

December 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Montana FSA: December 2017 eNews

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2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program Available in 42 Montana Counties: January 30th Application Deadline

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.

Livestock producers in 42 Montana counties are eligible to apply for 2017 LFP benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass and 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.

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](#)
- [Montana NRCS](#)
- [Montana RD](#)
- [USDA:](#)
<https://www.usda.gov/>
- [New Farmers:](#)
<https://newfarmers.usda.gov/>
- [Montana Department of Agriculture's Hay Hotline](#)

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

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

The following **42 Montana counties** met the drought criteria on the U.S. Drought Monitor and are eligible for the 2017 LFP Program: **Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Sheridan, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux and Yellowstone.**

- **1 monthly LFP payment:** Big Horn, Flathead, Lake, Lincoln and Sanders
- **3 monthly LFP payments:** Broadwater, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark and Pondera
- **4 monthly LFP payments:** Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Dawson, Fallon, Glacier, Golden Valley, Judith Basin, Liberty, Meagher, Musselshell, Powder River, Richland, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Wheatland, Wibaux and Yellowstone
- **5 monthly LFP payments:** Blaine, Custer, Daniels, Fergus, Garfield, Hill, McCone, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan and Valley.

Producers with grazing land physically located in one of the 42 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. Required supporting documents may include information related to grazing leases or federal grazing permits, contract grower agreements, documentation to support livestock inventory and more. Note that 2017 acreage reports were required to be filed for all eligible land no later than the final reporting date of **Nov. 15, 2017**.

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

Enrollment Period Underway for Safety Net Coverage in 2018

Montana farmers and ranchers with base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program may now enroll for the 2018 crop year. The enrollment period, which began on Nov. 1, 2017, will end on Aug. 1, 2018.

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

The producers on a farm that are not enrolled for the 2018 enrollment period will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 crop should crop prices, county

revenues, or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in previous years must still enroll during the 2018 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>.

Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2018 Coverage; Dec. 15 Deadline

Enrollment ends on Dec. 15, 2017, for coverage in calendar year 2018

Secretary Allows Producers to Opt Out

USDA Farm Service Agency announced that starting Sept. 1, 2017, dairy producers can enroll for 2018 coverage in the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy). Secretary Sonny Perdue has utilized additional flexibility this year by providing dairy producers the option of opting out of the program for 2018.

To opt out, a producer should not sign up during the annual registration period. By opting out, a producer would not receive any MPP-Dairy benefits if payments are triggered for 2018. Full details will be included in a subsequent Federal Register Notice. The decision would be for 2018 only and is not retroactive.

The voluntary 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.

MPP-Dairy gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation. **Enrollment ends on Dec. 15, 2017, for coverage in calendar year 2018.** Participating farmers will remain in the program through Dec. 31, 2018, and pay a minimum \$100 administrative fee for 2018 coverage. Producers have the option of selecting a different coverage level from the previous coverage year during open enrollment.

Dairy operations enrolling in the program must meet conservation compliance provisions and cannot participate in the Livestock Gross Margin Dairy Insurance Program. Producers can mail the appropriate form to the producer's administrative county FSA office, along with applicable fees, without necessitating a trip to the local FSA office. If electing higher coverage for 2018, dairy producers can either pay the premium in full at the time of enrollment or pay 100 percent of the premium by Sept. 1, 2018. Premium fees may be paid directly to FSA or producers can work with their milk handlers to remit premiums on their behalf.

USDA has a web tool to help producers determine the level of coverage under the MPP-Dairy that will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The online resource, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine unique operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs based on price projections. Producers can also review historical data or estimate future coverage based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, Smartphone, tablet or any other platform, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop by a local FSA office to learn more about the MPP-Dairy.

2017 Livestock Indemnity Program

For 2017 livestock deaths, a notice of loss must have been filed with the local FSA office within 30 calendar days from when the loss was apparent.

To be eligible for LIP, producers who suffered livestock deaths due to an adverse weather from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017 must have submitted a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock was first apparent. An application for payment must be filed with their local FSA County Office by the March 31, 2018 deadline. Eligible adverse weather events include, but are not limited to, earthquake, hail, lightning, tornado, winter storm (lasting 3 consecutive days with high winds, freezing rain/sleet, heavy snowfall and extremely cold temperatures), floods, blizzards, wild fires, extreme heat, extreme cold, anthrax, straight-line winds, and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae poisoning) that directly results in the death of eligible livestock more than normal mortality.

