

July 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Montana FSA: July 2020 Newsletter

All Montana USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Face coverings are encouraged but not required for in-office appointments. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone, by mail, by email and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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Carl Mattson, Chair (Chester)
Chaley Harney (Billings)
Liane Johnson (Cut Bank)
Bob Lee (Judith Gap)

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

To find contact information for your local office, visit: www.farmers.gov.

From the State Executive Director

Signup for the [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#) (CFAP) continues through Aug. 28. As of July 13, Montana FSA administered more than \$95.7 million in CFAP relief to 6,403 Montana farmers and ranchers. Of that, more than \$87.7 million were livestock payments. You can learn about additional commodities eligible for CFAP as well as the additional digital options available to help producers apply for this important program in this newsletter and farmers.gov/cfap.

The nomination period is winding down for FSA county committee elections across Montana. I urge all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in FSA's 2020 election process. To view the area up for election and nomination this year, click [HERE](#) and select your Montana county. Learn more about FSA's nomination and election process [HERE](#). All nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by Aug. 1, 2020 (or next business day). For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, visit fsa.usda.gov/elections.

As the number of COVID-19 cases rise and fall in our counties, please be patient with your local FSA office as we do our best to provide high quality and timely producer services while also striving to protect the health and safety of our employees and customers. The new national CFAP Call Center (877-508-8364) will help us meet those goals.

On behalf of USDA and FSA offices across Montana, we look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,
Mike Foster

Montana FSA Program Dates and Deadlines

March 23: Signup Began for Excess Moisture and Drought (D-3 and Above) Losses Under [WHIP+](#). Deadline TBD.

July 15: 2020 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Spring Seeded Alfalfa Seed, Forage Seeding, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Perennial Forage not covered under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), Annually Seeded Spring Crops, 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.*

July 15: Report 2019 Yields for Crops Enrolled in ARC-IC

July 16: First day of 2020 CRP Summer/Fall Non-Emergency Grazing and Haying Periods (*prior approval required*)

Aug. 1: Last day to submit Nominations for 2020 FSA County Committee Elections to FSA (or next business day)

Aug. 3: Deadline to request a farm reconstitution or farm transfer for 2020

Aug. 15: 2020 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Hemp

Aug. 21: Last day of [CRP Soil Health and Income Protection Program \(SHIPP\) Pilot](#) Signup Period

Aug. 28: Last day of [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Signup](#)

Aug. 31: Last day of 2020 CRP Summer/Fall Non-Emergency Harvesting Period (*prior approval required*)

Aug. 31: All Hay Bales Must be Removed from Non-Emergency CRP Acreage

Sept. 1: 2021 NAP Coverage Application Closing Date for all Canola (Winter and Spring Seeded) and Value-Loss Crops such as Nursery, Christmas Trees, Grass Sod, Ginseng, Aquaculture, Floriculture, Root Stock Sets and Mushrooms

Sept. 30: Deadline to update Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payment yields

Sept. 30: 2021 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

Oct. 12: First day of 2021 Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) Sign-up

Ongoing: FSA [Farm Loan](#) Applications are accepted and processed year-round.

Ongoing: Contact FSA right away for notice of loss deadlines and disaster program requirements.

For more information, contact your local FSA office and/or visit www.farmers.gov.

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.

Report 2019 Yields for Crops Enrolled in ARC-IC: Deadline July 15

Producers who elected ARC-IC on one or more farms must certify crop yields for all planted covered commodities on the(all) enrolled ARC-IC farm(s) to be eligible for any potential payment. 2019 actual yields are required to calculate the 2019 guarantee and actual revenue. If the 2019 actual revenue is less than the 2019 guarantee, the ARC-IC farm may be eligible for a 2019 ARC-IC payment.

All 2019 yields for all covered crops planted are to be reported and certified on FSA form [CCC-863](#) along with the yields of the five historical benchmark years of 2013-2017. Additionally, since the 2018 yield for all covered commodities planted on the ARC-IC farm will be required for the 2020 contract year, producers may report that yield at the same time. 2019 actual crop yields for ARC-IC calculations are required to be reported to FSA by July 15, 2020.

More information on the ARC-IC program can be found in the [Appendix to the contract](#).

July 15th Deadline for FSA Maps - 2020 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds Montana producers to complete [crop acreage reports](#) by the applicable deadline.

