certain drought or excessive moisture conditions, emergency haying and grazing can be authorized by the State FSA Committee when requested by county FSA committees.

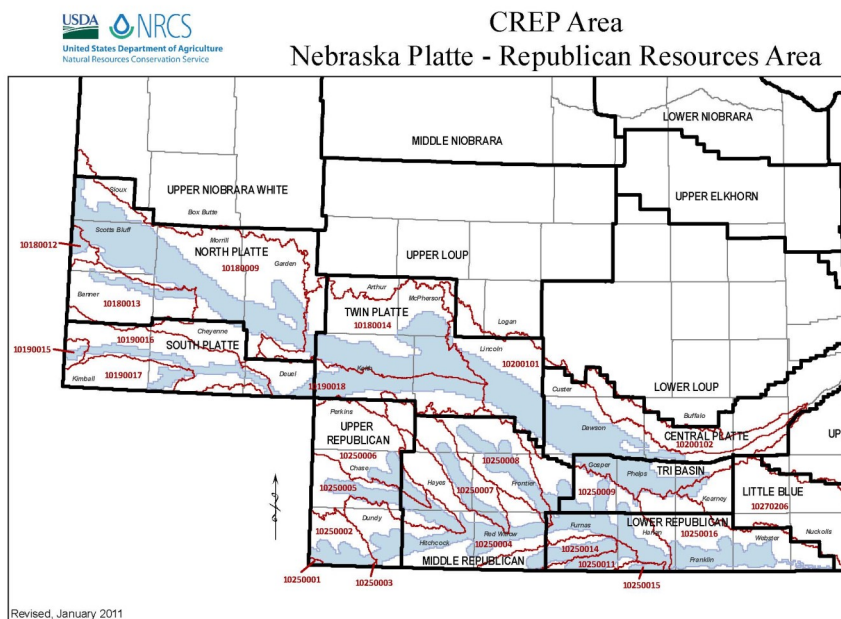
Under normal conditions, managed haying and grazing can be requested at the local county office by the landowner or producer on the CRP contract.

Both managed and emergency haying and grazing have restrictions. This in-

cludes how frequently the CRP acres can be harvested, the amount of acres that can be harvested and which practices are eligible. The date of the contract initiation usually determines the frequency and number of acres that can be harvested.

CRP acres must be considered fully established before haying or grazing under either the emergency or managed provisions. In addition, haying or grazing CRP acres is not authorized during the primary nesting season. For Nebraska, the primary nesting season is May 1 through July 15.

Haying is limited to one cutting and grazing and haying cannot occur on the same acreage. Participants agree to graze with certain grazing height limitations. For managed haying and/or grazing, there is a reduction to the annual CRP payment.



Landowners should contact their local FSA office to find out whether their land is located in the Platte-Republican Resources Area CREP as outlined in the picture above. Enrollment in this program is ongoing in 27 Nebraska counties. Participants can receive irrigated land rental payments for enrolled acres.

It is available to landowners/farmers with property in specified areas of the Republican River Basin and the North Platte, South Platte and Platte River basins. This includes portions of Banner,

Buffalo, Chase, Cheyenne, Dawson, Deuel, Dundy, Franklin, Frontier, Furnas, Garden, Gosper, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Kearney, Keith, Kimball, Lincoln, McPherson, Morrill, Nuckolls, Phelps, Red Willow, Scotts Bluff, Sioux and Webster counties.

Under the Nebraska Platte-Republican River CREP, landowners are provided irrigated land rental payments to convert their irrigated cropland into CRP habitat. Up to 100,000 acres can be enrolled in the project, with the contracts running from 10-15 years.

At present, there are approximately 42,000 acres enrolled.

Landowners/farmers with questions about this program should contact their county FSA office for more information.

For managed haying/harvesting, the authorization expires August 31 and all hay bales must be completely removed from CRP contract acres by no later than October 15. CRP participants must report the number of acres hayed to FSA by no later than October 1.

For managed/routine grazing, this authorization expires September 30 and all livestock must be removed by October 1. CRP participants must report the number of acres grazed to FSA by no later than October 1.

All hayed and grazed acres are subject to FSA spot-check at any time during 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.

Landowners Must Maintain Acres Enrolled in Farm Programs, CRP

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices.

