

February 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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From the State Executive Director

Mission Critical! Contact USDA Farm Service Agency Now to Enroll in Key Safety Net Programs – Don't Let the March 16 Deadline Pass You By.

The clock is ticking... March 16 is THE LAST day to make what is likely one of the most important business decisions you will make for your farming operation this year.

If you have not already visited your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office to make your election for either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and to sign your annual enrollment contract, you should call and make your appointment now.

Many of you are gearing up to head to the field for spring planting, but I cannot stress enough the importance of not letting this deadline get lost in the hectic day-to-day obligations of farm life. *If you fail to enroll for 2019 ARC or PLC, you will be ineligible to receive a payment for the 2019 crop year.*

Bob Lee (Judith Gap)
Bruce Tutvedt (Kalispell)

Directories:

[Online Directory of FSA Offices in Montana](#)

[PDF of Montana FSA Directory](#)

[PDF of Montana USDA Directory](#)

Policy Reminders:
[2020 Annual Notification to FSA Customers](#)

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms. These programs cover 20 commodities produced in the U.S.

FSA anticipates more than 1.7 million producers will enroll in ARC or PLC - that's a lot of producers to assist in a short period of time. As of Feb. 3, FSA records in Montana show 11,647 farms out of an expected 21,550 farms have completed ARC or PLC enrollment for the 2019 crop year.

Want to maximize your time visiting with FSA? Inquire about deadlines and options for also enrolling in 2020 ARC or PLC and updating PLC payment yields. Our staff will help you make the most out of your visit or set you up with a future appointment to help check FSA programs off your lengthy "to do" list.

If you're still unsure about the choice of ARC or PLC, we offer online decision tools to help you determine the best program election for your farming operation. To access these tools, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Call FSA today for an appointment. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

We know that time is money... so make the time to avoid losing the money.

CRP General Signup Feb. 28th Deadline Nearing

FSA offices across Montana are also busy assisting producers with the General Conservation Reserve Program Signup that closes **Feb. 28**. Please review the important [2020 FSA deadlines](#). If you haven't completed your paperwork, please contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment ASAP.

Market Facilitation Program

Earlier this week, [USDA announced the third and final tranche of the 2019 Market Facilitation Program](#) (MFP) payments aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations.

For Montana producers, the third tranche of payments includes the remaining 25 percent of the payment rate for Hogs, Dairy, and Specialty Crops (primarily Fresh Sweet Cherries), and the amount over \$15 an acre in counties with Non-Specialty payment rates over \$15 an acre (Chouteau, Daniels, Flathead, Gallatin and Sheridan). Counties with a \$15 per acre Non-Specialty payment rate will not receive any additional amount.

Last but not least, I had the opportunity to attend the seventh annual Next Generation Conference in Shelby last week and really enjoyed it. Kudos to Farm Loan Manager Lacy Roberts, FSA staff and partners who put on another great conference.

Sincerely,
Mike Foster

Keeping Track of Montana FSA Program Dates & Deadlines

[Download/Print: 2020 MT FSA Dates/Deadlines Poster - pdf](#)

Sept. 11, 2019 to TBD: 2018 and 2019 Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) Sign-up (Sign-Up Deadline TBA)

Feb. 28: Last day of General CRP Signup

March 2: Deadline for the 2019 Livestock Indemnity Program Application for Payment and all supporting documentation for timely filed 2019 LIP notices of livestock losses.

March 16: Last day of 2019 Agricultural Risk Coverage Price Loss Coverage (ARC-PLC) Enrollment and Program Election Period

March 16: 2020 NAP Coverage Application Closing Date for all Spring Crops except Spring-Seeded Canola, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Mixed Forage

March 16: First day of 2020 CRP Spring Managed Grazing Period (*prior approval required*)

March 16: First day of CRP Grasslands Signup

April 14-15: USDA Tribal Outreach Forum in Billings

May 14: Last day of 2020 CRP Spring Managed Grazing Period (*prior approval required*)

May 15: Last day of CRP Grasslands Signup

May 31: Last day to apply for a 2019 crop marketing assistance loan for harvested Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower Seed.

