

March 2017



Farm Service Agency

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2017 NAP: USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage: March 15th Deadline

Montana producers have until **March 15, 2017** to sign-up for FSA's Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for all 2017 spring planted NAP crops except spring seeded rye, speltz, triticale, wheat, and mixed forage.

NAP provides a catastrophic level (CAT) coverage based on the amount of loss that exceeds 50 percent of the expected production at 55 percent of the average market price for the crop. NAP offers buy-up coverage for the 2015

Acting State Executive Director:
Amy Webbink

State Committee:
Steve Carney, Chair
Floyd Dahlman
Kelly Flaherty-Settle
Anita Matt
Patricia Quisno

Montana USDA Office Directories:

[Online Directory of FSA Offices in Montana](#)

[PDF of Montana FSA Directory](#)

[PDF of Montana USDA Directory](#)

[FSA Factsheets Website](#)

Online Resource Links:

[FSA Disaster Programs](#)
[FSA Farm Loan Programs](#)
[FSA Conservation Programs](#)
[FSA Price Support Programs](#)
[FSA ARC-PLC Programs](#)
[FSA Organic Certification](#)
[Cost-Share Program](#)
[FSA Energy Programs](#)

FSA Policy Reminders:
[2017 Annual Notification-pdf](#)

Reasonable Accommodations:

People with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs and/or events should contact the County Executive Director in the FSA Office in your area or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Alternatively, you may also contact Montana FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Jennifer Cole at (406) 654.1333, ext. 117 or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov.

through 2018 crop years in addition to the basic CAT-level coverage, on all crops except those intended for grazing. These additional coverage levels range from 50-65 percent of the expected production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price.

In order to meet eligibility requirements for NAP, crops must be noninsurable, commercially-produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available. If the Risk Management Agency (RMA) offers coverage for a crop in the county, NAP coverage is not available for that crop. For questions regarding insurability of a crop, please contact your local crop insurance agent. For information on whether a crop is eligible for NAP coverage, please contact your local FSA office.

The NAP service fee for all coverage levels is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interest in multiple counties. In addition to the service fee, producers who elect buy-up coverage must pay a premium equal to the lesser of 5.25 percent of the guarantee or 5.25 percent of the payment limit. FSA will waive NAP service fees and reduce buy-up premiums by 50 percent for underserved, limited resource, and beginning farmers. For questions regarding how to calculate the premium, please contact your local FSA office.

For more information, visit the national NAP page at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap>.

- [2017 NAP Program Factsheet](#) (pdf)

Upcoming Farm Service Agency Deadlines

- **March 15:** 2017 NAP Application Closing Date for Spring Crops (except spring seeded rye, speltz, triticale, wheat, and mixed forage)
- **March 15:** Deadline for Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) Eligible Material Owner Signup for foresters and farmers seeking incentives to remove biomass residues from fields or national forests for delivery to energy generation facilities.
- **March 16:** 2017 CRP Spring Grazing Period Begins (with prior written approval)
- **March 31:** Deadline for 2016 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to file an Application for Payment and supporting documentation. (Producers must file a 2016 LIP Notice of Loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.)
- **March 31:** Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat and Sesame Seed
- **May 14:** 2017 CRP Spring Grazing Period Ends
- **May 15 to July 15:** Montana Primary Nesting Season
- **May 31:** Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower Seed
- **June 15:** 2017 FSA County Committee Election Nomination Period Begins
- **July 15:** Last day of Montana Primary Nesting Season
- **July 16:** 2017 CRP Summer/Fall Grazing Period Begins (with prior written approval)
- **July 16:** 2017 CRP Managed Harvesting Period Begins (with prior written approval)
- **July 17:** 2017 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Spring Seeded Alfalfa Seed, Forage Seeding, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Fruit (except cherries), Vegetables, Christmas Trees, all Spring-Seeded Crops and all other crops not required to be reported by previously announced deadlines
- **Aug. 1:** Deadline for 2017 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Enrollment
- **Aug. 1:** 2017 FSA County Committee Election Nomination Period Deadline
- **Aug. 1:** Last day to request FY 2017 farm reconstitutions on ARC & PLC farms
- **Aug. 1:** Last day to request farm transfers for FY 2017
- **Sept. 1:** 2018 NAP Application Closing Date Value-Loss Crops such as nursery, Christmas trees, grass sod, ginseng, aquaculture, floriculture, root stock sets and mushrooms.
- **Sept. 13:** 2017 CRP Summer/Fall Grazing Period Ends
- **Sept. 30:** 2017 CRP Managed Harvesting Period Ends
- **Oct. 2:** 2018 NAP Application Closing Date for Annual Fall-Seeded Crops, Perennial Forage and Grazing, Mixed Forage Crops including spring seeded annual types of mixed forage, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Garlic