If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and prac-

tice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants also must control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Nebraska is May 1 through July 15. Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

For reference, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture has designated 12

weeds in the state as noxious: Canada thistle, leafy spurge, musk thistle, plumeless thistle, purple loosestrife, spotted and diffuse knapweeds, saltcedar, phragmites, sericea lespedeza, Japanese knotweed, Bohemian knotweed and giant knotweed.

To learn more about state-designated noxious weeds, visit www.nda.nebraska.gov and look under Animal and Plant Health Protection/Plant Health/Noxious Weeds.

County FSA offices will complete field visits and spot-checks of ARC/PLC and CRP acreage and will consult with county weed authorities as necessary. This effort usually begins the later part of May and continues through the summer months.

** From: Policy Change, Page 1*

know they are available in the event of a disaster.

I also want to call your attention to the Conservation Programs section of this newsletter. If you are a landowner in the state of Nebraska and have an interest in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), please note that the Farm Service Agency has a couple of options for you to consider, depending on where your land is located. Enrollment is ongoing in two CRP programs: the Migratory Birds, Butterflies and Pollinators State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project and the Platte-Republican Resources Area Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

Regarding CRP, the other important thing I want to note is that Farm Service Agency policy recognizes the importance of transitioning land to beginning, veteran and underserved farmers and ranchers. Stories in the Conservation Programs section of this newsletter detail benefits available to landowners who are willing to provide access to their CRP acres to farmers and ranchers who qualify as beginners, veterans or underserved. Take a look at the articles on pages 8 and 9, and then call your local FSA office for more information.

Best wishes for a successful second half of the production year.

Until next time,



State Executive Director

** From: NAP Deadline, Page 1*

closing deadline.

Like crop insurance, NAP coverage is valuable when weather and disease disasters strike. Eligible causes of loss for NAP include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture or wind, flooding, excessive heat, among others. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

** From: FSFL, Page 5*

tion units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. FSFL loans also can be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

The program also includes a "microloan" option with lower down payments, designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets. The microloan option allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of 5 percent. Producers can self-

The fee for basic coverage is \$250 per crop, with a maximum of \$750 per county and a multi-county maximum of \$1,875. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are eligible for free catastrophic level of coverage.

To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap. To find out about the crops covered by NAP in your local area, visit your county FSA office. To find your local office, go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

certify the storage needs of the eligible commodity and are not required to demonstrate storage needs based on production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

All loan requests are subject to an environmental evaluation. Accepting delivery of equipment, or starting any site preparation or construction before loan approval may impede the successful completion of an environmental evaluation and may adversely affect loan eligibility.

Miscellaneous

Dates to Remember

July 2, 2018	Enrollment period opens for 2019 coverage for Margin Protection Program for Dairy
July 16, 2018	Acreage reporting deadline for all spring-seeded crops, including Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage, and all other crops for the 2018 crop year
July 16, 2018	***NAP acreage reporting deadline for millet and spring-seeded mixed forage, oats, peas and sorghum forage
August 1, 2018	Enrollment period for 2018 ARC/PLC ends
August 1, 2018	Deadline to request farm transfers or reconstitutions for 2018
October 1, 2018	Enrollment period closes for 2019 coverage for Margin Protection Program for Dairy
October 1, 2018	***NAP sales closing deadline for alfalfa, mixed forages (2019 coverage)
November 1, 2018	Deadline to apply for 2018 ELAP losses
November 15, 2018	***NAP sales closing deadline for grass (2019 coverage)
November 15, 2018	Acreage reporting deadline for fall-seeded crops and perennial grasses for 2019 program eligibility (includes NAP program)
November 20, 2018	***NAP sales closing deadline for aronia berries, grapes (2019 coverage)
December 14, 2018	***NAP production reporting deadline for alfalfa and grass (2018 coverage)
December 31, 2018	***NAP production reporting deadline for barley and spring-seeded mixed forage (2018 coverage)
January 2, 2019	Deadline to report honeybees for 2019 FSA program eligibility (ELAP, NAP)
<p>***Please note the above NAP calendar references are not inclusive for all NAP-covered crops; NAP participants should contact their County FSA Office to confirm important program deadlines.</p>	

* From: Report Changes, Page 3

a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

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Visit your local FSA office for more information on these options.

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If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

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