

March 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Montana FSA: March 2018 Newsletter

Montana USDA Farm Service Agency

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State Executive Director:
Mike Foster

Trump Administration Appoints Mike Foster as State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Montana

The Trump Administration recently appointed Mike Foster as the new State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Montana Farm Service Agency (FSA). Foster began his new position on Feb. 20, 2018.

Foster was born and raised in Townsend, Montana, and currently resides in Bozeman. From 1991 to 1994, he represented the 32nd District in the Montana House of Representatives. He then served

State Committee:

Carl Mattson, Chair
Joe Dooling
Chaley Harney
Bruce Tutvedt

Directories:

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Special Accommodations:

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should

as a state senator representing Montana's 20th District from 1995 to 1998, where he was majority whip. Foster most recently served as regional director of advocacy for St. Vincent Healthcare.

The Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs. The agency offers farmers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. FSA continues to conserve natural resources and also provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including special emphasis on beginning, underserved and women farmers and ranchers.

Under the direction of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, the USDA will always be facts-based and data-driven, with a decision-making mindset that is customer-focused. Secretary Perdue leads the USDA with four guiding principles: to maximize the ability of American agriculture to create jobs, sell food and fiber, and feed and clothe the world; to prioritize customer service for the taxpayers; to ensure that our food supply is safe and secure; and to maintain good stewardship of the natural resources that provide us with our miraculous bounty. And understanding that we live in a global economy where trade is of top importance, Secretary Perdue has pledged to be an unapologetic advocate for American agriculture.

As SED, Foster will use his leadership experience to oversee FSA programs in a customer-focused manner to ensure a safe, affordable, abundant and nutritious food supply for consumers.

Secretary Perdue Appoints Montana FSA State Committee

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee Appointees earlier this year. State committees are selected by the Secretary, serve at the pleasure of the Secretary, and are responsible for carrying out FSA's farm programs within delegated authorities.

The state committee members appointed for Montana are:

- Committee Chair Carl Mattson - Chester
- Joe Dooling - Helena
- Chaley Harney - Billings
- Bruce Tutvedt - Kalispell

contact the county FSA office directly or by phone or the 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.

Reminder of March 15th Deadline for 2018 NAP Coverage

Montana producers have until **March 15, 2018** to sign-up for Farm Service Agency's Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for all 2018 spring planted NAP crops except spring seeded rye, speltz, triticale, wheat, and mixed forage.

NAP provides a catastrophic level (CAT) coverage based on the amount of loss that exceeds 50 percent of the expected production at 55 percent of the average market price for the crop. NAP offers buy-up coverage for the 2015 through 2018 crop years in addition to the basic CAT-level coverage, on all crops except those intended for grazing. These additional coverage levels range from 50-65 percent of the expected production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price.

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

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

For more information, visit the national NAP page at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap>.

Link to: [NAP Program Factsheet](#) (pdf)

Livestock Indemnity Program & Reporting Livestock Losses

FSA's Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provide benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions, including eligible adverse weather, eligible disease and eligible attacks (attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators). LIP payments are equal to 75 percent of the market value of the applicable livestock on the day before the date of death of the livestock as determined by the Secretary.

For FSA's **2017 LIP Program**, producers who suffered livestock deaths due to an eligible loss condition including eligible adverse weather events, eligible disease and eligible attacks from Jan. 1, 2017 through Dec. 31, 2017 must have submitted a notice of loss to FSA 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 **April 2, 2018** deadline.

For the 2018 LIP Program, producers who suffer livestock deaths due to an eligible loss condition including eligible adverse weather events, eligible disease and eligible attacks 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 loss condition. The inventory numbers represent the number of eligible livestock before and after the eligible loss conditions 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 eligible loss conditions, pictures with a date, and other similar documents.

For questions, contact your local FSA office and visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

Link to: [Livestock Indemnity Program Factsheet](#)

2018 CRP Spring Managed Grazing Period: March 16-May 14

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

Primary Nesting Season: May 15 to July 15

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2018 Spring Managed Grazing Period is March 16 to May 14, 2018. Livestock must be removed when the calculated AUMs have been utilized but no later than May 14th.

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

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

Enrollment Period Continues for 2018 ARC-PLC Safety Net Coverage

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. For more information, contact your local FSA office and visit https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc_program/index.

ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases. Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

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 Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$300,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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.

Upcoming FSA Program Dates and Deadlines

- [2018 Montana FSA Customer Calendar](#) (pdf)
- [2018 Upcoming FSA Deadlines Poster](#) (pdf)

Now through August 1, 2018: 2018 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) annual signup period

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 16: 2018 CRP Spring Managed Grazing Period Begins (with prior County Committee written approval)

April 2: 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.)

April 2: Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for 2017 Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat and Sesame Seed

May 14: 2018 CRP Spring Managed Grazing Period Ends (livestock must be removed when the calculated AUMs have been utilized but no later than May 14)

May 15 to July 15: Montana Primary Nesting Season

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

June 15: 2018 FSA County Committee Election Nomination Period Begins

July 16: 2018 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. **Please note that this is the final date that we can accept late-filed 2017 reports for these crops.**

July 16: 2018 CRP Summer/Fall Grazing Period Begins (with prior written approval)

July 16: 2018 CRP Managed Harvesting Period Begins (with prior written approval)

Aug. 1: Deadline for 2018 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Enrollment

Aug. 1: 2018 FSA County Committee Election Nomination Period Deadline

Aug. 1: Last day to request FY 2018 farm reconstitutions on ARC & PLC farms

Aug. 1: Last day to request farm transfers for FY 2018

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

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).