2017 CRP Spring Managed Grazing Period: March 16-May 14

Spring Managed Grazing: Livestock must be removed from CRP by May 14

Primary Nesting Season: May 15 to July 15

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2017 Spring Managed Grazing Period is March 16 to May 14, 2017. Livestock must be removed when the calculated AUMs have been utilized but no later than May 14th.

Summer/Fall Managed Harvesting Period begins July 16 following Montana's Primary Nesting Season and ends no later than Sept. 30. Summer/Fall Grazing Period begins July 16 and ends when the calculated AUMs have been utilized or no later than Sept. 13.

Producers are reminded to sign up at their local FSA office and complete a CRP-117 form for FSA office approval before conducting any managed harvesting and/or grazing activity.

Report Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2017, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2017, and no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event or attack. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.00% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3.60%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2017 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent
- An application for payment by March 31, 2018.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

Ongoing FSA Notice of Loss Requirements

Montana farmers and ranchers are reminded to timely report all crop and livestock losses to your local FSA office. For any questions, please contact your local FSA office.

NAP – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program: Submit Notice of Loss within 15 calendar days of the earlier of a natural disaster occurrence, the final planting date if planting is prevented by a natural disaster, the date that damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent; or the normal harvest date.

ELAP – Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program: Submit Notice of Loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or Nov. 1st after the end of the program year in which the loss occurred.

LIP - Livestock Indemnity Program: Submit Notice of Loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. File an Application for payment and supporting documentation no later than 90 days after the calendar year in which the loss occurred.

TAP - Tree Assistance Program: Final Date to Submit an Application and Supporting Documentation is the later of 90 calendar days of the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent

Visit FSA's national disaster assistance [website](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index) at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index> and [FSA's program factsheets](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/factsheets/index) page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/factsheets/index>.

FSA County Committee Elections

Congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected County Committee members and appointed advisors. FSA appreciates all of these individuals for their service on the county committees and representing farmers and ranchers within their local area. FSA thanks all of the voters for taking time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation. Contact your FSA office for more information.

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

USDA announced that 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 or transitional 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. For states that want to continue to directly administer the programs, applications were due Feb. 17, 2017.

Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic or transitional 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. This announcement also adds transitional certification and state organic program fees as additional scopes.

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>.

2017 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Enrollment Period Continues: Aug. 1 Deadline

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Nov. 1, 2016, to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC 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>.

Training Underway in Montana FSA Offices

County Operations Training

FSA develops new local leaders through a one-year training program for County Operations Trainees. Each trainee is guided through the training program by an experienced County Executive Director (CED). A combination of classroom-type training, hands-on experience and formal management training prepare the trainees to step into the managerial role of CED to provide oversight for FSA commodity, conservation and livestock programs for one or more counties.

We would like to introduce you to the following trainees currently located in five Montana offices:

- Custer County Office in Miles City: Lacey Wilson
- Dawson County Office in Glendive: Moses Wanyakha
- Cascade County Office in Great Falls: Shanan Smiley
- Judith Basin Office in Stanford: Liz Bradshaw
- Teton County Office in Choteau: Laura Antone

Farm Loan Officer Training

FSA's 2-year training program for Farm Loan Officer Trainees uses classroom and on-the-job training to develop competencies required to be a successful Farm Loan Officer. The training program involves intense credit and financial analysis training related to agricultural enterprises under the supervision of an experienced Farm Loan Manager.

We would like to introduce you to the following trainees currently located in five Montana offices:

- Cascade County Office in Great Falls: Kent Wietgreffe
- Glacier County Office in Cut Bank: Kris Nicholson
- Roosevelt County Office in Culbertson: Cheryl Tompt and Scott Johnson
- Yellowstone County Office in Billings: Abby Cook
- Blaine County Office in Chinook: Kari Sullivan

AFIDA: 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 FSA-153 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.

