

July 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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FSA Program Eligibility Requirement - 2017 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification Deadline: July 17

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers, including livestock producers, are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The 2017 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification Deadline is **Monday, July 17, 2017** for Spring Seeded Alfalfa Seed, Forage Seeding, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Fruit (except cherries), Vegetables, Christmas Trees, and all

Floyd Dahlman
Kelly Flaherty-Settle
Anita Matt
Patricia Quisno

Spring-Seeded Crops and any other crops not required to be reported by previously announced deadlines.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

Directories:

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

Online Resource Links:

- [FSA Factsheets](#)
- [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](#)
- [USDA:](#)
<https://www.usda.gov/>
- [New Farmers:](#)
<https://newfarmers.usda.gov/>
- [Montana Department of Agriculture's Hay Hotline](#)
- [FSA's HayNet and Grazing Net](#)

- If the crop has not been planted by the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 17th. Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the applicable dates or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Important reminder: A "Final" crop reporting date was established which is the crop's subsequent year's acreage reporting date (ARD). If a crop report is not submitted by the subsequent year's ARD, or "Final" ARD, the acreage report cannot be considered acceptable and producers will not receive planting credit for the crop nor will the crop be eligible for any FSA program benefits for the applicable program year. The first "Final" ARD is **November 15, 2017**. Producers that do not report their 2017 perennial forage crops, including native grass, by November 15, 2017, will not be eligible for the 2017 LFP or ELAP program

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office.

FSA Policy Reminders:

- [2017 Annual Notification](#) (pdf)

Producers in Nine Montana Counties May Be Eligible for 2017 Drought Disaster Assistance

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Montana reminds producers affected by the recent drought that disaster assistance programs are available.

As of June 29, 2017, the following nine (9) Montana counties have met the extreme drought (D3) criteria on the U.S. Drought Monitor and are eligible for disaster assistance programs: **Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Valley and Wibaux.**

These nine (9) Montana counties recently met qualifying drought ratings that 'trigger' eligibility for the **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)**. Eligible pasture types may include long season small grains, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass or forage sorghum that is produced on dryland acres and used for grazing. Irrigated acres used for grazing or aftermath grazing are not eligible under this program.

Eligible livestock include alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, reindeer or sheep that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland during the normal grazing period.

Applications are required for 2017 losses. The LFP application and supporting documentation for 2017 losses must be submitted by January 30, 2018; however, 2017 acreage reports are required to be filed for all eligible land no later than the final reporting date of **November 15, 2017**. Acreage reports filed after that date will not be accepted which will result in ineligibility for the 2017 LFP program. Required supporting documents may include information related to grazing leases or federal grazing permits, contract grower agreements, documentation to support livestock inventory and more.

Producers with grazing land physically located in one of the nine eligible LFP counties should contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to begin the application process.

Livestock producers may also be eligible for assistance through the **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** which covers the additional cost of transporting water to eligible livestock when the drought directly impacts water availability during the normal grazing period. The **ELAP** program also provides assistance to Honeybee producers that have additional feed purchase costs when a county reaches the D3 status at any time during the program year.

In addition, the **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** provides funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. ECP is available by producer request and pending funding availability.

Compensation is also available to producers who purchased coverage through the **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**, which protects non-insurable crops against natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses or prevented planting.

USDA also authorized **emergency grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** acres in certain CRP land in Montana. Producers must contact FSA for written approval prior to beginning any emergency grazing. Emergency grazing is authorized to begin immediately and extends through Sept. 30, unless conditions improve. Producers must work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a modified conservation plan that is site specific, including the authorized grazing duration to reflect local wildlife needs. FSA State Committees will monitor emergency grazing implementation at the local level to mitigate adverse impacts on nesting areas and established CRP vegetation.

Eligible CRP participants can use the acreage for grazing their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reductions assessed for acres grazed.

For more information, contact the local FSA office. Information can also be obtained online at disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Authorizes Emergency Grazing in Drought-Stricken Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota and Authorizes Additional Flexibilities for Producers

Producers must contact FSA for written approval prior to beginning any emergency CRP activity.

USDA authorized emergency grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres during the primary nesting season in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana in the counties meeting D2 or greater, as indicated by the US Drought Monitor. Since that time the drought has continued to deepen and the forecast is for hot, dry weather in the upcoming week in the northern plains. As

such, USDA is authorizing emergency grazing of CRP for any county in which any part of its border lies within 150 miles of a county approved for emergency grazing of CRP.

In addition, for any county in which any part of its border lies within 150 miles of any county approved for emergency grazing of CRP, USDA will allow CRP contract holders who have their acreage according to their mid-management conservation plan to donate their hay to livestock producers. CRP contract holders still have the ability to sell their hay with a 25 percent reduction in their annual rental payment as they've been fully authorized to do in the past. After prior approval from FSA, haying is authorized to begin July 16th. Only hay conducted as a mid-contract management activity, is authorized to be donated to an eligible livestock producer.

Emergency haying is not authorized at this time. USDA will continue to monitor conditions and will consider expanding emergency authority if conditions worsen.

Eligible CRP participants can use the acreage for grazing their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reductions assessed for acres grazed.

A map displaying counties approved for CRP emergency grazing and the donation of hay under mid-contract management authority, is available at: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/emergency-haying-and-grazing/index>.

