

August 15, 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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- [How is the Census of Agriculture conducted?](#)
- [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\) – Important Acreage Reporting Deadline](#)
- [Crop Insurance Deadline Nears in Florida](#)
- [2016 PLC Payment Rates and ARC Actual Prices for Wheat, Barley and Oats](#)
- [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#)
- [CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and Farm Programs](#)
- [USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property](#)
- [USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers](#)
- [Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips](#)

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## Florida FSA Newsletter

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### Florida Farm Service Agency

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### How is the Census of Agriculture conducted?

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will mail questionnaires for the 2017 Census of Agriculture to farm and ranch operators in December 2017 to collect data for the 2017 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 5, 2018. The most convenient way to complete the census is online at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov). Alternately, you can return your forms by mail.

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### Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) – Important Acreage Reporting Deadline

Producers in the following Florida counties are eligible to apply for 2017 Livestock Forage Disaster program (LFP) benefits:

Bay, Brevard, Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Escambia, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands Hillsborough, Holmes, Indian River, Jackson, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Martin, Nassau,

Mark Cotrell

### **Farm Program**

Tom Hockert

### **Farm Loans**

Justin Teuton

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

Okaloosa, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, St. Lucie, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, Sumter, Walton, Washington

A timely filed Report of Commodities (FSA-578) is a requirement for LFP. The deadline to file a 2017 FSA-578 for native and improved pastures was November 15, 2016. Accepting a late-filed FSA-578 is allowed if the producer pays the cost of a farm visit, the crop's use can be verified and the late report is filed before the subsequent year's acreage reporting deadline (November 15, 2017). **The deadline to file a late-filed FSA-578 before the subsequent year's acreage reporting deadline is a policy change beginning with 2017 crop year.**

Producers interested in LFP but have not completed a 2017 acreage report should contact their local FSA Office **immediately**. If a 2017 acreage report for native & permanent grasses is not completed before November 15, 2017, local offices will not be allowed to extend this date for any reason.

Eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than January 30, 2018 for 2017 LFP participation. However, applicants who have not completed a 2017 acreage report before November 15, 2017, will be not eligible for LFP benefits even if they enroll timely.

Please contact your local FSA Office for more information about LFP or visit online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## **Crop Insurance Deadline Nears in Florida**

### **Cabbage Growers Need to Make Insurance Decisions Soon**

VALDOSTA, Ga., July 27, 2017 - USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Florida cabbage growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage is August 15. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the August 15 sales closing date to do so.

Crop insurance is a key component of the farm safety net, as it provides protection against a loss in production due to natural perils, such as drought or excessive moisture. Coverage is available for cabbage in Alachua, Flagler, Hillsborough, Manatee, Putnam, and St. John counties.

Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2018 crop year. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Growers can use the RMA Cost Estimator to get a premium amount estimate of their insurance needs online.

For more information about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net, visit: [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov).

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## **2016 PLC Payment Rates and ARC Actual Prices for Wheat, Barley and Oats**

The Agricultural Act of 2014 provides for payments for covered commodities through the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program when the market year average price is below the reference price. Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) program payments are triggered when the actual revenue is

below the guarantee established for the program.

The Marketing Year Average (MYA) price for wheat, barley and oats was announced June 29, resulting in a PLC payment rate of \$1.61 per bushel for 2016 wheat and \$0.34 per bushel for 2016 oats. There is no PLC payment on 2016 barley.

For Agriculture Loss Coverage – County (ARC-CO), actual crop revenue is calculated by multiplying the actual average yield for your county times the higher of the MYA price or the national loan rate. For 2016, the following prices have been set – wheat at \$3.89 per bushel; barley at \$4.96 per bushel; and oats at \$2.06 per bushel. 2016 county yields will not be available until this fall.

Agriculture Loss Coverage–Individual Option (ARC-IC) will utilize the same prices as ARC-CO, however the actual crop revenue cannot be calculated until participating producers report all production for all covered commodities planted on the farm and all MYA prices for all covered commodities planted on the farm are known. Both of these items are necessary to calculate the ARC-IC actual revenue for the farm.

All 2016 ARC and PLC payments cannot be made until after Oct. 1, 2017, or the announcement of the final 2016 MYA price for the applicable covered commodity.

For information on release dates for MYA prices, ARC-CO yields and projected and final PLC payment rates, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc) and click on the “ARC/PLC Program Data” link.

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

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by Nov. 1, 2017
- An application for payment by Nov. 1, 2017

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet

- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at [www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets).

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## **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 Florida is March 1st through July 15th. 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.

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## **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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans), or contact your local FSA office.

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## **USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers**

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and

ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans).

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans).

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## **Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips**

USDA offers programs to help producers recover from disasters; FEMA can help you prepare ahead of time.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently launched a free mobile app that will instruct the public on what to do before, during and after emergencies. The app is available for download for Apple, Android and Blackberry mobile devices.

Download the app to:

- Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations
- Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters and customize your emergency checklist
- Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone)
- Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders.

For more information about the FEMA app, visit [fema.gov/mobile-app](http://fema.gov/mobile-app). To download the FEMA app from the Apple Store visit <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8>. To download the FEMA app on Google Play for Android visit: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en>

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## **Dates to Remember**

September 4 - Federal Holiday Observed. Offices Closed.

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