Farm Loan Program Availability

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agricultural production. As a farmer or rancher, whether you are just starting out or have many years of experience, loans are available for farm operating purposes and/or to purchase or improve a farm or ranch. As the "Lender of First Opportunity" FSA targets some of the direct and guaranteed loan funds for beginning and/or underserved farmers or ranchers. For purposes of this program, a beginning farmer/rancher is defined as someone who started in farming or ranching less than 10 years ago; underserved individuals are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere. For more information, contact your local FSA office who can schedule an appointment with the Farm Loan Program (FLP) staff serving your area and/or visit the [National FLP Web site](#).

- [FSA Factsheet: Farm Loan Program Overview](#) (pdf)

Emergency Loans – Disaster Designations in Montana

FSA's Emergency Loan Program is available for agricultural producers in counties designated as primary or contiguous natural disaster areas. See map below of current Disaster Designations in Montana by County. Contact your local FSA office for specific designations in your area and time frames to apply. Eligible producers have **eight months** from the date of the disaster designation to apply for low-interest emergency loans to 1.) restore or replace essential property; 2.) pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; 3.) pay essential family living expenses; or 4.) refinance certain debts, excluding real estate. Producers interested

in applying for an emergency loan, or other FLP loans, should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with the Farm Loan Program staff serving your area.

- [Current Disaster Designations in Montana](#) - (by county)
- [Emergency Loan Factsheet](#) (pdf)

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 \$100,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and loans under \$100,000 will not 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>.

FSA Texting Option: How to subscribe to Montana offices

No office? No problem! FSA Now Offers Text Message Alerts

Keep up with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) News

Receive text message alerts from FSA while on-the-go, in the field, on the tractor or even on horseback. Subscribe to receive text message alerts on your cell phone and stay updated on:

- Deadline reminders
- Program notifications
- Reporting requirements
- Local outreach events

To subscribe to texts from the Montana FSA State Office: Text **Montana** to **FSA-NOW (372-669)**.

Want to receive texts from your Montana FSA County Office?

TO SUBSCRIBE, text your county's keyword (listed below) to FSANOW (372-669). For example, to subscribe to FSA texts from Beaverhead County you will text **MTBeaverhead** to FSA-NOW (**372-669**).

County/Keyword

Beaverhead County: MTBeaverhead	McCone County: MTMcCone
Big Horn County: MTBigHorn	Meagher County: MTMeagher
Blaine County: MTBlaine	Mineral County: MTMineral
Broadwater County: MTBroadwater	Missoula County: MTMissoula
Carbon County: MTCarbon	Musselshell County: MTMusselshell
Carter County: MTCarter	Park County: MTPark
Cascade County: MTCascade	Petroleum County: MTPetroleum
Chouteau County: MTChouteau	Phillips County: MTPhillips
Custer County: MTCuster	Pondera County: MTPondera
Daniels County: MTDaniels	Powder River County: MTPowder
Dawson County: MTDawson	Powell County: MTPowell
Deer Lodge County: MTDeerLodge	Prairie County: MTPrairie
Fallon County: MTFallon	Ravalli County: MTRavalli
Fergus County: MTFergus	Richland County: MTRichland
Flathead County: MTFlathead	Roosevelt County: MTRoosevelt
Gallatin County: MTGallatin	Rosebud County: MTRosebud
Garfield County: MTGarfield	Sanders County: MTSanders
Glacier County: MTGlacier	Sheridan County: MTSheridan
Golden Valley County: MTGolden	Silver Bow County: MTSilverBow
Granite County: MTGranite	Stillwater County: MTStillwater
Hill County: MTHill	Sweet Grass County: MTSweetGrass
Jefferson County: MTJefferson	Teton County: MTTeton
Judith Basin County: MTJudithBasin	Toole County: MTToole
Lake County: MTLake	Treasure County: MTTreasure
Lewis and Clark County: MTLewisClark	Valley County: MTValley
Liberty County: MTLiberty	Wheatland County: MTWheatland
Lincoln County: MTLincoln	Wibaux County: MTWibaux
Madison County: MTMadison	Yellowstone County: MTYellowstone

Standard text messaging rates apply. Expect to receive no more than two text messages from FSA each month, on average. Participants may unsubscribe at any time. Contact your local FSA office to subscribe to the text message alerts service. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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