The deadline for acreage certification is **July 15, 2020**, and applies to crops such as **spring alfalfa seed, Conservation Reserve Program, perennial forage (not covered by NAP), annually spring seeded crops, and any other crop not reported by a previous deadline.**

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers, including livestock producers, must file an accurate crop acreage report by the deadline. FSA staff is available to assist producers in completing acreage reports and providing maps.

Due to the pandemic, FSA has implemented acreage reporting flexibilities. FSA can work with producers to file timely acreage reports by phone, email, online tools and virtual meetings. Some FSA offices are open for in-person appointments, but you must call first to make an appointment.

FSA county offices in Montana provide maps to producers along with instructions for completing and returning the maps through either mail, email or through commercially available free and secure online tools such as Box for file sharing and OneSpan for eSignature solutions. After planting is complete, producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail, email or the Box and OneSpan tools by July 15.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and send producers the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail, email, or Box by July 15.

The following exceptions apply to the July 15 acreage reporting date:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer has not timely filed an acreage report, the producer may file the acreage report within 30 days of the acreage reporting date. Because of the pandemic, late fees will be waived if filed within the 30 days.

FSA is also providing additional flexibilities for producers to file on acres with failed crops or crops that were prevented from planting because of extreme weather events. For insured crops, producers who timely filed a prevented planted claim with the reinsurance company but filed a *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) form after the deadline will be considered timely filed for FSA purposes. For uninsured crops, producers may start a *Notice of Loss* by calling their FSA county office.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Reporting Organic Crops: Producers who selected the “organic” option on their NAP application must report the applicable crop as organic and provide a copy of their current organic plan and recent written certification in effect from a certifying agency. Please note that if you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary information to FSA immediately upon receipt.

When producers are working with FSA staff – either in-person or virtually – they can also take care of applications for other FSA programs, including the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. A CFAP Call Center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. The CFAP Call Center can provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers will select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the Call Center staff.

Applications can also be submitted for the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus for 2018 and 2019 as well as other disaster assistance programs that may be able to assist producers at this time.

For questions, please call your FSA county office. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Additional Commodities Eligible for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

Applications for New Commodities Accepted Beginning July 13

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced an initial list of additional commodities that have been added to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), and that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made other adjustments to the program based on comments received from agricultural producers and organizations and review of market data. Producers will be able to submit applications that include these commodities on Monday, July 13, 2020. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting through Aug. 28, 2020, applications for CFAP, which helps offset price declines and additional marketing costs because of the coronavirus pandemic. USDA expects additional eligible commodities to be announced in the coming weeks.

USDA collected comments and supporting data for consideration of additional commodities through June 22, 2020.

Changes to CFAP include:

- Adding the following commodities: alfalfa sprouts, anise, arugula, basil, bean sprouts, beets, blackberries, Brussels sprouts, celeriac (celery root), chives, cilantro, coconuts, collard greens, dandelion greens, greens (others not listed separately), guava, kale greens, lettuce – including Boston, green leaf, Lolla Rossa, oak leaf green, oak leaf red and red leaf – marjoram, mint, mustard, okra, oregano, parsnips, passion fruit, peas (English/Garden, Snap, and Sugar), pineapple, pistachios, radicchio, rosemary, sage, savory, sorrel, fresh sugarcane, Swiss chard, thyme and turnip top greens.
- Expanding for seven currently eligible commodities – apples, blueberries, garlic, potatoes, raspberries, tangerines and taro – CARES Act funding for sales losses because USDA found these commodities had a 5 percent or greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally, these commodities were only eligible for marketing adjustments.
- Determining that peaches and rhubarb no longer qualify for payment under the CARES Act sales loss category.
- Correcting payment rates for apples, artichokes, asparagus, blueberries, cantaloupes, cucumbers, garlic, kiwifruit, mushrooms, papaya, peaches, potatoes, raspberries, rhubarb, tangerines and taro.

Additional details can be found in the Federal Register in the [Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#) and [Final Rule Correction](#) and at www.farmers.gov/cfap.

