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Farm Service Agency



Missouri FSA Newsletter

Missouri Farm Service Agency

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Click [here](#) for the Missouri Department of Conservation Covey Headquarters newsletter.

Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) closing deadline for hay, forage, pasture, and most annual fruits and vegetables is **March 15**. Eligible producers must apply for coverage and pay the applicable service fees annually by the application closing date. Acreage reports are also due annually. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection. Coverage for specific crops may be checked online at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

The Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) deadline for prior year harvested small grains and honey is **March 31**.

And don't forget - 2017 ARC/PLC contracts are ready. Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) can now sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until **Aug. 1, 2017**.

As a reminder, all USDA Service Centers will be closed on Monday, **Feb. 20**, in observance of George Washington's Birthday.

Contact or visit your local county FSA office for more information on these important deadlines. A full customer calendar with program deadlines, NAP crop sales closure dates, observed holidays and more can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/mo.

Cover Crop Guidelines

Recently the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) worked together to develop consistent, simple and a flexible policy for cover crop practices.

The following guidelines were updated for cover crops.

Termination:

The cover crop termination guidelines provide the timeline for terminating cover crops, are based on zones and apply to non-irrigated cropland. To view the zones and additional guidelines visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/landuse/crops/> and click "Cover Crop Termination Guidelines."

Reporting:

The intended use of cover only will be used to report cover crops. This includes crops that were terminated by tillage and reported with an intended use code of green manure. An FSA policy change will allow cover crops to be hayed and grazed. Program eligibility for the cover crop that is being hayed or grazed will be determined by each specific program.

If the crop reported as cover only is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated properly, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop.

Crops reported with an intended use of cover only will not count toward the total cropland on the farm. In these situations, a subsequent crop will be reported as the initial crop to account for all cropland on the farm.

Cover crops include grasses, legumes, and forbs, for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes. Cover crops are primarily used for erosion control, soil health improvement, and water quality improvement. The cover crop may be terminated by natural causes, such as frost, or intentionally terminated through chemical application, crimping, rolling, tillage or cutting. A cover crop managed and terminated according to NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines is not considered a crop for crop insurance purposes.

Cover crops can be planted: with no subsequent crop planted, before a subsequent crop, after prevented planting acreage, after a planted crop, or into a standing crop.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and some loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will no longer require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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 farmland 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, or contact your local FSA office.

USDA's Farm Service Agency Expands Bridges to Opportunity Nationwide

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced the expansion of a unique service for farmers and ranchers. FSA's Bridges to Opportunity program provides a one-stop-shop that connects producers with resources, programs and educational services offered across the department, as well as from other USDA partner organizations. Bridges to Opportunity, which currently provides enhanced customer support to more than 150,000 customers in 20 states, will expand to serve customers across the country before the end of the month using fiscal year 2016 funds.

FSA's presence in over 2,100 county offices, in nearly every rural county, puts the agency in a unique position to partner with non-governmental organizations to reach thousands of agricultural producers who can benefit from the programs and services. Bridges to Opportunity allows FSA employees to search and obtain a list of all local, state, regional and national organizations that may be able assist local producers with their specific need. For example, FSA's Houston County office in Texas partnered with many agricultural organizations to serve producers affected by severe drought. When drought-stricken agricultural producers came to the county office looking for assistance, FSA employees were able to provide traditional services, such as the Livestock Forage Program and the Emergency loan program administered by FSA, as well as connect local farmers with local, regional, and national organizations that provide drought assistance and education.

Bridges to Opportunity was developed by FSA to provide producers with a more comprehensive customer service experience by connecting them with other USDA agencies and nonfederal partners. Through Bridges to Opportunity, FSA county office employees have the tools to connect farmers, ranchers and anyone interested in agriculture with customized expertise on topics ranging including organic production, beginning farmer resources, integrated pest management, disaster

assistance, conservation practices, agricultural educational courses, loans, grants and other financial assistance that can start, grow or benefit farming and ranching operations.

For more information about Bridges to Opportunity, please contact your local FSA county office.

Missouri Woodland Conference - April 4 and 5

The Missouri Woodland Conference will be held on April 4 and 5 at the Missouri Farm Bureau Headquarters in Jefferson City, Mo. Each day will begin at 9 a.m. and adjourn at 4:15 p.m. Topics include Financial Assistance Opportunities for Woodland Landowners; Finding Technical Assistance; Woodland Landowners Panel; Resource Professionals Panel; Forestland Succession Planning; Managing Woodland for Timber and Wildlife; and more.

Visit the Walnut Council website at <http://walnutcouncil.org/state-chapters/missouri.html> for the complete program and registration form.

Interest Rates and Dates to Remember

Selected Interest Rates for February 2017	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.500
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.875
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.00
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50
Emergency Loans	3.875
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years)	1.50
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years)	2.00
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	2.25
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	2.50
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years)	2.50
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.875

Dates to Remember	
Feb. 20	George Washington's Birthday. USDA offices are closed.
Feb. 28	NAP application closing date for rice.
Mar. 15	NAP application closing date for many NAP crops, including forage and pasture.
Mar. 31	Final availability date for 2016 Marketing Assistance Loans & LDPs for small grains & honey.
May 1	NAP application closing date for ornamental nursery (for subsequent year).
May 15	Final date to report spring oats & potatoes.

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).