

April 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

**GovDelivery**

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

---

## April 2018 Pennsylvania FSA Newsletter

---

- [USDA to Immediately Assist Producers for Qualifying Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program Losses](#)
- [USDA Reopens Enrollment for Improved Dairy Safety Net Tool](#)
- [Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres](#)
- [CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and Farm Programs](#)
- [Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers](#)
- [Livestock Inventory Records](#)
- [Still Time to be Counted in the 2017 Census of Agriculture](#)
- [Youth Loans](#)
- [Measurement Service](#)
- [Interest Rates for April 2018](#)

---

### **Pennsylvania Farm Service Agency**

359 East Park Drive, Suite 1  
Harrisburg, PA 17111

**Phone:** 717-237-2113  
**Fax:** 855-778-8909

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

**State Executive Director:**  
Gary Groves

### **USDA to Immediately Assist Producers for Qualifying Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program Losses**

\$34 Million in Payments for 2017 Losses Part of Broad Suite of Programs Aiding Ag Operations

USDA will issue \$34 million to help agricultural producers recover from 2017 natural disasters through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP), which covers losses not covered by certain other USDA disaster assistance programs. These payments are being made available today, and they are part of a broader USDA effort to help producers recover from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, wildfires and

**State Committee Members:**

Bonnie Wenger, Chair  
George Greig  
Doug Graybill  
Bill Hoover

**Division Chiefs:**

David Poorbaugh:  
Farm Loan Programs

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county. For local FSA service center contact information, please visit: [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov)

**Dates to Remember:**

**May 28:** Federal Holiday - Offices Closed

**May 31:** Final Availability Date for 2017 Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, Sunflower Seed MAL/LDP

**June 1:** End of 2018 Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy) Registration and Re-Enrollment Period

**June 15:** Final Reporting Date for Spring Barley, Spring Forage Seeding, Spring Oats, Rye, Triticale, Spring Wheat

**July 4:** Federal Holiday - Offices Closed

**July 16:** Final Reporting Date for Corn, Soybeans, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and all other crops

**Continuing:** Continuous CRP Signup (CREP only)

drought. A large portion of this assistance will be made available in [federally designated disaster areas](#).

ELAP aims to help eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs such as the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) and the [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#).

The increased amount of assistance through ELAP was made possible by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, signed earlier this year. The Act amended the 2014 Farm Bill to enable USDA's [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) to provide assistance to producers without an annual funding cap and immediately for 2017. It also enables FSA to pay ELAP applications as they are filed for 2018 and subsequent program years.

**Other USDA Disaster Assistance Programs**

The Act removed program year payment limitations and increased the acreage cap for the [Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#), a nationwide program that provides owners of orchards, vineyards and nurseries with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster. For example, the program will help owners of citrus groves in Florida, avocado trees in California, coffee plantations in Puerto Rico and vineyards reduce the cost of replanting, and speed recovery from the loss of fruit and nut trees, bushes, and vines.

Prior to the Act, there was a combined program year payment limitation of \$125,000 for ELAP, LIP and LFP per person or legal entity. The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) had its own \$125,000 payment limitation. The Act removed the program year per person and legal entity payment limitation for LIP and TAP. As a result of the Act, a \$125,000 per person and legal entity single payment limitation applies to the total amount of program year payments received under both ELAP and the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) and program payments under LIP and TAP no longer have payment limits.

Under the updated program, as amended by the Act, growers are eligible to be partly reimbursed for losses on up to 1,000 acres per program year, double the previous acreage limit of 500 acres.

In total, it is estimated that the Act will enable USDA to provide more than \$3 billion in disaster assistance, including the \$2.36 billion announced last week to be made available through FSA's new 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program. This includes \$400 million made available for the [Emergency Conservation Program](#), which helps farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters. As signups

across the country are completed, additional applications will be funded.

According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States was impacted by 16 separate billion-dollar disaster events in 2017 including: three tropical cyclones, eight severe storms, two inland floods, a crop freeze, drought and wildfire. More than 25 million people – almost eight percent of the population – were affected by major disasters. From severe flooding in Puerto Rico and Texas to mudslides and wildfires in California, major natural disasters caused catastrophic damages, with an economic impact totaling more than \$300 billion.

### **For Assistance**

Producers with operations impacted by natural disasters and diseases in 2018 are encouraged to contact their [local USDA service center](#) to apply for assistance through ELAP, TAP, LIP and LFP. Producers with 2017 ELAP claims need to take no action as FSA will begin paying those claims today.

