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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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- [Deadlines Approaching for FSA Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs](#)
- [The Census of Agriculture is a Producer's Voice, Future, and Opportunity](#)
- [USDA to Measure Final 2017 Row Crop Production and Grain Stocks with Two End-of-Year Surveys](#)
- [USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [Loan Servicing](#)
- [USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers](#)
- [USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Florida Producers](#)
- [Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips](#)
- [Changing Bank Accounts](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

Florida FSA Newsletter

Florida Farm Service Agency

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Deadlines Approaching for FSA Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs

Livestock producers are reminded that deadlines for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) are quickly approaching.

The deadline to apply for LFP benefits for 2017 grazing losses is Jan. 30, 2018. Eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and submit the required supporting documentation by the deadline. LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land.

Producers with eligible livestock losses must submit a LIP application for payment by March 31, 2018. LIP provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by

Mark Cotrell

federal law.

Farm Program

Tom Hockert

Farm Loans

Justin Teuton

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

For 2017, eligible LIP losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2017, 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. 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

Please contact to your local FSA office to make an appointment to apply for LFP or LIP benefits.

The Census of Agriculture is a Producer's Voice, Future, and Opportunity

In December farmers and ranchers across the nation received the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web questionnaire. The online questionnaire has been revised extensively to make it more convenient for producers.

Conducted once every five years, the census of agriculture is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them; it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.

Farmers and ranchers, trade associations, government, extension educators, researchers, and many others rely on census of agriculture data when making decisions that shape American agriculture – from creating and funding farm programs to boosting services for communities and the industry. The census of agriculture is a producer's voice, future, and opportunity.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

USDA to Measure Final 2017 Row Crop Production and Grain Stocks with Two End-of-Year Surveys

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is encouraging producers to respond to two upcoming surveys – the December Agricultural Survey and the County Agricultural Production Survey – that are critical to row crop producers around the country. The results of the surveys help determine the structure of the 2017 farm payment and risk management programs administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency and Risk Management Agency.

The County Agricultural Production Survey was sent to 170,000 row crop producers beginning Nov. 3. Responses are due by Jan. 15, 2018, and NASS will publish county-level results for corn, soybeans, sunflowers, and sorghum on Feb. 22, 2018, in the Quick Stats database. These county-

level data are critical for USDA farm payment determinations.

The December Agricultural Survey will go to 84,000 producers beginning Nov. 29. Responses are due by Dec. 21, 2017, and NASS publishes results in the Crop Production 2017 Summary report on Jan. 12, 2018. Information collected in this survey also feeds into the county estimates for row crops. The survey also asks about grain stocks stored on-farm.

When producers receive the surveys, they have the option to respond using the secure online questionnaire or return it by mail. NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

These and all NASS data are available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications and the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data are used at www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBW-g1FgLN8.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection."

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser2017/CropCriteria.aspx>.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

Loan Servicing

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.

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.

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.

USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Florida Producers

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Producers can text Florida to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from the Florida State Office. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

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. 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>

Changing Bank Accounts

All FSA payments should be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

Dates to Remember

January 15 - Federal Holiday Observed. Offices Closed.

February 19 - Federal Holiday Observed. Offices Closed

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).