April 15: NAP producers with 2020 Perennial Forage intended for mechanical harvest or grazing are required to report their crop acreage 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage. NAP producers are encouraged to report perennial forage acreage by April 15.

June 1: Last day to apply for a 2019 crop marketing assistance loan for harvested Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower Seed

June 15: Nomination Open for 2020 FSA County Committee Elections

June 30: Last day of 2020 Agricultural Risk Coverage Price Loss Coverage Enrollment Period

July 15: 2020 Acreage 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 2019 reports for these crops.*

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 with USDA Farm Service Agency via phone, email, fax or in-person office visit.

- **ELAP – Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program:** Submit Notice of Loss **30** calendar days of when the loss is apparent.

- **LIP - Livestock Indemnity Program:** Submit Notice of Loss within **30** calendar days of when the loss is first 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 within 90 calendar days of: the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent to the producer.

Contact your local FSA office for assistance and visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt and www.farmers.gov.

March 16th Deadline for Election & Enrollment of 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

Call Today to Make an Appointment!

USDA's Farm Service Agency encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. **March 16, 2020** is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year.

FSA offices have multiple programs competing for the time and attention of our staff. Because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs; and to ensure FSA meets your program delivery expectations, please do not wait to start the enrollment process. Call your FSA county office and make an appointment soon to ensure your elections are made and contracts signed well ahead of the deadlines.

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Until March 16, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested. Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our [program fact sheet](#) or our [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#). Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. To enroll, contact your [FSA county office](#) for an appointment.

USDA Reminds Producers of Feb. 28 Deadline for Conservation Reserve Program General Signup

USDA reminds agricultural producers interested in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2020 general signup to enroll by February 28, 2020. This signup is available to farmers and private landowners who are either enrolling for the first time or re-enrolling for another 10- to 15-year term.

Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive yearly rental payments for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers"), which can control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

CRP has 22 million acres enrolled, but the 2018 Farm Bill lifted the cap to 27 million acres.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the U.S. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. Marking its 35th anniversary in 2020, CRP has had many successes, including:

- Preventing more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;
- Reducing nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively;
- Sequestering an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road;
- Creating more than 3 million acres of restored wetlands while protecting more than 175,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, enough to go around the world 7 times; and
- Benefiting bees and other pollinators and increased populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, grasshopper sparrows and many other birds.

The CRP continuous signup is ongoing, which enables producers to enroll for [certain practices](#). FSA plans to open the Soil Health and Income Protection Program, a CRP pilot program, in early 2020, and the 2020 CRP Grasslands signup runs from March 16, 2020 to May 15, 2020.

To enroll in CRP, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

2020 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) 2020 Spring Managed Grazing Period is March 16 to May 14, 2020. Livestock must be removed when the calculated AUMs have been utilized but no later than May 14th.

The CRP 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.

Livestock Losses

The [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP), administered by USDA Farm Service Agency, provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

In addition, LIP provides assistance for injured livestock that are sold within 30 days of an eligible loss condition at a reduced price due to adverse weather or attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

For livestock death losses, eligible livestock owners must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent. Producers should document the adverse weather conditions and date(s) of weather events.

Participants must provide all supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred. Livestock owners and contract growers must record all pertinent information, including the number and kind of all livestock adversely impacted. Some examples of required supporting documentation include:

- **Beginning Inventory Records**
- **Proof of death loss documentation**
- **Purchase and sales records**
- **Calving records (include date of birth, date of death and cause of death)**
- **Preg test records (completed by 3rd party)**
- **Copy of growers contracts**
- **Proof of normal mortality documentation**

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.0% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3.6%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

2019 Livestock Losses: In addition to filing a timely notice of loss, producers must submit an application for payment and all supporting documentation by **March 2, 2020**.

