

November, 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Signup Suspended](#)
- [Livestock Forage Program](#)
- [Foreign Buyers Notification](#)
- [Power of Attorney](#)
- [Fall Acreage Reporting Deadline](#)
- [Payments to Deceased Producers](#)
- [Report Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\) Losses](#)
- [USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [Enrollment Period for 2018 USDA Safety Net Coverage Begins Nov. 1](#)
- [Margin Protection Program – Dairy Registration and Coverage Election Deadline](#)
- [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program](#)
- [USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers](#)
- [Calendar Deadlines](#)
- [November 2017 Loan and Interest Rates](#)

North Dakota FSA e-News

North Dakota Farm Service Agency

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Todd Hall, Member
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Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Signup Suspended

Under the 2014 Farm Bill, CRP enrollment was limited to 24 million acres for Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018. Because the national enrollment of CRP is so close to the acreage limit, FSA has suspended the continuous signup process until further notice. FSA can only accept offers for enrollment under CRP Grasslands or the CRP Enhanced Program (CREP). Only 16 counties in south west and south central North Dakota are eligible for CREP enrollment. All counties in North Dakota can accept CRP Grassland offers.

[Back to top](#)

Marie Marshall, Member
Lucy Matejcek, Member

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Find Your Local Office:

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Livestock Forage Program

The deadline to complete an application for **2017 LFP** is **January 30, 2018**. Producers are asked to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment, if necessary, to complete this application. Livestock producers must have copies of land leases or permits when making the application. In addition, livestock producers will need to know the number of livestock that grazed individual pastures throughout the 2017 grazing period. To be eligible for LFP, the producer must have an interest in the livestock by either owning or leasing the livestock, plus either own or lease the grazing land. Due to the many different leasing arrangements that occur, it is possible that not all producers will be able to show an interest in either the livestock and/or grazing land. Don't delay completing your application.

[Back to top](#)

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

[Back to top](#)

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information. Power of Attorney provisions do not apply to farm loan programs.

[Back to top](#)

Fall Acreage Reporting Deadline

Producers with the following crops have a reporting deadline of November 15th for both FSA and RMA purposes: apiculture, perennial forage, PRF, rye, and all other fall-seeded small grains. Therefore, the aforementioned crops must be reported by **November 15, 2017** to be considered timely filed for program year 2018.

[Back to top](#)

Payments to Deceased Producers

In order to claim a Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment on behalf of a deceased producer, all program conditions for the payment must have been met before the applicable producer's date of death.

If a producer earned a FSA payment prior to becoming deceased, the following is the order of precedence of the representatives of the producer:

- administrator or executor of the estate
- the surviving spouse
- surviving sons and daughters, including adopted children
- surviving father and mother
- surviving brothers and sisters
- heirs of the deceased person who would be entitled to payment according to the State law

In order for FSA to release the payment, the legal representative of the deceased producer must file a form FSA-325, to claim the payment for themselves or an estate. The county office will verify and determine that the application, contract, loan agreement, or other similar form requesting payment issuance, was signed by the applicable deadline for such form, by the deceased or a person legally authorized to act on their behalf at that time of application.

If the application, contract or loan agreement form was signed by someone other than the participant who is deceased, FSA will determine whether the person submitting the form has the legal authority to submit the form to compel FSA to pay the deceased participant.

Payments will be issued to the respective representative's name using the deceased program participant's tax identification number. Payments made to representatives are subject to offset regulations for debts owed by the deceased.

FSA is not responsible for advising persons in obtaining legal advice on how to obtain program benefits that may be due to a participant who has died, disappeared or who has been declared incompetent.

[Back to top](#)

Report Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

The 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 including drought (includes native grass for grazing).

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops. A notice of loss must be filed within 15 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

[Back to top](#)

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.

