

November 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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### USDA Farm Service Agency - Montana

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**State Executive Director:**  
Mike Foster

**State Committee:**  
Carl Mattson, Chair  
Joe Dooling  
Chaley Harney  
Bruce Tutvedt

### Message from State Executive Director

It's that time of year again. The 2018 Farm Service Agency's (FSA) county committee elections are officially underway and we're asking for your help. Please take a few minutes to vote in your local county committee election. FSA county committees are a vital and direct link between our farm community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Earlier this summer, we put out a call for nominations for individuals who would be willing to serve on the committee. Elections are held annually in every county when FSA accepts nominations for a certain Local Administrative Area (LAA). The area up for election rotates each year. Nominations have been made and now it's time for you to decide who will fill this role.

Ballots are mailed out the week of Nov. 5 to eligible voters. If your LAA had a committee seat open this year, and you are an eligible voter, you can expect

**Directories:**

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to receive a ballot in the mail. Producers who did not receive a ballot can pick one up at the local FSA office.

In states like Montana, it's important to know that members of American Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote in an FSA county committee election if the tribal member meets the voting requirements. For purposes of FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned, or held in trust by the United States for the tribe, even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land.

**Special Accommodations:**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should 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](mailto:jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov).

The individuals you elect to serve on your behalf operate within official federal regulations so that local input is provided on federal programs such as:

- Income safety-net loans and payments, including setting county average yields for commodities;
- Conservation programs;
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities;
- Emergency programs, and
- Payment eligibility.

Our FSA county committees make a difference and if you won't take it from me, I encourage you to check out stories from county committee members from around the nation. Read their testimonials at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections). While you're there, you can find other information about the elections.

Ballots must be returned to your local FSA office by **Dec. 3, 2018**. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than **Dec. 3**.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to make an impact in your local community.

Sincerely,  
Mike Foster

## **FSA Maps - 2019 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification Deadline: Nov. 15, 2018**

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers, including livestock producers, are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline. Producers are required to complete and submit their FSA maps as part of the crop certification process. The maps can be obtained at the local FSA office.

The 2019 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification Deadline is **Nov. 15, 2018** for **Apiculture, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter) and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains**. These crops must be reported to FSA by Nov. 15, 2018 to be considered timely filed in order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

**Reporting Organic Crops:** Producers who want to use the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) organic price and selected the "organic" option on their NAP application must report their crops as organic.

**Important Reminder:** If a crop report is not submitted by the subsequent year's acreage reporting date (ARD), the acreage report cannot be considered acceptable and producers will not receive planting credit for the crop nor will the crop be eligible for any FSA program benefits for the applicable program year.

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

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## Nov. 16th Deadline Approaches for the 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program

Montana Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that the deadline to apply for assistance under the 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (2017 WHIP) is Nov. 16, 2018. Agricultural producers affected by hurricanes and wildfires in 2017 can apply for assistance to help recover and rebuild their farming operations.

The program was authorized by Congress earlier this year by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

Eligible crops, trees, bushes, or vines, located in a county declared in a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or Secretarial Disaster Designation as a primary county are eligible for assistance if the producer suffered a loss as a result of a hurricane during calendar year 2017. Also, losses located in a county not designated as a primary county may be eligible if the producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a hurricane or wildfire in 2017. A list of counties that received qualifying hurricane declarations and designations is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/recover/whip>. Eligibility is determined by Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees.

Agricultural production losses due to conditions caused by last year's wildfires and hurricanes, including excessive rain, high winds, flooding, mudslides, fire, and heavy smoke, could qualify for assistance through the program. Typically, 2017 WHIP is only designed to provide assistance for production losses, however, if quality was taken into consideration under the insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy, where production was further adjusted, the adjusted production will be used in calculating assistance under this program.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or NAP coverage is available, excluding crops intended for grazing. A list of crops covered by crop insurance is available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Actuarial Information Browser at

<https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser>.

Producers will be subject to payment limitations based on their average adjusted gross income.