2020 Livestock Losses: In addition to filing a timely notice of loss, producers must submit an application for payment and all supporting documentation by **March 2, 2021**.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: fsa.usda.gov/mt or farmers.gov.

2020 NAP: USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage before March 16

The Farm Service Agency encourages Montana producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the following 2020 NAP coverage application closing dates:

- **March 16:** Spring Crops except Spring-Seeded Canola, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Mixed Forage

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved, limited resource, and veteran farmers and ranchers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops. Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx>.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

NAP Service Fees: For all coverage levels, the new NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. These amounts reflect a \$75 service fee increase for crop, county or multi-county coverage. The fee increases apply to obtaining NAP coverage on crops on or after April 8, 2019.

NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans: The 2018 Farm Bill NAP amendments specify that qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are now eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.”

Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs. For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit www.farmers.gov.

USDA Announces Details of Risk Management Programs for Hemp Producers

March 16 is the deadline to purchase hemp coverage

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of two programs that protect hemp producers' crops from natural disasters. A pilot hemp insurance program through Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) provides coverage against loss of yield because of insurable causes of loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain or Cannabidiol (CBD) oil and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage protects against losses associated with lower yields, destroyed crops or prevented planting where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. Producers may apply now, and the deadline to sign up for both programs is March 16, 2020.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

NAP provides coverage against loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, seed or CBD for the 2020 crop year where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

NAP basic 50/55 coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. The 2018 Farm Bill allows for buy-up levels of NAP coverage from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Pilot Insurance Program

The MPCI pilot insurance is a new crop insurance option for hemp producers in select counties of 21 states for the 2020 crop year. The program is available for eligible producers in certain counties in Alabama, California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin. Information on eligible counties is accessible through the USDA Risk Management Agency's Actuarial Information Browser.

Among other requirements, to be eligible for the pilot program, a hemp producer must have at least one year of history producing the crop and have a contract for the sale of the insured hemp. In addition, the minimum acreage requirement is 5 acres for CBD and 20 acres for grain and fiber. Hemp will not qualify for replant payments or prevented plant payments under MPCI.

This pilot insurance coverage is available to hemp growers in addition to revenue protection for hemp offered under the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection plan of insurance. Also, beginning with the 2021 crop year, hemp will be insurable under the Nursery crop insurance program and the Nursery Value Select pilot crop insurance program. Under both nursery programs, hemp will be insurable if grown in containers and in accordance with federal regulations, any applicable state or tribal laws and terms of the crop insurance policy.

Eligibility Requirements

Under a regulation authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill and issued in October 2019, all growers must have a license to grow hemp and must comply with applicable state, tribal or federal regulations or operate under a state or university research pilot, as authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

Producers must report hemp acreage to FSA after planting to comply with federal and state law enforcement. The Farm Bill defines hemp as containing 0.3 percent or less tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) on a dry-weight basis. Hemp having THC above the federal statutory compliance level of 0.3 percent is an uninsurable or ineligible cause of loss and will result in the hemp production being ineligible for production history purposes.

For more information on USDA risk management programs for hemp producers, visit farmers.gov/hemp to read our [frequently asked questions](#). For more information on the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program, visit USDA's Agricultural Marketing Services' website to read their [frequently asked questions](#).

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 \(pdf\)](#)

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.

Foreign Persons Must Report U.S. Agricultural Land Holdings

USDA Farm Service Agency in Montana reminds foreign persons with an interest in agricultural lands in the United States that they are required to report their holdings and any transactions to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Any foreign person who acquires, transfers or holds any interest, other than a security interest, including leaseholds of 10 years or more, in agricultural land in the United States is required by law to report the transaction no later than 90 calendar days after the date of the transaction.

Foreign investors must file an [FSA-153](#) "Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) Report" with the FSA county office in the county where the land is located.

