

May 2017



Farm Service Agency

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**NEWSLETTER**

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## Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

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### Wisconsin Farm Service Agency **Greetings from the Acting State Director**

8030 Excelsior Dr.  
Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53717

Phone: 608-662-4422  
Fax: 855-758-0755

**Acting State Executive Director:**  
Russell Raeder

**State Committee:**  
Bill Averbeck  
George Huber  
Linda Ceylor  
Jamie Derr  
Mike Gallagher

**Farm Loan Chief:**  
Tom Brandt

**Farm Program Chief/Executive Officer:**  
Russ Raeder

Many producers across the state have experienced a very wet spring which has included some serious weather events. As a reminder, the Farm Service Agency offers federal farm programs to help eligible producers recover from recent heavy rains, flooding, high winds, and tornadoes. If your farming operation has been impacted by recent weather events, please stop into your local county office. We can help you navigate any available assistance.

Available programs and loans include:

**Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops.

**Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, tropical storms, tornados lightening, extreme heat, and extreme cold. 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.

**Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disaster.

**Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** - provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other

To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi)

disaster programs. ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed that was purchased or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for the producer's eligible livestock. In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled; forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.

ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to floodwaters.

For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds and tornadoes.

Emergency Loan Program – Available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Secretarial Disaster designation. These low interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding.

**Emergency Loan Program** - Available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Secretarial Disaster designation. These low-interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to severe weather events.

**Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.

**HayNet** - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze. [www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet).

**Prevent Plant or Failed Acres** - To establish or retain FSA program eligibility, farmers and ranchers must report prevented planting and failed acres (crops and grasses). Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form FSA-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

For more information on disaster assistance programs and loans visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/) or contact your local FSA Office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Thanks for all the work you do,

Russ Raeder

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## Dates to Remember

### May 29, 2017:

USDA **Service Centers closed** in observance of Memorial Day

### May 31, 2017:

Last day to obtain **Marketing Assistance Loans** on 2016 coarse grain crops

### July 4, 2017:

USDA **Service Centers closed** in observance of Independence Day

### July 17, 2017:

Final date to report spring-seeded crops (including CRP) on FSA-578.

### June 15-August 1, 2017:

**County Committee Election** nomination period for Local Administrative Area up for election. Individuals can nominate themselves or others.

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## Sonny Perdue Sworn in as 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Sonny Perdue was sworn in as the 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by fellow Georgian and Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Clarence Thomas in a brief ceremony on April 25 at the Supreme Court building.

Perdue grew up on a dairy and diversified row crop farm in Bonaire, Georgia. Being uniquely qualified as a former farmer, agribusinessman, veterinarian, state legislator and governor of Georgia, he has experienced the agriculture industry from every possible perspective throughout his life.

As secretary, Perdue says he will champion the concerns of farmers, ranchers, foresters and producers, and will work tirelessly to solve the issues facing our farm families.

Perdue's policies as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture will be guided by four principles which will inform his decisions. First, he will maximize the ability of the men and women of America's agriculture and agribusiness sector to create jobs, to produce and sell the foods and fiber that feed and clothe the world, and to reap the earned reward of their labor. Second, he will prioritize customer service every day for American taxpayers and consumers. Third, as Americans expect a safe and secure food supply, USDA will continue to serve in the critical role of ensuring the food we put on the table to feed our families meets the strict safety standards we've established. And fourth, Perdue will always remember that America's agricultural bounty comes directly from the land.

For more information about Secretary Perdue, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

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## Microloan Program Available as a Financing Option

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations.

The program operates similar to the Direct Operating Loan program but includes reduced requirements for managerial experience and loan security, as well as reduced paperwork.

The microloan program can be used for such expenses as annual crop inputs, marketing and distribution expenses, purchase of livestock and equipment, and minor farm improvements such as wells and refrigeration units.

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$50,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are normally repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates will be the same as the regular Direct Operating Loan rates.

To learn more about the Microloan program, contact your local office at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filed at one location, data important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. **Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information.** The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as [FSAFarm+](#), gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of “idle” and “fallow.”

### Reporting Cover Crops:

FSA made changes to the types of cover crops. Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- Cereals and other grasses - Any cover crop that is classified as a grass plant or cereal grain, and would include, but not be limited to, the following cover crops: cereal rye, wheat, barley, oats, black oats, triticale, annual ryegrass, pearl millet, foxtail millet (also called German, Italian or Hungarian millet), sorghum sudan grass, sorghum and other millets and grasses.
- Legumes - Any cover crop that is classified as a legume, including, but not limited to, clovers, vetches, peas, sun hemp, cowpeas, lentils and other legumes.
- Brassicas and other broadleaves - Any cover crop that is classified as a non-legume broadleaf, including, but not limited to, Brassicas such as radishes, turnips, canola, rapeseed, oilseed rape, and mustards, as well as other broadleaf plants such as phacelia, flax, sunflower, buckwheat, and safflower.
- Mixtures - Mixes of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time, for example, oats and radishes.

## **POLICY UPDATES FOR ACREAGE REPORTING, continued**

If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

### **Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:**

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 days to change the intended use. Producer share interest changes alone will not allow for revisions to intended use after the acreage reporting date. The revision must be performed by either the acreage reporting date or within 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

### **Acreage Reports:**

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

### **Reporting Grazing Allotments:**

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. Producers will use form "FSA-578" to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the "Reporting Unit" field. The local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

### **Definitions of Terms**

FSA defines "idle" as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row. For example, the balance of a field that could not be planted due to moisture or a turn area that is not planted would be reported as idle.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season. Resting the ground in this manner allows it to recover its fertility and conserve moisture for crop production in the next growing season

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## **2017 NRCS Conservation Local Work Group Meeting Schedule Announced**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin has announced the [schedule for 2017 Local Working Group \(LWG\) meetings](#). Eighteen meetings will be held across Wisconsin in June to gather input and help set priorities for U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs under the 2014 Farm Bill.

Farmers representing a variety of crops and livestock raised within the local area, private woodland owners, representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations, and representatives of other agriculture and natural resource agencies are welcome and should be represented. Local Working Groups offer a seat at the table for interested individuals and groups to advise NRCS on how best to set priorities and locally implement conservation programs.

Wisconsin LWGs represent two or more counties grouped together by geography, similar land use, resources, and type of agriculture. [See a map of Local Working Groups](#). This will allow greater flexibility and access to funding for the groups.

## 2017 NRCS CONSERVATION LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETING SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED, continued

One of the main programs discussed at the meetings will be the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a federal conservation program that helps agricultural producers in a manner that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. EQIP offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners with needed conservation practices for water quality, soil health, wildlife and other natural resources. The program was re-authorized through 2019 in the federal Farm Bill, which was passed in February 2014.

Local Working Group meetings are open to the public. Anyone interested in becoming a member in LWGs should contact their local [NRCS Service Center](#). Contact your local NRCS District Conservationist if you are interested in participating.

For detailed information on local work groups, see [What are Local Working Groups](#) and see the [Schedule of Meetings](#).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any Local Work Group meetings should contact Kim Iczkowski at 608-662-4422 extension 133 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 at least 2 work days before the scheduled meeting.

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