Both insured and uninsured producers are eligible to apply for 2017 WHIP. However, all producers receiving 2017 WHIP payments will be required to purchase crop insurance and/or NAP, at the 60 percent coverage level or higher, for the next two available crop years to meet statutory requirements. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two applicable years will be required to pay back the 2017 WHIP payment.

Each producer will be asked to provide acceptable production records which must be either verifiable or reliable production records. If a producer is unable to provide production records, USDA will calculate the production based on the higher of the producer certified production and the county disaster yield.

Contact your local FSA office to make an appointment to apply. For more information on USDA disaster assistance programs, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/recover>.

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# Application Period Deadlines Established for Producers Recovering from 2017 & 2018 Livestock Loss, Other Disasters

## 2017-2018 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees & Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) 2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) reopened the application period for three disaster assistance programs in response to statutory changes made by Congress earlier this year.

The deadlines for the new applications for livestock, honeybee, farm raised fish or other losses due to natural disasters in calendar year 2017 or 2018 filed under the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) or [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) have been established and are listed below.

Additionally, the [2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) application period has been reopened for producers who suffered a grazing loss due to a qualifying drought in the following 42 MT counties: 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 & Yellowstone. (See article below for information on the 2018 LFP Program.)

**Producers who already submitted applications and received decisions on their applications for these years do not need to file again, but they can reapply if they have additional losses or their application was disapproved because it was filed late.**

**Important Deadlines:** ([click HERE for a printable poster of these livestock deadlines](#)):

- **Dec. 3:** Application for Payment deadline for the 2017 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). A notice of loss must be filed with the local FSA office by the later of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent to the owner or Dec 3, 2018.
- **Dec. 3:** 2017 and 2018 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees & Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Deadline
- **Dec. 3:** 2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) application deadline
- **March 1, 2019:** Application for Payment deadline for the 2018 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). A notice of loss must be filed with the local FSA office by the later of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent to the owner or **Dec 3, 2018**.

Producers interested in LFP, LIP or ELAP should contact their [local USDA service center](#). To apply, producers will need to provide verifiable and reliable production records and other information about their operation.

Various disasters continue to impact farmers and ranchers, LFP, LIP and ELAP are three of many programs available through USDA to help producers recover. Learn more at <https://www.usda.gov/disaster>,

[Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\) Factsheet](#)

[Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\) Factsheet](#)

[Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish Program ELAP Factsheet](#)

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## USDA Market Facilitation Program: Jan. 15 Deadline

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn, cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The initial MFP payment rates are:

- **Corn - \$0.01 per bushel**
- **Cotton - \$0.06 per pound**
- **Dairy (milk) - \$0.12 per cwt.**
- **Fresh Sweet Cherries - \$0.16 per pound**
- **Pork (hogs) - \$8.00 per head**
- **Shelled Almonds - \$0.03 per pound**
- **Soybeans - \$1.65 per bushel**
- **Sorghum - \$0.86 per bushel**
- **Wheat - \$0.14 per bushel**

The sign-up period for MFP runs through **Jan. 15, 2019**, with information and instructions provided at [www.farmers.gov/mfp](http://www.farmers.gov/mfp). MFP provides payments to producers of eligible commodities who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA.

MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined \$125,000 for eligible crop commodities
- A combined \$125,000 for dairy production and hogs
- A combined \$125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than \$900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

### Expanded Hog Timeline

USDA has expanded the timeline for producers with whom the Aug. 1, 2018, date does not accurately represent the number of head of live hogs they own. Producers may now choose any date between July 15 to Aug. 15, 2018 that correctly reflects their actual operation.

MFP applications are available online at [www.farmers.gov/mfp](http://www.farmers.gov/mfp). Applications can be completed at a local FSA office or submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing. To locate or contact your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov). Link to [Market Facilitation Program Fact Sheet](#).

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## 2018 Livestock Forage Disaster Program Available in Flathead, Lincoln and Sanders Counties: Jan. 30, 2019 Application Deadline

The 2018 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) triggered in three Montana counties: **Flathead, Lincoln and Sanders**. Livestock producers have until **Jan. 30, 2019** to enroll in the Livestock Forage Disaster Program.