Producers must contact FSA for written approval prior to beginning any emergency CRP activity. To take advantage of the emergency grazing provisions, producers should contact their local USDA Service Center. Visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Designates Six Counties in Montana as Primary Natural Disaster Areas with Assistance to Producers in North Dakota

On June 30, 2017, USDA announced Daniels, Garfield, McCone, Roosevelt, Sheridan and Valley counties in Montana were designated as primary natural disaster areas due to losses and damages caused by a recent drought.

Farmers and ranchers in Custer, Dawson, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland and Rosebud counties in **Montana** also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Farmers and ranchers in Divide, McKenzie and Williams counties in **North Dakota** also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on June 28, 2017, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for [FSA's emergency \(EM\) loans](#), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include [Operating and Farm Ownership Loans](#); the [Emergency Conservation Program](#); [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#); [Livestock Indemnity Program](#); [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#); and the [Tree Assistance Program](#). Interested farmers may contact their local USDA service centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

FSA news releases are available on FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov via the "Newsroom" link.

Filing for 2017 NAP Losses

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, documents a producer's loss or damage to a crop or commodity due to an eligible cause of loss, as well as failed acreage and prevented planting. A CCC-576, Notice of Loss must be provided for prevented planting claims, within 15 calendar days after the final planting date established for the crop, and for low yield claims, the earlier of:

- 15 calendar days after the disaster occurrence or date of loss or damage to the crop first becomes apparent
- 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date established for the crop.

Timely filing a Notice of Loss with FSA is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office by the dates previously mentioned.

For more information, contact the local FSA office. Online NAP resources are available at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/noninsured-crop-disaster-assistance/index>.

2017 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & 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, have until Aug. 1, 2017 to sign contracts with FSA and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment deadline is **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>.

Montana Hay Hotline Available for Producers Affected by Drought

Listings of Hay for Sale [Online](#)

With the severe drought conditions affecting many throughout the state, the Montana Department of Agriculture wants to remind folks that the Hay Hotline is available to producers as an [online](#) tool to connect buyers and sellers of hay and pasture.

The department maintains the Hay Hotline as a service to the agricultural industry, making it available with the expectation that all buyers and sellers will treat each other in an equitable and lawful manner. Visit the online tool at <http://agr.mt.gov/Hay-Hotline>. Anyone with questions about the hay hotline is encouraged to call the department at (406) 444-2402.

For more information on drought conditions in Montana, visit the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation drought management page at: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/water/drought-management>.

The Montana Department of Agriculture's mission is to protect producers and consumers, and to enhance and develop agriculture and allied industries. For more information on the department, visit agr.mt.gov.

New 2018 Reporting Requirement for AUM Leases

Beginning in program year 2018, AUM leases (Forest Service, BLM, and private) will be required to be reported on an AUM basis and no longer on an acreage basis. Producers with AUM leases will be required to provide a copy of their AUM lease to the FSA office when reporting their perennial forage acres, including native grass, no later than November 15, 2017. If you have questions regarding this new policy, please contact the local FSA office.

Aug. 1st Nomination Deadline for 2017 County Committee Elections

USDA FSA encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the County Committee election nomination process which opens June 15 and ends Aug. 1.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year. County committees may have one or more appointed advisors to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and land owners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

All nomination forms for the 2017 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2017. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

2017 Montana County Committee Election Areas Open for Nomination

The following areas in Montana are open for nomination this year:

- [Click here to view this year's Montana LAAs](#) (map and description by County)

- [2017 FSA-669A Nomination Form](#)
- [FSA County Committee Election Website](#)

Document the Drought: USDA U.S. Drought Monitor Offers Producers a Voice to Report Drought Impacts

The U.S. Drought Monitor's reporting feature offers producers an opportunity to submit drought impact and condition reports.

The USDA, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, produced the U.S. Drought Monitor to include a reporting feature that allows producers to report local drought impacts and conditions.

The report allows producers to:

- Provide a written description of drought impacts on livelihood, activities, etc.;
- Select categories to show losses and gains as a result of the drought;
- Report on the duration of drought event;
- Select Affected Places – geographic areas ranging from an entire state to a small area within a state;
- Submit images that document the drought and its impact;
- Provide contact information (includes an option to keep information confidential).

The reporting tool for producers to record the effects of the drought can be accessed at the following link: <http://droughtreporter.unl.edu/submitreport/>

More information including state specific drought impact maps can be found on the U. S. Drought Monitor homepage: <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home.aspx>

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/fact-sheets/index) page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/fact-sheets/index>.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) to Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

FSA supports the RMA in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the county office staff, the RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

Upcoming Farm Service Agency Dates and Deadlines

- **June 15:** 2017 FSA County Committee Election Nomination Period Began
- **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
- **July 17:** 2016 NAP Production Reporting Deadline for certain NAP crops
- **July 17:** Deadline to submit 2016 Certified Yields for ARC-IC
- **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
- **Nov. 15:** 2018 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Perennial Forage, Pasture, Rangeland, Forage (PRF) including native grass, fall wheat (Hard Red Winter), and all other fall-seeded small grains
- **Nov. 15: Final** 2017 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Perennial Forage, Pasture, Rangeland, Forage (PRF) including native grass, fall wheat (Hard Red Winter), and all other fall-seeded small grains

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 contact Montana FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Jennifer Cole at (406) 654.1333, ext. 117 or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov.

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).