[Back to top](#)

Enrollment Period for 2018 USDA Safety Net Coverage Begins Nov. 1

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that producers who chose coverage from the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Nov. 1, 2017, to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2018. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2018.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2018 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

The two programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain

rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

[Back to top](#)

Margin Protection Program – Dairy Registration and Coverage Election Deadline

The registration and coverage election deadline for MPP-Dairy deadline is **December 15, 2017**. Furthermore, a change has been made that allows participating dairy operations to “opt” out of MPP for 2018. If a dairy operation has been participating in MPP prior to 2018 and decides to no longer wish to participate, the dairy operation does not have to contact the local FSA office. If the dairy operation chooses to “opt” out for 2018, the final year of the program, coverage ends on December 31, 2017.

[Back to top](#)

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade on-farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the eligible net cost of the storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. FSA requires additional security for all loans exceeding \$100,000 or when the aggregate amount of FSFL loans exceeds \$100,000.

Loan terms of 3, 5, 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan and loan type. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. Sign-up for the FSFL program is continuous throughout the year. All requests for FSFL prior to loan approval require a site inspection for an environmental assessment in accordance to National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) requirements showing no adverse impacts. FSFL policy requires the following actions cannot occur at the proposed FSFL location prior to the environmental assessment being completed:

- **accepting delivery of equipment and/or materials in previously undisturbed areas**
- **site preparation or foundation construction in previously undisturbed areas**
- **no alteration to any structures that are 50 years old or older or within a historic district**

If any of the above are completed prior to FSA completing the on-site assessment may impede the completion of the environmental assessment and eligibility for the FSFL.

Another financing option under the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The program also offers a new “microloan” option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales, grain carts, grain baggers or handling trucks that can move or store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

[Back to top](#)

USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers

Free basic coverage and discounted premiums available for new and underserved loan applicants

Producers who apply for FSA farm loans will be offered the opportunity to enroll in new disaster loss protections created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new coverage, available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), is available to FSA loan applicants who grow non-insurable crops, so this is especially important to fruit and vegetable producers and other specialty crop growers.

New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost, or higher coverage for a discounted premium.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered crops include “specialty” crops, for instance, vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. FSA allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

In addition to free basic coverage, beginning, underserved or limited income producers are eligible for a 50 percent discount on premiums for the higher levels of coverage that protect up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also may work with FSA to protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

FSA offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

Growers need not apply for an FSA loan, nor be a beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmer, to be eligible for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program assistance. To learn more, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans, or contact your local FSA office at <https://offices.usda.gov>.

[Back to top](#)

Calendar Deadlines

Important Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

November 6, 2017 - County Committee Election Ballots will be mailed out to eligible farmers and ranchers for the 2017 FSA County Committee elections

November 10, 2017 - USDA Service Center Closed for **Veterans Day**

****Thank you to all who have served and continue to serve!**

November 15, 2017 - Deadline to remove harvested hay from CRP Acreage

November 15, 2017 - 2018 Perennial and Other Forage NAP Coverage deadline

November 15, 2017 - Acreage Reporting Deadline for Fall-Seeded Small Grains, Apiculture, and PRF/Perennial Forage for program year 2018.

November 15, 2017 - Final date to late-file an acreage report for the 2017 program year for Fall-Seeded Small Grains, Apiculture, and PRF/Perennial Forage

November 15, 2017 - 2018 Hops NAP Coverage deadline

November 23, 2017 - USDA Service Center Closed for Thanksgiving Day

December 1, 2017 - NAP coverage deadline for Honey

December 4, 2017 - Deadline for Producers to return their County Committee Election Ballots to their local County FSA office to ensure their vote is counted for

December 15, 2017 - Registration and coverage election deadline for MPP-Dairy deadline

[Back to top](#)

November 2017 Loan and Interest Rates

Commodity Loans –**2.375%**

Operating Loans – **2.750%**

Farm Ownership and Conservation Loans – **3.625%**

Farm Ownership-Joint Financing – **2.500%**

Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss - **3.750%**

Farm Ownership-Down Payment Loans – **1.500%**

Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3-Year – **1.625%**

Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5-Year – **1.875%**

Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7-Year – **2.125%**

Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10-Year – **2.375%**

Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12-Year – **2.375%**

[Back to top](#)

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