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers, due to a qualifying drought in the county, on privately-owned or cash-leased land, federal leases/permits, state leases, and some private AUM leases. LFP also provides compensation for grazing losses due to fire on federally-managed land. Livestock producers with grazing land in these three counties can apply for 2018 LFP drought 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. Livestock producers are encouraged to contact their FSA Office with any questions regarding specific crops and production methods that are eligible.

Eligible livestock include alpacas, beef cattle over 500 pounds, 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. Eligible livestock must be maintained as part of the producer's commercial farming operation.

Livestock producers must complete the LFP application and required supporting documentation no later than Jan. 30, 2019 for 2018 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.

For more information about LFP, contact the Flathead/Lincoln FSA Office in Kalispell at (406) 752-4242, ext. 2 or the Sanders FSA Office in Plains at (406) 826-3752. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. Visit Montana FSA online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt) and [www.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.usda.gov/disaster) to learn more about LFP and other FSA disaster assistance programs.

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### Sign in/Sign up!

Farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers have new online options to access U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. Through USDA's new streamlined process, producers doing business as an individual can now register, track and manage their applications for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) and 2017 Wildfires Hurricanes Indemnity Program (2017 WHIP) on the secure and convenient [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov). Currently, USDA eAuthentication does not have the mechanism to issue accounts to businesses, corporations, other entities, or for anyone acting on behalf of another individual or entity. Producers, doing business as an individual, first need to sign up for Level 2 eAuthentication access.

- Step 1: Create an online account at [www.eauth.usda.gov](http://www.eauth.usda.gov)
- Step 2: Complete identity verification by either using the online self-service identity verification method or by completing the identity verification in-person at your USDA Service Center.
- Step 3: Contact your local USDA Service Center to have your new Level 2 account linked with your USDA customer record
- Step 4: You're enrolled and ready to log in

Or go to your local USDA Service Center and our supportive staff will help you sign up for Level 2 Access right in the office! They will get you online so you can create an online account at [www.farmers.gov/sign-in](http://www.farmers.gov/sign-in). You'll complete identity verification right on the spot. You're enrolled! Users with a secure Level 2 eAuthentication ID, linked to their USDA customer record, can apply for select USDA programs, view and print farm maps and farm records data. Enrolling is easy! Visit [farmers.gov/sign-in](http://farmers.gov/sign-in) to learn more.

To locate a service center near you or use online services not requiring eAuthentication access, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov). For technical assistance, call the eAuthentication help desk at 1-800-457-3642.

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## USDA Commodity Loans Available to Montana Producers

Farm Service Agency reminds Montana producers that Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) are available to help producers through periods of low market prices. The 2014 Farm Bill authorized MALs and LDPs for the 2014 to 2018 crop years.

MALs provide interim financing and allow producers to delay the sale of the commodity at harvest-time lows and wait until more favorable market conditions emerge. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

The Final Availability Date for Loans and Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) for 2018 Mohair, Unshorn Pelts (LDP only) and Wool is **Feb. 1, 2019**. The Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for 2018 Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat and Sesame Seed is **April 1, 2019**.

FSA offices are accepting requests for 2018 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest.

Before MAL and LDP disbursements can be made, producers must meet the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash-rent tenant and member contribution. In order to meet eligibility requirements, producers must retain beneficial interest in the commodity, meaning they have control of the commodity or a title to the commodity, until the MAL is repaid or the Commodity Credit Corporation takes title to the commodity.

The 2014 Farm Bill also establishes payment limitations per individual or entity not to exceed \$125,000 annually on certain commodities for the following program benefits: Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage payments, Marketing Loan Gains and LDPs. These payment limitations do not apply to MAL disbursements.

Producers or legal entities whose total applicable three-year average adjusted gross income exceeds \$900,000 are not eligible for Marketing Loan Gains and LDPs, but are eligible for MALs repaid at principal plus interest.

