

July 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Montana FSA: July 2019 Newsletter

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### USDA Farm Service Agency - Montana

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**State Executive Director:**  
Mike Foster

**State Committee:**  
Carl Mattson, Chair (Chester)  
Chaley Harney (Billings)

### From the State Executive Director

Hope you're having an enjoyable summer! There's so much to do and see in Montana; it always seems to fly by. If you haven't certified your 2019 acreage with FSA, please do so right away and by July 15.

Signup is underway for the Conservation Reserve Program and Dairy Margin Coverage program. Stay tuned for details on the Market Facilitation Program for 2019. County Committee Election nominations are open until Aug. 1. Consider running for a seat on your local FSA county committee. View the [2019 Montana election areas](#) by county to see if your area is up this year and download a nomination form in this issue or inquire at your local FSA office.

Reach out to your local FSA for program signup and assistance.

Liane Johnson (Cut Bank)  
Bruce Tutvedt (Kalispell)

We wish you a safe, enjoyable Montana summer!

Sincerely,  
Mike Foster

**Directories:**

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Offices in Montana](#)

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## RMA Prevented Planting Cover Crop Relief for 2019 due to Historical Flooding and Excessive Rainfall

Producers planting cover crops on prevented planted acreage have the flexibility in 2019 regarding how the crop will be harvested. In addition to normal cover crop policy, which allows the cover crop to be hayed or grazed, producers can also harvest the cover crop for silage, haylage, and baleage.

In addition, under the current policy, producers are not permitted to hay or graze the cover crop planted on prevented planted acreage until after November 1st to receive a full prevented planting payment. In 2019, producers can now harvest the crop after September 1st and receive a full prevented planting payment. If harvested before September 1st, the prevented planting payment will be reduced by 65 percent.

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## USDA Offers Producers Options to Re-Enroll or Extend Expiring CRP Contracts: August 23 Deadline

Farmers and ranchers with expiring [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) contracts may now re-enroll in certain CRP continuous signup practices or, if eligible, select a one-year contract extension. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is also accepting offers from landowners who want to enroll for the first time in one of the country's largest conservation programs. FSA's 52<sup>nd</sup> signup for CRP runs from June 3 to August 23.

This year's CRP continuous signup includes practices such as grass waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others. [View a full list of practices approved for this signup](#). Continuous signup contracts last for 10 to 15 years. Soil rental rates are set at 90 percent of 2018 rates. Incentive payments are not offered for these practices.

Producers interested in applying for CRP continuous practices, including those under existing CREP agreements, or who want to extend their contract, should contact their USDA service center by August 23.

To locate your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov). More information on CRP can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

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## CRP Management Reminder

A reminder that the Primary Nesting Season for CRP contracts is May 15 to July 15. No activity can be conducted during the Primary Nesting Season unless a written request is reviewed and approved by the County Committee before any activity can be completed. This includes spot-weed control and management activities.

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## FSA Maps - 2019 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification: July 15 Deadline

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 **July 15, 2019** for **Spring Seeded Alfalfa Seed, Forage Seeding, CRP, Perennial Forage not covered under NAP, and all other crops not required to be reported by a previous reporting date**. These crops must be reported to FSA by July 15, 2019, to be considered timely filed in order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements. Crops reported after July 15, 2019 may be subject to late-file fees that can be substantial depending on the number of acres seeded.

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 and provide a copy of their current organic plan and recent written certification in effect from a certifying agent.

**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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## Nominations Open for the 2019 County Committee Elections

USDA Farm Service Agency is accepting nominations for county committee members through Aug. 1. Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Organizations, including those representing beginning, women and minority producers, also may nominate candidates.

Committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Their input is vital on how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues. The committees are made of three to 11 members and typically meet once a month. Members serve three-year terms.

**2019 Montana Nomination/Election Areas:** To view the a [map and description of Montana areas up for election](#) this year by county, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt).

To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://fsa.usda.gov/elections). All nomination forms for the 2019 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2019.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 4, 2019. Read more at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

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## Inform FSA Promptly of All Changes in Farming Operation and Contact Information

It is important to promptly report any changes in your farming operation to FSA. These changes can include, but are not limited to, changes in your address, phone, or email, name changes, changes to entity membership or shares, formation or dissolution of any entity (such as a trust, partnership, LLC, LLP or corporation) that owns or operates land or owns other farming assets used in your operation, sale or purchase of land, adding or dropping leases, and any changes to financing or equipment. Participants in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to their local FSA office in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan with necessary changes, as applicable. Failure to timely notify your local FSA office may result in ineligibility for program benefits, or delays in issuance of program payments. If you have any updates or corrections to your records, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

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## FSA Disaster Programs Notice of Loss Requirements

It's important for agricultural producers to report losses immediately as all disaster programs are dependent on the timely reporting of loss. A notice of loss can be filed via phone, email, fax or in-person office visit.

