

August 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Montana FSA: August 2017 Newsletter & Disaster Programs Update

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Aug. 1, 2017 ARC-PLC Enrollment & More FSA Deadlines

Montana farmers and ranchers should contact their local FSA office to participate and for any questions about FSA programs.

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

Aug. 31: 2017 CRP Emergency CRP Haying Ends

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](#)

FSA Policy Reminders:

[2017 Annual Notification](#) (pdf)

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 Managed Summer/Fall Grazing Period Ends

Sept. 30: 2017 CRP Managed Harvesting Period Ends

Sept. 30: 2017 CRP Emergency Grazing 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. 1: 2017 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees & Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Application for Payment Deadline

Nov. 6: County Committee Election Ballots will be mailed to Eligible Voters

Nov. 12: All Hay Bales Must be Removed from CRP

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

Dec. 1: 2018 NAP Application Closing Date for Honey Producers

Dec. 4: Last Day to Return Voted County Committee Election Ballots to local FSA Offices

Jan. 1, 2018: Newly elected COC Members Take Office

Jan. 2, 2018: 2018 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Honey covered under NAP (or 30 days after placement of colonies.)

Jan. 15, 2018: 2018 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed and Cherries

Jan. 30, 2018: Deadline for 2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation

Jan. 30, 2018: Deadline for 2017 Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation for Loss of 2017 (or 90 days after disaster event or loss was apparent.)

Feb. 1, 2018: Final Availability Date for Loans and LDPs for Mohair, Unshorn Pelts (LDP only) and Wool

USDA Offers Drought and Fire Impacted Montana Farmers and Ranchers Disaster Assistance

Farm Service Agency Stands Ready to Assist Agricultural Producers Affected by Drought and Fire

Montana Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers of federal farm program benefits that may be available to help eligible producers recover from drought and fire.

FSA offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts during drought, fire 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 including excessive wind and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.
- **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 wildfires, hurricanes, floods, blizzards, tropical storms, tornados, 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.
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disasters including excessive wind and qualifying drought.
- **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. ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to wildfire. For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including wildfire, flooding, high winds and tornadoes. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- **Emergency Loan Program** – available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous disaster designation. These low interest loans help producers recover from production and/or physical losses.
- **Emergency Conservation Program** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters, including fence loss, and implement emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought and wildfire. Submit an application at your local FSA office.

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).

NOVEMBER 15, 2017- FINAL ACREAGE REPORTING DATE FOR 2017 PERENNIAL FORAGE

The final acreage reporting date (ARD) for 2017 perennial forage crops, including all grazing acres, is **November 15, 2017**. Producers that are affected by the drought or fire **MUST** file a 2017 acreage

report to be eligible for the livestock disaster programs, LFP and ELAP. If all perennial forage crops, including all grazing acres, are not reported by **November 15, 2017**, producers will not be eligible for the 2017 LFP or ELAP program.

For more information on disaster assistance programs and loans visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster or contact your local FSA Office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

How to Document Wildfire Losses

Producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to recent wildfires may be eligible for disaster assistance programs through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and the 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.

To participate in LIP, 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. To participate in ELAP, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock losses due to the eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Rendering truck receipts by kind, type and weight - important to document prior to disposal;
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Documentation from Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Natural Resources, or other sources to substantiate eligible death losses due to an eligible loss condition;
- Documentation that livestock were removed from grazing pastures due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition;
- Costs of transporting livestock feed to eligible livestock, such as receipts for equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal;
- Feed purchase receipts if feed supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Number of gallons of water transported to livestock due to water shortages.

For more information on these programs and documentation requirements, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster or contact your local FSA office.

2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program Available in 17 Montana Counties

FSA's Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land, or fire on federally managed land.

Producers in 17 Montana counties are eligible to apply for 2017 LFP benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass, 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.

County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of a qualifying drought or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire.

As of **July 27, 2017**, the following 17 **Montana counties** have met the extreme drought (D3) or exceptional drought (D4) criteria on the U.S. Drought Monitor and are eligible for the 2017 LFP Program: **Blaine, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, McCone, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Valley and Wibaux. (2017 LFP Map)**

Producers with grazing land physically located in one of the 17 eligible LFP counties should contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to begin the application process.

Eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than Jan. 30, 2018, for 2017 losses. Note that 2017 acreage reports are required to be filed for all eligible land no later than the final reporting date of **Nov. 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.

Additional Information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, is available at your local FSA office or online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

2017 Emergency Conservation Program Assistance

ECP Drought: As of July 27, 2017, the following 15 counties are authorized to schedule 2017 Emergency Conservation Program Signup for Drought: Blaine, Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Valley and Wibaux. Signup dates vary by county. Contact your local FSA office for assistance.

