

January 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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January 30th Application Deadline Nearing for 2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program; Available in 42 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.

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](#)

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.

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.

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.

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

In December farmers and ranchers across the nation were sent a 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.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

For the 2017 LIP Program, producers who suffered livestock deaths due to an adverse weather from Jan. 1, 2017 through Dec. 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 the local FSA County Office by the **March 31, 2018** deadline.

For the 2018 LIP Program, producers who suffer livestock deaths due to an adverse weather from Jan. 1, 2018 through Dec. 31, 2018 must submit a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is first apparent. Livestock producers suffering livestock losses may submit the notice of loss to FSA by phone, fax, and email or in person. An application for payment must be filed with the local FSA County Office by the March 31, 2019 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 in excess of 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.

For questions, contact your local FSA office.

Enrollment Period Continues 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, 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>.

Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

Guaranteed Conservation Loans

Guaranteed Conservation Loans are available for applicants to install a conservation practice. These funds may be used for any conservation activities included in a conservation plan or Forest Stewardship Management plan. A copy of the conservation plan is required to complete the application. These loans are not limited to just family farmers. In some cases, applicants can operate non-eligible enterprises. Loan funds are issued by a participating commercial lender and guaranteed up to 80 percent by FSA or up to 90 percent for beginning and historically underserved producers.

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](#).

Emergency Loan Program Available in MT Disaster Areas

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)

Keep Track of FSA Program Dates and Deadlines

Jan. 1: Newly elected FSA County Committee Members Took 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 2017 Mohair, Unshorn Pelts (LDP only) and Wool

March 15: 2018 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Application Closing Date for Spring Crops (except spring seeded, rye, speltz, triticale, wheat and mixed forage)

March 31: Application for Payment deadline for the 2017 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). (A notice of loss must have been filed with the local FSA office within 30 calendar days from when the 2017 loss was apparent.)

March 31: Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for 2017 Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat and Sesame Seed

May 31: Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for 2017 Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower Seed

Now through August 1, 2018: 2018 ARC/PLC annual signup period

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

Registration Open for the 2018 Montana's Next Generation Conference in Shelby

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

Registration is 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 **Jan. 12**. Late registrations will be accepted until **Jan. 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's 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).

Farm Business Workshops available in Havre, Plains, Troy and Helena/Montana City

To obtain Farm Service Agency borrower Financial Management Training credit, you must attend the workshops on Managing Your Financials and Financial Decision-Making.

With opportunities in value added, direct marketing, and new crops and technologies, there has never been a better time to start a farm business in Montana or add a new side enterprise to your farm.

This winter, the Community Food & Agriculture Coalition, MSU Extension and local partners are offering the Planning for On-Farm Success weekly workshop series. You have the skills to produce high value products. Now you can learn how to manage the profitable business that turns your passion into a career. Each workshop includes expert presenters as well as local networking and Q&A with experienced producers, ag service providers and local lenders. All of these experts will help you work on your plan. Workshops will be streamed from Missoula to locations in Havre, Plains and Troy.

The seven workshops are:

- Jan 9: Farm Strategic Planning
- Jan 16: Researching Your Market
- Jan 23: Farm Marketing & Promotion
- Jan 30: Managing Your Financials
- Feb 6: Financial Decision-Making
- Feb 13: Financing Your Farm
- Mar 20: Managing Farm Risks

Registration includes a copy of the Planning For On-Farm Success workbook. To register and learn more about topics and presenters, visit: www.farmlinkmontana.org/PFOS2018.

To obtain Farm Service Agency borrower financial management training credit, you must attend the workshops on Managing Your Financials and Financial Decision-Making. For more info on FSA credit or the PFOS series, email dave@farmlinkmontana.org.

[Helena/Montana City workshops](#) will be offered this winter as a 4-part, weekly series from January 18th to February 8th. To learn more and register for the Helena/Montana City series, visit <http://www.farmlinkmontana.org/PFOS2018> or contact: Brent Sarchet, MSU Extension, at bsarchet@lccountymt.gov.