- **ELAP – Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program:** Submit Notice of Loss the **earlier** of **30** calendar days of when the loss is apparent or Nov. 1st after the end of the program year in which the loss occurred.
  - **LIP - Livestock Indemnity Program:** Submit Notice of Loss within **30** calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
  - **NAP – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program:** Submit Notice of Loss within **15** calendar days of the earlier of a natural disaster occurrence, the final planting date if planting is prevented by a natural disaster, the date that damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent; or the normal harvest date. **Note:** A producer's signature is required on form CCC-576 when a Notice of Loss is submitted.
  - **TAP - Tree Assistance Program:** Final Date to Submit an Application and Supporting Documentation is the later of **90** calendar days of the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent
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## USDA Decision Tool for New Dairy Margin Coverage Program

USDA announced the availability of a new [web-based tool](#) – developed in partnership with the University of Wisconsin – to help dairy producers evaluate various scenarios using different coverage levels through the new [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program.

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized DMC, a voluntary risk management program that offers financial protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. It replaces the program previously known as the Margin Protection Program for Dairy. Sign up for this USDA Farm Service Agency program opened on June 17.

The University of Wisconsin launched the decision support tool in cooperation with FSA and funded through a cooperative agreement with the USDA Office of the Chief Economist. The tool was designed to help producers determine the level of coverage under a variety of conditions that will provide them with the strongest financial safety net. It allows farmers to simplify their coverage level selection by combining operation data and other key variables to calculate coverage needs based on price projections.

The decision tool assists producers with calculating total premiums costs and administrative fees associated with participation in DMC. It also forecasts payments that will be made during the coverage year.

For more information, access the tool at [fsa.usda.gov/dmc-tool](https://fsa.usda.gov/dmc-tool). For DMC sign up, eligibility and related program information, visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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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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## Document the Drought: USDA U.S. Drought Monitor Offers Producers a Voice to Report Drought Impacts

The U.S. Drought Monitor's reporting feature offers producers an opportunity to submit drought impact and condition reports.

The USDA, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, produced the U.S. Drought Monitor to include a reporting feature that allows producers to report local drought impacts and conditions.

The report allows producers to:

- Provide a written description of drought impacts on livelihood, activities, etc.;
- Select categories to show losses and gains as a result of the drought;
- Report on the duration of drought event;
- Select *Affected Places* – geographic areas ranging from an entire state to a small area within a state;
- Submit images that document the drought and its impact;
- Provide contact information (includes an option to keep information confidential).

The reporting tool for producers to record the effects of the drought can be accessed at the following link:  
<http://droughtreporter.unl.edu/submitreport/>

More information including state specific drought impact maps can be found on the U. S. Drought Monitor homepage:  
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home.aspx>

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## Storage and Handling Trucks Eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loans

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) provide low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade facilities to store commodities. Some storage and handling trucks are eligible for the FSFL. These include:

- **Cold Storage Trucks:** A van or truck designed to carry perishable freight at specific temperatures. Cold storage trucks can be ice-cooled or equipped with any variety of mechanical refrigeration systems.
- **Flatbed Trucks:** Truck with an open body in the form of a platform with no side walls for easy loading and unloading. These trucks can be categorized into different sizes which range from light, medium, or heavy duty, compact or full-size, or short and expandable beds.
- **Grain Trucks:** A piece of farm equipment specially made to accommodate grain products and are traditionally truck chassis units with a mounted grain "dump" body where grain commodities are transported from a field to either a grain elevator or a storage bin.

- **Storage Trucks with a Chassis Unit:** Commonly referred to as a box truck, box van or straight truck, is a truck with a cargo body mounted on the same chassis with the engine and cab.

To be eligible for FSFL, the storage and handling truck must be less than 15 years old and have a maximum of four axles with a gross weight rating of 60,000 pounds or less. Pick-up trucks, semi-trucks, dump trucks, and simple insulated and ventilated vans are ineligible for FSFL.

FSFL for storage and handling trucks must be \$100,000 or less. FSFL-financed storage and handling trucks must be used for the purpose for which they were acquired for the entire FSFL term.

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## Keeping Track of Important FSA Dates & Deadlines

FSA reminds agricultural of the following program dates and deadlines. Contact your local FSA office with any questions.

**May 15 to July 15:** Montana Primary Nesting Period

**June 14 to Aug. 1:** Open Nomination Period for 2019 FSA County Committee Elections

**July 15:** 2019 Acreage/Crop Reporting Deadline for Spring Seeded Alfalfa Seed, Forage Seeding, CRP, Perennial Forage not covered under NAP, and all other crops not required to be reported by a previous reporting date (*Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2018 reports for these crops.*)

**July 15:** Deadline to submit 2018 Individual Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC-IC) Production Sheets (CCC-863)

**July 16 to Sept. 13:** 2019 CRP Summer/Fall Managed Harvesting Period (prior approval required)

**Aug. 1:** Deadline to request a farm reconstitution or farm transfer for 2019

**Aug. 23:** Last day to submit Continuous CRP Offer

**Sept. 1:** 2020 NAP Application for Coverage Deadline for Spring and Winter Canola & Value-Loss Crops such as Nursery, Christmas Trees, Grass Sod, Ginseng, Aquaculture, Floriculture, Root Stock Sets & Mushrooms

**Sept. 30:** 2020 NAP Application for Coverage Deadline for Annual Fall-Seeded Crops, Perennial Forage and Grazing, Mixed Forage Crops (including spring seeded annual types of mixed forage, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Garlic

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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 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@usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.cole@usda.gov).

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