ECP Fire: As of July 27, 2017, the following two counties are authorized to schedule 2017 Emergency Conservation Program Signup for Fire: Custer and Richland. Additional ECP-Fire requests are anticipated for recent and ongoing Montana wildfires and will be announced upon authorization.

For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- affect the productive capacity of the farmland
- impair or endanger the land

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. No producer is eligible for more than \$200,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence. The following types of measures may be eligible:

- removing debris from farmland
- grading, shaping, or releveling severely damaged farmland
- restoring permanent fences
- restoring conservation structures and other similar installations
- drought emergency measures

Producers who have suffered a loss from a natural disaster may contact the local FSA Office and request assistance.

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all of the following are met:

- an application for cost-share assistance has been filed
- onsite inspection of the damaged area and an environmental assessment conducted
- the Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), has made a needs determination, which may include cubic yards of earthmoving, etc., required for rehabilitation

For more information about ECP, please contact the local FSA Office and visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

ELAP Covers Losses from Additional Cost of Transporting Water to Livestock

Assistance is available to livestock producers through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) for producers who have incurred additional operating costs for transporting water to livestock due to an eligible drought.

An eligible drought means that part or all of a county is designated D3 (extreme drought) or higher as indicated by the U.S. Drought Monitor (www.droughtmonitor.unl.edu). Producers must file a notice of loss on form CCC-851 the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the producer, or by Nov. 1, 2017. Additionally, the deadline to submit an application for payment for 2017 ELAP assistance is Nov. 1, 2017.

To qualify for ELAP, eligible livestock must be: adult or non-adult dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo and beefalo, as well as alpacas, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, reindeer, or sheep.

Additionally, the livestock must have been owned 60 calendar days prior to the beginning of the drought and be physically located in the county designated as a disaster area due to drought. Adequate livestock watering systems or facilities must have existed before the drought occurred and producers are only eligible if they do not normally transport water to the livestock.

Livestock that were or would have been in a feedlot are not eligible for transporting water. ELAP covers the additional cost of transporting water and does not cover the cost of the water itself.

Producers will have to provide documentation to FSA that shows the method used to transport the water, the number of gallons of water transported and the number of eligible livestock to which water was transported.

Livestock producers should contact FSA to make an appointment to sign up for ELAP and to learn more about eligibility, application and documentation requirements.

USDA Opens More Land for Emergency Haying and Grazing

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized the use of additional Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practices for emergency grazing and haying in and around portions of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota affected by severe drought.

CRP practices eligible to be hayed and grazed are: CP1 (Introduced Grasses); CP2 (Native Grasses); CP4B (Wildlife Corridors); CP4D (Wildlife Habitat); CP8A (Grassed Waterways); CP10 (Grasses already established); CP18B (Vegetation to Reduce Salinity); CP18C (Salt Tolerant Vegetative Cover); CP23 (Wetland Restoration); CP23A (Wetland Restoration, Non-floodplain); CP27 (Farmable Wetlands); CP28 (Farmable Wetland Buffers); CP37 (Duck Nesting); CP41 (Flooded Prairie Farmable Wetlands). Many of these practices are wetland related and acreage within 120' of a stream or other permanent water body is ineligible for any type of haying. The haying would be for the buffer portion of the wetland related practice. All CRP acreage located within a SAFE project area are eligible to be

grazed, but not hayed. All emergency grazing must end Sept. 30, 2017 and emergency haying must end Aug. 31, 2017.

Landowners interested in emergency haying or grazing of CRP acres should contact the FSA office and meet with the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff to obtain a modified conservation plan to include emergency haying/grazing. CRP participants are reminded that a certain percentage of fields must be left unhayed or ungrazed.

Additional information about the counties approved for emergency haying and grazing and the eligible CRP practices in this area is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/emergency-hayandgraze.

Report 2017 NAP Losses

The Noninsured 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. Eligible causes of loss include but are not limited to the following natural disasters: damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind; adverse natural occurrences, such as earthquake or flood; and conditions related to damaging weather or adverse natural occurrences, such as excessive heat, plant disease, or insect infestation.

The natural disaster must occur during the coverage period, before or during harvest, and must directly affect the eligible crop.

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 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, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

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

Emergency Loan Program Available: Montana Disaster Designations

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. 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)

2018 MPP-Dairy Election Period to begin Sept. 1, 2017

MPP-Dairy 2018 annual coverage election period signup that was scheduled to begin on July 3, 2017 has been delayed to begin on September 1, 2017.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2016, through Sept. 30, 2017, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope.

Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certification fees, late fees and inspections necessary to address National Organic Program regulatory violations.

Producers and handlers may submit OCCSP applications to FSA county offices or they may apply through participating State Agencies, which will be listed at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index> as their agreements to administer the program are finalized.

The FSA OCCSP application form is available at [USDA's eForms site](#), by selecting "Browse forms" and entering "OCCSP" in the "title or keywords" field on the search page.

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