Producers have several options for applying to the CFAP program:

1. Using an online portal, accessible at farmers.gov/cfap, allows producers with secure USDA login credentials—known as eAuthentication—to certify eligible commodities online, digitally sign applications and submit directly to the local USDA Service Center. New commodities will be available in the system on July 13, 2020.
2. Completing the application form using our CFAP Application Generator and Payment Calculator found at farmers.gov/cfap. This Excel workbook allows customers to input information specific to their operation to determine estimated payments and populate the application form, which can be printed, then signed and submitted to their local USDA Service Center. An updated version with the new commodities will be available on the website on July 13, 2020.
3. Downloading the AD-3114 application form from farmers.gov/cfap and manually completing the form to submit to the local USDA Service Center by mail, electronically or by hand delivery to an office drop box. In some limited cases, the office may be open for in-person business by appointment. Visit farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status to check the status of your local office.

USDA Service Centers can also work with producers to complete and securely transmit digitally signed applications through two commercially available tools: Box and OneSpan. Producers who are interested in digitally signing their applications should notify their local service centers when calling to discuss the CFAP application process. You can learn more about these solutions at farmers.gov/mydocs.

Getting Help from FSA

New customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

All other eligibility forms, such as those related to adjusted gross income and payment information, can be downloaded from farmers.gov/cfap. For existing FSA customers, these documents are likely already on file.

Wool Triggers Loan Deficiency Payment in Montana

Wool producers in Montana may be eligible for loan deficiency payments (LDPs) from the USDA Farm Service Agency, which help producers under certain market conditions.

Marketing assistance loans (MALs) and LDPs are marketing tools available to producers beginning upon harvest or shearing. MALs help producers meet cash flow needs without selling commodities when market prices are at harvest-time lows.

Producers who are eligible for marketing loans, but choose to forgo the loan, are eligible for LDPs if the posted county price falls below the county loan rate. Producers also can purchase a commodity certificate that may be exchanged for the outstanding loan collateral. Producers can check their daily LDP rates online at fsa.usda.gov.

LDPs are no longer subject to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant rules.

USDA Adds Digital Options for Farmers and Ranchers to Apply for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

USDA's Farm Service Agency will now accept applications for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) through an online portal, expanding the options available to producers to apply for this program, which helps offset price declines and additional marketing costs because of the coronavirus pandemic. FSA is also leveraging commercial document storage and e-signature solutions to enable producers to work with local service center staff to complete their applications from home. The deadline to apply is **Aug. 28**.

Through the portal, producers with secure USDA login credentials—known as eAuthentication—can certify eligible commodities online, digitally sign applications and submit directly to the local USDA Service Center. Producers who do not have an eAuthentication account can learn more and begin the enrollment process at farmers.gov/sign-in. Currently, the digital application is only available to sole proprietors or single-member business entities.

USDA Service Centers can also work with producers to complete and securely transmit digitally signed applications through two commercially available tools: Box and OneSpan. Producers who are interested in digitally signing their applications should notify their local service centers when calling to discuss the CFAP application process. You can learn more about these solutions at farmers.gov/mydocs.

USDA has several other options for producers to complete and submit their CFAP applications. These include:

- Completing the application form using our [CFAP Application Generator and Payment Calculator](https://farmers.gov/cfap) found at farmers.gov/cfap. This Excel workbook allows customers to input information specific to their operation to determine estimated payments and populate the application form, which can be printed, and then signed to submit to the local USDA Service Center by mail, electronically or by hand delivery to an office drop box. In some limited cases, the office may be open for in-person business by appointment. Visit farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status to check the status of your local office.
- Downloading the AD-3114 application form from farmers.gov/cfap and manually completing the form to sign and submit to their local USDA Service Center.

Getting Help from FSA

New customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

All other eligibility forms, such as those related to adjusted gross income and payment information, can be downloaded from farmers.gov/cfap. For existing FSA customers, these documents are likely already on file.

Producers self-certify their records when applying for CFAP, and that documentation is not submitted with the application. However, producers may be asked for their documentation to support the certification of eligible commodities, so they should retain the information used to complete their application.

More Information

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364.

USDA Announces Flexibilities for Producers Filing 'Notice of Loss' for Failed, Prevented Planted Acres

File a 'Notice of Loss' for Prevented Planted and Failed Acres

USDA is providing additional flexibilities for producers to file on acres with failed crops or crops that were prevented from planting because of extreme weather events. USDA's Farm Service Agency is adding these flexibilities for *Notice of Loss* on both insured and uninsured crops to enable Service Centers to best assist producers.

Filing for Prevented Planted Acres

For insured crops, producers who timely filed a prevented planted claim with the reinsurance company but filed a *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) form after the deadline will be considered timely filed for FSA purposes. FSA can use data from the Risk Management Agency (RMA) for accepting the report of prevented planting with FSA. If the information is not available through RMA, the producer may also provide proper evidence to FSA that the prevented planted claim was timely filed with the reinsurance company.