Failure to file a report, filing a late report or filing an inaccurate report, can result in a penalty with fines up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land.

For AFIDA purposes, agricultural land is defined as any land used for farming, ranching or timber production, if the tracts total 10 acres or more.

Disclosure reports are also required when there are changes in land use. For example, reports are required when land use changes from nonagricultural to agricultural or from agricultural to nonagricultural. Foreign investors must also file a report when there is a change in the status of ownership such as the owner changes from foreign to non-foreign, from non-foreign to foreign or from foreign to foreign.

Data gained from these disclosures is used to prepare an annual report to the President and Congress concerning the effect of such holdings upon family farms and rural communities in the United States.

For more information regarding AFIDA and FSA programs, contact your local FSA office at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt or visit the USDA Web site at <http://www.usda.gov>.

Agriculture News from USDA Rural Development in Montana

Registration Open: 2020 Soil Health Innovations Conference

March 30-31 in Bozeman, MT

In March 2020, the inaugural Soil Health Innovations Conference will bring together leading experts and innovative farmers from around the U.S. to share the latest in soil science, best practices in soil management, and the emerging technologies that will drive the future of sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The [National Center for Appropriate Technology](#) (NCAT) is sponsoring the conference in cooperation with [USDA Rural Development](#), [Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\)](#), and [Montana State University](#). The conference will be held March 30-31 in Bozeman, Montana.

Registration remains open. To register and for more information, visit <https://soilinnovations.ncat.org/>.

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

Application Deadline: March 10, 2020

The USDA Rural Development is accepting applications for grants to help farmers, ranchers, and producer-based businesses develop new products and expanding marketing opportunities.

Rural Development is making approximately \$37 million in grants available nationwide under the [Value Added Producer Grant \(VAPG\) Program](#). The grants can be used to develop new products from raw agricultural products, to develop additional uses for already developed product lines, or to market value-added agricultural products.

Independent producers, agricultural operators, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures are eligible to apply. Priority will be given to veterans, socially-disadvantaged groups, beginning farmers and ranchers, operators of small- and medium-sized family farms and ranches, and farmer and rancher cooperatives.

Electronic applications must be submitted to grants.gov by **10:00 pm MST on March 5, 2020**. Paper applications must be submitted by **4:30 pm MST on March 10, 2020**. In Montana, applications should be submitted to your [local USDA Rural Development office](#).

We strongly encourage you to contact a local [Business and Cooperative Program Specialist](#) prior to beginning work on your application for more details about the requirements and process. VAPG toolkits and other useful resources can be found on our [website](#).

For additional information, see page 67703 of the [December 11, 2019, Federal Register](#).

REAP Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Application Deadline: March 31, 2020

RD's [REAP Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements](#) will provide funds to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to install renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements. The Rural Energy for America Program is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the nations critical energy needs. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis. The application deadline is March 31, 2020. Contact your area RD office for assistance.

USDA Swine Small Enterprise Study

From July 2020 through January 2021, USDA National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), will conduct its third national study of U.S. small enterprise swine operations.

Montana producers are included in this study that will take an in-depth look at small enterprise swine operations (fewer than 1,000 pigs) and provide new information regarding animal health and management practices used on these operations, as well as the alternative marketing strategies they implement.

Approximately 5,000 swine operations from 38 states will be asked to participate in the study. These states account for about 95 percent of U.S. swine operations with fewer than 1,000 pigs.

Participation in any NAHMS study is voluntary. In June 2020, selected producers will be mailed a letter describing the study and be provided with a questionnaire to complete and return. Producers who don't respond to the questionnaire will be called by a NASS representative to arrange a convenient time to complete the questionnaire via a telephone interview.

The privacy of every questionnaire participant is protected. Data will only be presented in an aggregate or summary manner.

For more information, please contact Charles Haley at 970-494-7216 or charles.a.haley@aphis.usda.gov.

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).