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## Oregon FSA Newsletter

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### Oregon Farm Service Agency

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### USDA Provides Greater Protection for Fruit, Vegetable and Other Specialty Crop Growers

*Free Basic Coverage Plans and Premium Discounts Available for New, Underserved and Limited Income Farmers*

Greater protection is now available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for crops that historically have been ineligible for federal crop insurance. The new options, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, provide greater coverage for losses when natural disasters affect specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, ginseng, honey, syrup, and energy crops.

Previously, the program offered coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Producers can now choose higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price.

The expanded protection will be especially helpful to beginning and socially disadvantaged producers, as well as farmers with limited resources, who will receive fee waivers and premium reductions for expanded coverage. More crops are now eligible for the program, including expanded aquaculture production practices, and sweet and biomass sorghum. For the first time, a range of crops used to produce bioenergy will be eligible as well.

To help producers learn more about the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and how it can help them, USDA, in partnership with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, created an online resource. The Web tool, available at

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

[www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap), allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage. It also gives them an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

If the application deadline for an eligible crop has already passed, producers will have until Jan. 14, 2015, to choose expanded coverage through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. To learn more, visit the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local FSA office at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov). The Farm Service Agency (FSA), which administers the program, also wants to hear from producers and other interested stakeholders who may have suggestions or recommendations on the program. Written comments will be accepted until Feb. 13, 2015 and can be submitted through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

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## Farm Bill Allows Early Termination for Certain CRP Contracts

The Farm Service Agency reminds producers with acres under contract through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that they can apply for early contract termination, as required by the 2014 Farm Bill. The deadline to request early CRP contract termination is Jan. 30, 2015.

This is a unique opportunity to request early termination afforded by the 2014 Farm Bill. The earliest effective date for this early termination is October 1, 2014. The requesting CRP contract must have been in effect for at least five years and additional eligibility conditions must be met to qualify. The 2014 Farm Bill identifies a list of 10 exceptions whereby land will not be eligible for the early termination provisions. For a complete list of these exceptions, please view the program fact sheet online at [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/crp\\_opt\\_out\\_fact\\_sht.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp_opt_out_fact_sht.pdf)

Once a CRP contract termination request is approved by the FSA County Committee, the decision may not be reversed and the terminated contract will not be reinstated. Once the land is no longer considered under the CRP contract all participants must meet HEL/WC and other conservation compliance provisions for all associated lands.

For more information or to verify eligibility for early termination (opt-out) for existing CRP contracts, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov).

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## Livestock Disaster Assistance Sign-up Underway

Livestock disaster program enrollment opened on April 15, 2014. These disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

Eligible producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

### Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation by January 30, 2015.

### Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Producers who suffered livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

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

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

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

**For losses that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011, through the end of the 2014 calendar year, the final date to submit an application and supporting documentation is the later of Jan. 31, 2015 or 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date the loss is apparent. For calendar year 2015 and subsequent losses, all applications and supporting documentation must be submitted the later of 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date the loss is apparent.**

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

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## **Farm Loan Program Availability**

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agricultural production. As a farmer or rancher, whether you are just starting out or have many years of experience, loans are available for farm operating purposes and/or to purchase or improve a farm or ranch. All qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs. As the "Lender of First Opportunity" FSA targets some of the direct and guaranteed loan funds for beginning and/or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

For purposes of this program, a beginning farmer/rancher is defined as someone who started in farming or ranching less than 10 years ago, will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm, agrees to participate in borrower training, and does not own a farm in excess of 30% of the county's average size farm. Socially disadvantaged groups are women, African

Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere. Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Important ARC/PLC Program Deadlines Approaching

Producers are reminded that the deadline to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres is Feb. 27, 2015. Farm owners and producers can choose between the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) through March 31, 2015. The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

USDA helped create online tools to assist in the decision process, allowing farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources, available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc), from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

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

- Now through Feb. 27, 2015: Farm owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- Now through March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015: Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- October 2015: Payments issued for 2014 crop year, if needed.

To learn more about which safety net options are most appropriate for specific farming operations, farmers can use new Web tools at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc), which can be accessed from the convenience of a home computer or a mobile device at any time. To learn more about upcoming educational meetings, farmers can contact their local Farm Service Agency county office at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

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## 2015 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Oregon:

- Jan 2, 2015: Honey
- Jan 15, 2015: Apples, Apricots, Blueberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Grapes, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums
- May 15, 2015: Cabbage (Planted 3/12 - 4/20)
- July 15, 2015: Spring Alfalfa Seed, Cabbage (Planted 4/21 - 6/10), Onions (Planted 2/15 - 5/15), CRP, All Other Crops
- Aug 15, 2015: Cabbage (Planted 6/11-8/10)

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- 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 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 15th.

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

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local County FSA Office.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).