For uninsured crops, producers may start a *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) by calling their FSA county office, or they may print and complete the *Notice of Loss* ([CCC-576](#)) form from home and send to their county office. For prevented planted acreage, *Notice of Loss* forms mailed to the FSA office must be postmarked by the final acreage reporting date in the county to be considered timely filed. For all prevented planted cases, the *Report of Acreage* (FSA-578) form and the completed and signed *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) **must** be filed by the applicable acreage reporting date.

Filing for Failed Acres

For failed acreage of uninsured crops, the *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) must be completed, signed and verified before the disposition of the crop.

When to File a 'Notice of Loss'

A *Notice of Loss* cannot be filed for a crop before the final planting date, but it can be filed before completing the crop acreage report.

More Information

Producers who miss FSA's [July 15 acreage reporting deadline](#) will not face a late filing fee if filed within a month of the deadline.

For questions, please contact your FSA county office. To locate your FSA county office at your Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA's CRP-Grassland proves to be very popular

More than 1.2 million acres accepted for Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands

More than 1.2 million acres were accepted in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands during the recent signup period that began March 16 and ended May 15.

Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds.

Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is 10 or 15 years. FSA ranked offers using a number of factors, including existence of expiring CRP land, threat of conversion or development, existing grassland and predominance of native species cover and cost.

The 2018 Farm Bill set aside 2 million acres for CRP Grassland enrollment. CRP is one of the largest conservation programs at USDA. CRP marks its 35-year anniversary in 2020 with 22 million acres currently enrolled.

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

Aug. 21 Deadline for New Conservation Pilot Program for Prairie Pothole Producers to Plant Perennial Cover Crops

The Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) is a land conservation program administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency.

USDA Farm Service Agency announced a new pilot program that enables farmers in Prairie Pothole states to receive payments for planting perennial cover crops on their land for three to five years. The new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) pilot is available to producers in Iowa, Minnesota, **Montana**, North Dakota and South Dakota. The signup for this pilot started March 30, 2020 and ends **August 21**.

Through SHIPP, producers have the option of three-, four- or five-year CRP contracts to establish perennial cover crops on less productive cropland in exchange for payments. This pilot enables producers to plant perennial cover crops that, among other benefits, will improve soil health and water quality while having the option to harvest, hay and graze during certain times of the year. Up to 50,000 acres can be enrolled.

Perennial cover crops, whether used in a single crop rotation or over multiple years, can improve the productivity of soils and soil health on a farm for generations and increase the bottom line for the farmer. Soil health, or soil quality, by definition, is the capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans.

The SHIPP pilot is the latest option in a full suite of opportunities available to producers through CRP and other conservation programs offered by USDA. Farmers and ranchers are encouraged to talk to their FSA county office soon about whether this pilot fits their operation or consider another longer-term option such as the CRP General signup that ends February 28 or CRP Continuous signup that is ongoing.

For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp and contact your local office. To find your local USDA Service Center office, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/service-locator>.

One-Time PLC Yield Updates – Deadline September 30

Farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC yields of covered commodities on the farm, regardless of Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program election. The deadline to request a PLC yield update is September 30, 2020.

The updated yield will be equal to 90 percent of the average yield per planted acre in crop years 2013-2017 (excluding any year where the applicable covered commodity was not planted), subject to the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for the covered commodity. If the reported yield in any year is less than 75 percent of the 2013-2017 average county yield, then the yield will be substituted with 75 percent of the county average yield.

The chart below provides the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for each covered commodity.

Covered Commodity	National Yield Factor
Barley	0.9437
Canola	0.9643
Chickpeas, Large	1.0000
Chickpeas, Small	0.9760
Corn	0.9000
Crambe	1.0000
Flaxseed	1.0000
Grain Sorghum	0.9077
Lentils	1.0000
Mustard Seed	0.9460
Oats	0.9524
Peanuts	0.9273
Peas, Dry	0.9988
Rapeseed	1.0000
Rice, Long	0.9330
Rice, Medium	0.9887
Rice, Temp Japonica	0.9591
Safflower	1.0000
Seed Cotton	0.9000
Sesame Seed	0.9673
Soybeans	0.9000
Sunflower Seed	0.9396
Wheat	0.9545

It is the owner's choice whether to update or keep existing PLC yields. If a yield update is not made, then no action is required to maintain the existing PLC yield. An existing or updated PLC yield will be maintained and effective for crop years 2020 through 2023 (life of the 2018 Farm Bill).

