

September 2016



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## Louisiana FSA Newsletter

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### Louisiana Farm Service Agency

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Alexandria, LA 71302  
Phone: 318-473-7721

[www.fsa.usda.gov/la](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/la)

**State Executive Director:**  
Craig A. McCain

**Next State Committee Meeting:** To be determined

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

**USDA Service Centers will be closed on Monday, Oct. 10 in observance of Columbus Day**

### Message from Craig A. McCain, FSA State Executive Director

Recently I was asked a question concerning the weather events experienced across our State during the 2016 crop year. During my answer I began to doubt myself, was it four 500 year flood events, or three 500 year events and one 1000 year event? No wait, it was two 500 year events and two 1000 year events, all in nine months! Regardless of how the weather events which we have experienced are recorded in meteorological history, we all understand the damage left in their wake. Thousands of homes and businesses damaged, along with several hundred thousand acres of crops. Agricultural damages have been widespread, affecting rice, soybeans, plant cane, livestock, pastures and stored feed to name a few. While damage has ranged from minimal quality loss to complete crop losses, the economic losses have made an already challenging economic environment event more difficult. Recent weather has been more favorable across the State, however, most areas report continued rain showers, high humidity and warm temperatures, which is not a good combination for mature crops.

Only time will tell the extent of the damage resulting from these historical weather events, but preliminary estimates have the estimate at well over \$100 million. However, as it has been since the beginning, farmers and ranchers will persevere. This is not the first challenge faced by those who love the land and the production that results from hard work and commitment. The Farm Service Agency wants to assist those who have suffered qualifying losses. Please contact your local FSA Office for more details concerning assistance available in your parish.

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## USDA Offers Flood Impacted Louisiana Farmers and Producers Immediate Disaster Assistance

Louisiana Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers across the state of federal farm program benefits that may be available to help eligible producers recover from recent heavy rains and flooding.

FSA offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts following floods or similar qualifying natural disasters. 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 2016 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, tornadoes, lightning, 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.
- **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 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. 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 Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss. **Jefferson Davis, Acadia, Lafayette, St. Martin, Tangipahoa, St. Helena, Livingston, East and West Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, Ascension and St. James have been approved for debris removal, shaping and releveling, fence repairs and conservation structure restoration. The signup period will be for 60 days from approval of the program; therefore, signup may vary between Parishes. Interested producers should contact their local County Office for details.**

- **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).

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>.

## Several Parishes are Eligible for Emergency Loans

Presidential Declaration M4277

Farmers and ranchers in all of the following areas are either a primary or contiguous disaster area and are eligible for natural disaster assistance.

- |                 |                 |                |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| • Acadia        | Allen           | Ascension      |
| • Assumption    | Avoyelles       | Beauregard     |
| • Calcasieu     | Cameron         | Catahoula      |
| • Concordia     | E. Baton Rouge  | E. Feliciana   |
| • Evangeline    | Iberia          | Iberville      |
| • Jefferson     | Jefferson Davis | Lafayette      |
| • Lafourche     | LaSalle         | Livingston     |
| • Pointe Coupee | Rapides         | St. Charles    |
| • St. Helena    | St. James       | St. John       |
| • St. Landry    | St. Martin      | St. Mary       |
| • St. Tammany   | Tangipahoa      | Terrebonne     |
| • Vermilion     | Washington      | W. Baton Rouge |
| • W. Feliciana  |                 |                |

The designation is due to losses caused by severe storms and flooding beginning Aug. 11, 2016 and ending August 31, 2016.

All parishes listed above were designated natural disaster areas, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible parishes have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their production and physical losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Please contact your local FSA county office for further information. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> .

## USDA Extends Margin Protection Program for Dairy Enrollment Deadline

USDA announced that it will extend the deadline for dairy producers to enroll in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for Dairy to Dec. 16, 2016, from the previous deadline of Sept. 30. This voluntary dairy safety net program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance

to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer. A USDA web tool, available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool), allows dairy producers to calculate levels of coverage available from MPP based on price projections.

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## Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address or zip code or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

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## Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) Program

FSA borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment/s needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale. Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

For more information, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

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## USDA Climate Hub Building Block: Conservation of Sensitive Lands

USDA Climate Hubs are working with producers, ranchers, pasture and forest landowners to effectively partner in ways to help reduce climate change. To aid in this partnership, USDA established the 10 Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry.

One such Building Block is the “Conservation of Sensitive Lands”. The term “sensitive lands” denotes soils and landscapes that are valuable due to properties (e.g., high organic matter, wet hydrology) and/or function (e.g., wildlife habitat, filtration, and hydrologic storage). Typical examples of these soils are organic rich histosols, floodplains, or wetlands along riparian areas. Properties and functions of these soils are easily disrupted from agricultural or urban land use.

Sensitive lands that are used for agricultural production can be protected by changes in land use (long-term cover). This reduction in land use intensity can provide multiple environmental benefits, including substantial GHG mitigation that occurs as carbon is sequestered or preserved in soils and vegetation. When land is removed from crop production, several activities—including tillage, nitrogen fertilization, and energy use—are substantially reduced or eliminated, generating additional GHG mitigation.

FSA and NRCS are committed to identifying these sensitive lands and encouraging landowners, farmers, and ranchers to voluntarily adopt conservation systems--using financial and technical assistance--to generate GHG benefits. To read more about Conservation of Sensitive Lands, click the following link: [http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate\\_change/building\\_blocks/4\\_SensitiveLands.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/building_blocks/4_SensitiveLands.pdf)

For more information about the USDA Climate Hubs click here:  
<http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>

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## AskFSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then ASK FSA at [askfsa.custhelp.com](http://askfsa.custhelp.com).

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your FSA questions no matter where you are or what device you use. It is for ALL customers, including underserved farmers and ranchers who wish to be enrolled in FSA loans, farm, and conservation programs.

**Through AskFSA you can:**

- Access our knowledge base 24/7
- Receive answers to your questions faster
- Submit a question and receive a timely response from an FSA expert
- Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- Customize your account settings and view responses at any time

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## Selected Interest Rates for September 2016

- 90-Day Treasury Bill — .250%
- Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.125%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.125%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher — 1.50%
- Emergency Loans — 3.125%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) — 1.375%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) — 1.500%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) — 1.625%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans (15 year term) — 1.750%
- Commodity Loans — 1.500%.

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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).