For more information, please visit your local FSA office or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). To find your local USDA service center, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

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## Emergency Loans Available in Montana 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 \(pdf\)](#)

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## Reminder to Submit 2018 Year End Financial Data for Supervised Credit

FSA Direct Loan borrowers are reminded of their responsibility (per loan closing conditions) to submit 2018 yearend financial data to their local FSA office. This includes the following:

- yearend or current balance sheet

- profit and loss
- complete copies of both corporate and personal tax returns of all entity members – many producers had extensions to file their returns from the disaster last year
- proof of current insurance coverage on all assets pledged as security for the FSA loans.

FSA Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks. The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will assist borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation's goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA's staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

It is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur and it is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation;
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses;
- The development of problem situations;
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options. There are some benefits to FSA's servicing options BEFORE the loans go delinquent and being proactive is important to being able to take advantage of them.

Failure to submit financial information when requested by FSA could result in acceleration of your loan accounts.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Upcoming FSA Dates and Deadlines

Montana farmers and ranchers can contact their local FSA office to participate in FSA programs and for more information. Visit Montana FSA online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt) and [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

(Click [HERE](#) for a printable poster of these deadlines.)

- **Nov. 5:** County Committee Election Ballots will be mailed to Eligible Voters
- **Nov. 12:** All Hay Bales Must be Removed from Managed Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- **Nov. 15:** 2019 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains. *Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2018 reports for these crops.*
- **Nov. 16:** Last day of 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (2017 WHIP) Signup
- **Dec. 1:** 2019 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) Application Closing Date for Honey Producers
- **Dec. 3:** Last Day to Return Voted County Committee Election Ballots to local FSA Offices
- **Dec. 3:** Application for Payment deadline for the 2017 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). A notice of loss must be filed with the local FSA office by the later of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent to the owner or Dec 3, 2018.
- **Dec. 3:** 2017 and 2018 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees & Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Deadline
- **Dec. 3:** Deadline for 2017 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) Application for Payment & Supporting Documentation for Livestock Producers
- **Tree Assistance Program:** Deadline for 2017 and subsequent years Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation is the later Dec. 3, 2018 or within 90 calendar days of the disaster event or the date when the loss was apparent to the producer.
- **Jan. 1:** Newly elected FSA County Committee Members Take Office

- **Jan. 2:** 2019 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Honey covered under NAP (or 30 days after placement of colonies.) *Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2018 reports for Honey covered under NAP.*
- **Jan. 15:** Marketing Facilitation Program Signup Deadline for Corn, Cotton, Dairy, Hogs, Sorghum, Soybean, Fresh Sweet Cherries, Shelled Almonds and Wheat Producers.
- **Jan. 15:** 2019 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed and Cherries. *Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2018 reports for these crops.*
- **Jan. 30:** Deadline for 2018 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) Application for Payment & Supporting Documentation for Flathead, Lincoln & Sanders County Livestock Producers
- **Feb. 1:** Final Availability Date for Loans and Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) for 2018 Mohair, Unshorn Pelts (LDP only) and Wool
- **March 1:** Application for Payment deadline for the 2018 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). A notice of loss must be filed with the local FSA office by the later of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent to the owner or **Dec 3, 2018.**
- **March 15:** 2019 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Application Closing Date for Spring Crops (except spring seeded, rye, speltz, triticale, wheat and mixed forage)
- **March 16:** 2019 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Spring Managed Grazing Period Begins (with prior County Committee written approval)
- **April 1:** Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for 2018 Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat and Sesame Seed

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## USDA and Agricultural Resources

- [Farmers.gov](http://Farmers.gov)
- [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 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#)
- [Montana USDA Rural Development \(RD\)](#)
- [USDA New Farmers](#)
- [MSU Extension & MSU College of Agriculture](#)
- [Intertribal Agriculture Council & IAC Technical Assistance Center](#)
- [Montana Department of Agriculture & Hay Hotline](#)
- [Montana Department of Livestock](#)

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