Livestock producers must provide proof of death and inventory numbers of eligible livestock that died due to an eligible adverse weather event. The inventory numbers represent the number of eligible livestock before and after the adverse weather event(s) that cause the death of the livestock. Beginning and ending inventory documents can include, veterinary records, balance sheets, inventory numbers used for tax purposes, loan records, sales and purchase records and other similar documents. Proof of death documentation may be rendering truck receipts, FEMA records, veterinary records, private insurance documents, contemporaneous records that existed at the time of the weather event(s), pictures with a date, and other similar documents.

The Census of Agriculture is a Producer's Voice, Future, and Opportunity

In December farmers and ranchers across the nation will receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web questionnaire. The online questionnaire has been revised extensively to make it more convenient for producers.

Conducted once every five years, the census of agriculture is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them; it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.

Farmers and ranchers, trade associations, government, extension educators, researchers, and many others rely on census of agriculture data when making decisions that shape American agriculture – from creating and funding farm programs to boosting services for communities and the industry. The census of agriculture is a producer's voice, future, and opportunity.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

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)

Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Producers, Including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land

FSA offers farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office.

Marketing Assistance Available for 2017 Crops

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

Producers should become familiar with the process to access this assistance.

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for commodities such as feed grains, soybeans and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows.

A producer who is eligible to obtain an MAL, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

To be eligible for an MAL or an LDP, producers must have a beneficial interest in the commodity, in addition to other requirements. A producer retains beneficial interest when control of and title to the commodity is maintained. For an LDP, the producer must retain beneficial interest in the commodity from the time of planting through the date the producer filed [Form CCC-633EZ \(page 1\)](#) in the FSA County Office. For more information, producers should contact their local FSA county office or view the [LDP Fact Sheet](#).

December 2017 Loan and Interest Rates

Commodity Loans –**2.500%**

Operating Loans – **2.875%**

Farm Ownership and Conservation Loans – **3.750%**

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 – **1.750%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5-Year – **2.000%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7-Year – **2.250%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10-Year – **2.375%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12-Year – **2.375%**

Call your [local FSA office](#) for additional information.

Program Dates and Deadlines

Dec. 14: 2017 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Production Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage

Dec. 15: Last day of 2018 MPP-Dairy Signup

Dec. 30: 2017 NAP Production Reporting Deadline for Rye, Speltz, Triticale, and Wheat (Fall-Seeded)

Jan. 1: Newly elected FSA County Committee Members Take Office

Jan. 2: 2018 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Honey covered under NAP (or 30 days after placement of colonies.) **Please note that this is the Final Acreage Reporting Deadline for 2017 Honey covered under NAP.**

Jan. 15: 2018 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed and Cherries. **Please note that this is the Final Acreage Reporting Deadline for 2017 Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed and Cherries.**

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

Jan. 30: 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: Final Availability Date for Loans and Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) for Mohair, Unshorn Pelts (LDP only) and Wool

For more information, contact your local FSA office and/or visit Montana FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

Registration now open for 2018 Montana's Next Generation Conference

Participation in the January 27 workshops will fulfill the requirements for Farm Service Agency's Production and Financial Management Training.

Registration is now open for the 2018 [Montana's Next Generation Conference](#). The conference, which will take place Friday and Saturday, January 26-27, 2018, in Shelby, MT, will focus on business planning for the farm or ranch and production workshops.

The conference begins Friday at 11 a.m. at the [Shelby Civic Center](#) with family farm coach Elaine Froese. A family farmer herself from Manitoba, Elaine has developed a presentation that will hit home for local producers entitled "Your Farm, Your Family, Your Choice." Thru the course of the day, Elaine will break down for farmers and ranchers of all generations on how to keep communication lines open in the day to day family business operations, manage a successful multigenerational operation and share what has worked on their family farm.

Elaine has offered a free copy of her latest book "Building Your Farm Legacy" for all early bird registrations, which contains 32 chapters covering relationships, communication, teams & operations, planning, succession and healthy habits. Every family farm will want a copy of the valuable insights shared in this book.