PLC yields may be updated on a covered commodity-by-covered commodity basis using FSA form [CCC-867](#).

For more information, reference resources and decision tools, visit farmers.gov/arc-plc. Contact your local Farm Service Agency Office for assistance – farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

5 Steps to Complete After Spring Planting

With #Plant2020 in the rear-view mirror, it's time to think about next steps on your farm.

Your USDA team understands that the real work continues after planting. We know the rest of spring and summer will be spent scouting crops, irrigating or waiting for timely rains for your non-irrigated fields, and monitoring weed and insect pressure.

Before you get too busy, [there are five things to keep in mind after planting](#).

FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup

The USDA has started making payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) to agricultural producers who suffered eligible losses because of drought or excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Signup for these causes of loss opened March 23, and producers who suffered losses from drought (in counties designated D3 or above), excess moisture, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires can still apply for assistance through WHIP+.

To be eligible for WHIP+, producers must have suffered losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary county may be eligible if a producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event.

For losses due to drought, a producer is eligible if any area of the county in which the loss occurred was rated D3, or extreme drought, or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor during calendar years 2018 or 2019. Producers who suffered losses should contact their FSA county office.

In addition to the recently added eligible losses of drought and excess moisture, FSA will implement a WHIP+ provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops damaged by eligible disaster events. To ensure an effective program for all impacted farmers, the Agency is currently gathering information on the extent of quality loss from producers and stakeholder organizations.

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 Loans Website](#)

Income-over-feed margin for May triggers third payment for 2020; Dairy Safety-Net Program Signup to Begin October 12 for the 2021 Coverage Period

Income-over-feed margin for May triggers third payment for 2020

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency announced that the May 2020 income over feed cost margin was \$5.37 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the third payment of 2020 for dairy producers who purchased the appropriate level of coverage under the [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program.

To date, FSA has issued more than \$176 million in program benefits to dairy producers who purchased DMC coverage for 2020.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. Over 13,000 operations enrolled in the program for the 2020 calendar year.

Although DMC enrollment for 2020 coverage has closed, signup for 2021 coverage will begin October 13 and will run through December 11, 2020.

For more information, visit [farmers.gov DMC webpage](#) or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](#).

News from USDA Risk Management Agency: Forage Seeding Crop Insurance Deadline Nears in Montana

Producers Need to Make Insurance Decisions Soon

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds producers in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming that for the 2021 crop year a Fall Seeded Practice has been added for: 1) Irrigated Alfalfa Forage Seeding in all Montana and Wyoming counties; and 2) for Irrigated and Non-Irrigated Alfalfa Forage Seeding in all North Dakota and South Dakota counties. The Forage Seeding crop insurance policy insures newly established forage stands during the initial crop year of establishment. The final date to purchase or make changes to Fall Seeded Forage Seeding crop insurance in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming is **July 31**.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy. Producers may select from several coverage options, including yield coverage, revenue protection, and area risk policies. **Producers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2021 crop year.** Agents can help producers determine what policy works best for their operation and review existing coverage to ensure the policy meets their needs. RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus while continuing to support producers, working through Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) to deliver services, including processing policies, claims and agreements. RMA staff are working with AIPs and other customers by phone, mail, and electronically to continue supporting crop insurance coverage for producers. Farmers with crop insurance questions or needs should continue to contact their insurance agents about conducting business remotely (by telephone or email). More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](#).

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Producers can use the RMA Cost Estimator to get a premium amount estimate of their insurance needs online. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at <https://www.rma.usda.gov/>.

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

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: droughtreporter.unl.edu/submitreport/

More information can be found on the U. S. Drought Monitor site:
<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?MT>

Montana Farm and Ranch Stress Resource Clearinghouse

Montana State University Extension and an associated statewide advisory council have developed an online clearinghouse of resources for a wide range of topics related to stress and mental health. The clearinghouse was created specifically for ag producers and their families, but it contains a wealth of information for anyone interested in learning more about causes of stress, stress prevention and management, and overall mental health. To access the site, please click on this link: https://msuextension.org/wellness/stress-management/mt_farm_stress_clearing_house/

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