

March 2017



Farm Service Agency

GovDelivery Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER



Missouri FSA Newsletter

Missouri Farm Service Agency

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To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/mo

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 most crops 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. The March 15 deadline includes forage, pasture and most fruits and vegetables. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

The Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) deadline for prior year harvested wheat, barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed and sesame is **March 31**.

A full customer calendar with program deadlines, NAP sales closing dates, observed holidays and more can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/mo.

Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When a natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county. Agricultural producers can play a vital role in this process.

If you have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster you may submit a request to your local FSA county office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the county office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

Organic Producers and Handlers May Apply for Certification Cost Share Reimbursements; Expanded Eligibility for Transition and State Certification Cost

Starting March 20, 2017, organic producers and handlers will be able to visit over 2,100 USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices to apply for federal reimbursement to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification.

USDA reimburses organic producers up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification, but only about half of the nation's organic operations currently participate in the program. Starting March 20, USDA will provide a uniform, streamlined process for organic producers and handlers to apply for organic cost share assistance either by mail or in person.

USDA is making changes to increase participation in the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance Organic Certification Cost Share Program, and at the same time provide more opportunities for organic producers to access other USDA programs, such as disaster protection and loans for farms, facilities and marketing. Producers can also access information on nonfederal agricultural resources, and get referrals to local experts, including organic agriculture, through USDA's Bridges to Opportunity service at the local FSA office.

Historically, many state departments of agriculture have obtained grants to disburse reimbursements to those producers and handlers qualifying for cost share assistance. FSA will continue to partner with states to administer the programs.

Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/ arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage are all eligible for a cost share reimbursement from USDA.

Once certified, producers and handlers are eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 75 percent of certification costs each year up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope—crops, livestock, wild crops and handling.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation;

- Any significant changes to family income or expenses;
- The development of problem situations;
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Payment Limitations by Program

The 2014 Farm Bill established a maximum dollar amount for each program that can be received annually, directly or indirectly, by each person or legal entity. Payment limitations vary by program for 2014 through 2018.

Below is an overview of Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment limitations by program.

Commodity and Price Support Programs

The annual limitation for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Loan Gains is \$125,000 each.

Conservation Programs

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payment and incentive payment is limited to \$50,000. CRP contracts approved before Oct. 1, 2008, may exceed the limitation, subject to payment limitation rules in effect on the date of contract approval.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) has an annual limit of \$200,000 per disaster event. The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) has an annual limit of \$500,000 per disaster event.

Disaster Assistance Programs

The annual limitation of \$125,000 applies to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Tree Assistance Program (TAP). The total payments received under ELAP, LFP and LIP may not exceed \$125,000. A separate limitation applies to TAP payments.

Click [here](#) for more information on FSA payment limitations by program.

Rural Energy for America Program - Deadline March 31

USDA Can Help You Make Your Farm, Ranch or Small Business More Profitable

USDA is offering grants and loan guarantees to help rural businesses and agricultural producers reduce their energy costs and consumption.

The funding is being provided through USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Loans and grants are available to install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements.

Renewable energy systems include solar, wind, geothermal, anaerobic digesters, and renewable biomass.

Energy efficiency improvements include grain drying and handling, lighting, refrigeration, building improvements (such as adding insulation or replacing windows), heating and cooling upgrades, motor replacements and automated control upgrades.

Grants of up to 25 percent of a project's total costs are available.

- The maximum grants are \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements and \$500,000 for renewable energy systems

Loans guarantees of up to 75 percent of a project's total costs are available.

- The minimum loan is \$5,000
- The maximum loan is \$25 million

The next grant application deadline is March 31, 2017. Guaranteed loan applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

For information on REAP contact (573) 876-9321 or email nathan.tutt@mo.usda.gov.

Interest Rates and Dates to Remember

Selected Interest Rates for March 2017	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.500
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.00
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.00
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50
Emergency Loans	4.00
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years)	1.50
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years)	1.875
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	
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.
May 31	Final availability date for 2016 Marketing Assistance Loans & LDPs for feed grains, upland cotton, soybeans & minor oilseeds.
July 15	Final date to report CRP, burley tobacco, corn, cotton, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, popcorn, rice, soybeans & all other crops. NAP crops must be reported by the final reporting date or 15 days before harvest.
Aug. 1	Enrollment for 2017 ARC and PLC programs ends.

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).