Friday evening will include a trade show, a roast beef dinner and time for networking with neighbors, sponsors, and industry professionals.

Amanda Radke, a fifth generation family rancher and editor of the Beef magazine, will be the evening keynote speaker. As the incoming generation to her family ranch, Amanda is asking a lot of the same questions producers in the middle of succession planning are asking and will share what they have done on their own operation and what they have seen play out for other operations.

Saturday's events at the Shelby High School will feature industry speakers and professionals offering 36 workshop options covering crops and livestock production, financial management, record keeping, leasing, succession planning, and more. Saturday's workshops will provide pertinent information for both the beginning and experienced producer.

Several key highlights that producers won't want to miss from new speakers this year include international trade expert Scott Shearer, Water Rights, Indian Law and Agriculture Attorney Breeann Johnson, Dr. Rachel Endecott, Dr. Gary Sides and Dr. Jeanne Rankin. These talented speakers will join a great line-up of speakers with fresh topics on everything from soil amendments and micronutrients, dealing with drought, planning for profit, A.I. protocols, tightening your calving window, EPDs and much more.

The January 27 workshops will fulfill [Farm Service Agency's](#) production and financial management training requirements for producers. Pesticide applicator points will be available throughout the day.

Online registration is available at <https://events.ticketprinting.com/event/24605> or registration forms are available at http://www.mariasriverlivestock.com/next_generation_conference.html, or by calling 406-873-2239. Updates will be available via the Montana's Next Generation Conference Facebook page.

Early bird registration cost is \$25 a day for individuals or \$40 a day for couples if registrations are submitted by January 12. Late registrations will be accepted until January 19 at \$30 a day for individuals or \$50 a day for couples. Daycare will be available for both days at \$15 per child, which includes snacks and meals.

For more information see http://www.mariasriverlivestock.com/next_generation_conference.html, or contact Lacy Roberts at (406) 873-5618 or Kari Lewis at (406) 873-2239.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this event should contact Lacy Roberts at (406) 873-5618, ext. 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1 (800) 877-8339 by Jan. 19, 2018.

MSU Extension Economists offering Farm Management Workshops in Lewistown, Ronan, Choteau, Great Falls and Glasgow

Participation in a workshop will satisfy the requirements for Farm Service Agency Production and Financial Management Training.

MSU Extension Economists George Haynes, Kate Fuller, and Joel Schumacher will offer Farm Management Workshops in five communities in January to March 2018. Other faculty members contributing to these workshops include Agricultural Economists Anton Bekkerman, Joseph Janzen, Gary Brester, and Eric Belasco; Family Economist Marsha Goetting, Plant Pathologist Mary Burrows, Cropping Systems Specialist Kent McVay, and Beef Cattle Specialist Rachel Endecott.

Workshops are scheduled for two days, and will cover the following topics: (1) Financial analysis and enterprise budgeting; (2) Risk management; (3) Marketing of grain and cattle; (4) Disaster assistance and

tax considerations; (5) Agricultural policy issues; (6) Estate planning; and, (7) Crop and livestock production.

A pre-workshop optional course, **Introduction to Quicken**, will be offered on January 3 (Lewistown), February 7 (Ronan), February 12 (Choteau), February 20 (Great Falls), and March 7 (Glasgow). This optional course will be held from noon to 5 p.m. on those days. The number of participants is limited to 12 individuals for the **Introduction to Quicken** course.

The Farm Management Workshops will be held at the following locations January – March 2018:

- **Lewistown, Jan. 4 – 5**, Yogo Inn, Snowy Room, 211 NE Main Street
- **Ronan, Feb. 8 – 9**, Ronan Community Center, 300 3rd Avenue
- **Choteau, Feb. 13 – 14**, Stage Stop Inn, 1005 Main Ave N
- **Great Falls, Feb. 21 – 22**, Cascade County Extension Office, 3300 3rd Street NE, #9
- **Glasgow, March 8-9**, Cottonwood Inn and Suites, 54250 US-2

Participation in these workshops will satisfy the requirements for Farm Service Agency Production and Financial Management Training. There is no cost for this workshop. Please register by contacting Keri Hayes (406-994-3511 or khayes@montana.edu) or George Haynes (406-994-5012 or haynes@montana.edu).

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