If you'd like to see this series hosted in your community, you can let us know where Planning For On-Farm Success should be held next at the bottom of the page at <http://www.farmlinkmontana.org/PFOS2018>.

USDA Rural Development Seeks Applications for Grants to Help Agricultural Producers and Small Rural Businesses Develop New Products

Deadlines Nearing for RD's Value-Added Producer Grant Program

The USDA Rural Development (RD) is accepting applications for grants to help farmers, ranchers and producer-based businesses nationwide develop new product lines.

The funding is being provided through the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. VAPG grants can be used to develop new products from raw agricultural products or promote new markets for established products. Veterans, socially-disadvantaged groups, beginning farmers and ranchers, operators of small and medium-sized family farms and ranches and farmer and rancher cooperatives are given special priority.

The deadline to submit paper applications is **Jan. 31**. Electronic applications submitted through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) are due **Jan. 24**. For more information on this grant program, visit [USDA Rural Development](#). For assistance in Montana, call 406-585-2540.

Montana NRCS: USDA Seeks Applications for \$10 Million in Conservation Innovation Grants

USDA is offering grants for innovative ideas for conservation strategies and technologies. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest \$10 million in the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program, funding innovative conservation projects in three focus areas: grazing lands, organic systems and soil health. Grant proposals are due Feb. 26.

The NRCS uses CIG to work with partners to accelerate transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches that address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. This year, NRCS is focusing funding in these areas:

- **Grazing Lands:** Helping livestock producers make grazing management decisions, encouraging prescribed burning as a grazing management practice, and improving access to conservation planning tools used for developing grazing management plans.
- **Organic Agriculture Systems:** Helping organic producers develop innovative cropping and tillage systems, edge-of-field monitoring, crop rotations, and intercropping systems.
- **Soil Health:** Supporting both cropping and grazing systems, in a variety of climatic zones, that incorporate soil health management systems for addressing specific resource concerns

like nutrients and availability. Evaluating multiple soil health assessment methods to assist in the development of new soil health indicators and thresholds.

Potential applicants should review the announcement of program funding available at www.grants.gov, which includes application materials and submission procedures. All U.S.-based entities and individuals are invited to apply, with the sole exception of Federal agencies. Up to 20 percent of CIG funds will be set aside for proposals from historically underserved producers, veteran farmers or ranchers or groups serving these customers.

NRCS is hosting a webinar for potential CIG applicants on **Jan. 11 at 2 p.m. Mountain Time**. Information on how to join the webinar can be found on the [NRCS CIG webpage](#).

CIG is authorized and funded under the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP). Projects can last up to three years. The maximum award amount for any project this year is \$2 million. Since 2004, NRCS has invested nearly \$286.7 million in more than 700 projects focused on providing farmers and ranchers new techniques, data and decision-making tools for improving natural resources conservation on their land.

Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative: Grazing Lands Education and Demonstration Project Funding Available

The Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is accepting applications for mini-grants and demonstration projects.

The mini-grants will provide funding for educational events throughout the year and support partners and organizations with an interest in the conservation, education, and awareness of grazing lands and natural resources in Montana. Limit mini-grant funding requests to a minimum of \$50 and a maximum of \$1,000. There is no application deadline. Submissions will be considered year-round by the Montana GLCI steering committee.

Demonstration project applications are due **Feb. 16**. The current focus is on innovative projects addressing grazing management, soil and rangeland health, concentrated animal feeding operations/animal feeding operations, or noxious weeds on private Montana grazing lands.

Applications will be accepted from groups of individuals, non-governmental organizations, and state or local units of government. The Montana GLCI steering committee places special emphasis on cooperative efforts working with partners. Individual projects will be considered only if the project provides broad-scale, community-wide impacts and education. Projects must be initiated in 2018. Funding will be allocated on an annual basis, which is dependent upon the yearly Montana GLCI budget allocation. Application submission does not guarantee project funding will be available. All applicants must show a one-to-one match for project cost.

Get more information about both the mini-grant and demonstration project funding opportunities, including application requirements and forms, at www.mtglci.org.

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).