---

## **USDA Reopens Enrollment for Improved Dairy Safety Net Tool**

USDA's Farm Service Agency encourages dairy producers to consider enrolling in the new and improved [Margin Protection Program for Dairy](#) (MPP-Dairy), which will provide better protections for dairy producers from shifting milk and feed prices. With changes authorized under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has set the enrollment period to run from April 9, 2018 to June 1, 2018.

The program protects dairy producers by paying them when the difference between the national all-milk price and the national average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount elected by the producer.

Changes include:

- Calculations of the margin period is monthly rather than bi-monthly.
- Covered production is increased to 5 million pounds on the Tier 1 premium schedule, and premium rates for Tier 1 are substantially lowered.
- An exemption from paying an administrative fee for limited resource, beginning, veteran, and disadvantaged producers. Dairy operators enrolled in the previous 2018 enrollment period that qualify for this exemption under the new provisions may request a refund.

Dairy operations must make a new coverage election for 2018, even if you enrolled during the previous 2018 signup period. Coverage elections made for 2018 will be retroactive to January 1, 2018. All dairy operations desiring coverage must sign up during the enrollment period and submit an appropriate form (CCC-782) and dairy operations may still "opt out" by not submitting a form. All outstanding balances for 2017 and prior years must be paid in full before 2018 coverage is approved.

Dairy producers can participate in FSA's MPP-Dairy or the Risk Management Agency's Livestock Gross Margin Insurance Plan for Dairy Cattle (LGM-Dairy), but not both. During the 2018 enrollment period, only producers with an active LGM-Dairy policy who have targeted marketings insured in

2018 months will be allowed to enroll in MPP-Dairy by June 1, 2018; however, their coverage will start only after active target marketings conclude under LGM-Dairy.

USDA has a web tool to help producers determine the level of coverage under the MPP-Dairy that will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The online resource, which will be updated and available by April 9 at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool), allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine unique operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs based on price projections. Producers can also review historical data or estimate future coverage based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, smartphone, tablet or any other platform.

USDA is mailing postcards advising dairy producers of the changes. For more information, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy) or contact your [local USDA service center](#).

---

## **Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres**

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some 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 to 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, to report failed acres.

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.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

---

## CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and Farm Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also 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 Pennsylvania is **April 1st through July 31st**. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

---

## Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating purposes and/or to purchase or improve farms or ranches. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for underserved applicants. An 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, underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as underserved, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

---

## Livestock Inventory Records

Producers are reminded to keep updated livestock inventory records. These records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can assist producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, 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. For grazing or feed losses, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your local FSA office

---

## Still Time to be Counted in the 2017 Census of Agriculture

### ***NASS to follow-up with producers who have not yet responded***

Farmers and ranchers still have time to be counted in the 2017 Census of Agriculture, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Although the first deadline has just passed, NASS will continue to accept Census information through the spring to get a complete and accurate picture of American agriculture that represents all farmers and ranchers.

Federal law mandates that everyone who received the 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire complete it and return it even if not currently farming. NASS will continue to follow-up with producers through the spring with mailings, phone calls, and personal visits. To avoid these additional contacts, farmers and ranchers are encouraged to complete their Census either online at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov) or by mail as soon as possible. Responding online saves time by skipping sections that do not apply and automatically calculating totals. The online questionnaire is accessible on desktops, laptops, and mobile devices.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov). For questions or assistance filling out the Census, call toll-free (888) 424-7828.

---

## Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency 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 advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

### **Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:**

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

---

## Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery. If an on-site visit is not required producers are charged a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty or loss of eligibility.

---

## Interest Rates for April 2018

Farm Operating Loans - Direct: 3.500%

Farm Operating Loans - Microloan: 3.500%

Farm Ownership Loans:

- Direct: 4.000%
- Microloan: 4.000%
- Joint Financing: 2.500%
- Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher: 1.500%

Emergency Loans: 3.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years): 2.375%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years): 2.625%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years): 2.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years): 2.875%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years): 2.875%

Commodity Loans: 3.000%

---

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).



Questions?  
[Contact Us](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Delete Profile](#) | [Help](#)

This email was sent to Email Address using GovDelivery Communications  
Cloud on behalf of: USDA Farm Service Agency · 1400 Independence Ave.,  
S.W. · Washington, DC 20250 · 800-439-1420

