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Montana FSA: September 2015 eNewsletter

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Four regional Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) Farm Bill Meetings scheduled in early September

*NAP Meetings in Dillon, Billings, Miles City
and Lewistown to Highlight 2014 Farm Bill
Improvements and Upcoming 2016 Sales
Closing Dates*

Four regional producer meetings in Montana will be held in September to highlight important changes to the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill).

**Montana USDA
Directories:**

[Online Directory of FSA
Offices](#)

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Reasonable

Accommodations: People with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs should contact the County Executive Director in the FSA Office in your area or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Alternatively, you may also contact Montana FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Jennifer Cole at (406) 587-6786 or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov.

The meetings consist of presentations covering FSA's NAP program and the new buy-up coverage provisions. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters. MSU Extension will present an analysis and explanation of the web-based NAP Buy-Up Decision Tool.

Producers are invited to the following public meetings:

- **Tues., Sept. 8: Dillon**, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the USDA Conference Room (420 Barrett Street, Dillon)
- **Wed., Sept. 9: Billings**, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Big Horn Resort (1801 Majestic Lane)
- **Thurs., Sept. 10: Miles City**, 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Sleep Inn (1006 S. Haynes Ave.)
- **Thurs., Sept. 10: Lewistown**, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Yogo Inn (211 East Main Street)

The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP's basic catastrophic coverage to include buy-up coverage levels similar to buy-up provisions offered by crop insurance. Producers may elect additional coverage levels ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in five percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers who elect additional coverage must pay a premium in addition to the service fee. Crops intended for grazing are not eligible for additional coverage. Beginning, limited resource, and underserved farmers are eligible for a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction.

2016 NAP SALES CLOSING DATES: The upcoming NAP sales closing dates for the 2016 crop year are: **Sept. 30, 2015** for annual fall-seeded crops, perennial forage and grazing, mixed forage crops, rye, speltz, triticale, wheat and garlic, Dec. 1, 2015 for honey and March 15, 2016 for all other crops. The closing date for value-loss crops was Sept. 1, 2015.

For more information about NAP coverage, visit your local FSA office. For online resources, visit Montana FSA at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt, the NAP Page at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, MSU

Extension's Farm Bill website at <http://www.montana.edu/farmbill> and FSA's national Farm Bill website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill>.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in a meeting should contact Jennifer Cole on 406.587.6786, or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, and jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov by Sept. 7.

[See NAP Factsheet Here](#)

[See NAP Presentation PowerPoint Here](#)

2014 and 2015 ARC-PLC Enrollment Deadline is Sept. 30

Enrollment into the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2014 and 2015 began June 17, 2015, and will end Sept. 30, 2015. For ARC-CO and PLC, the contract enrollment must be completed by those producers with an interest in the base acres of the farm. For ARC-IC farms, the contract enrollment must be completed by producers who have an interest in the planted acres of the covered commodities on the farm. Contract enrollment is a separate process from program election which was completed earlier this year. Contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll your farms into ARC or PLC by the deadline of **Sept. 30, 2015**.

[See Factsheet Here](#)

2014 ARC and PLC Payments

The final payments for the 2014 ARC and PLC program, if payments are triggered, are scheduled to be made by the end of October for wheat, barley, oats, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, dry peas and lentils. The minor oilseed and garbanzo bean 2014 ARC and PLC payments, if triggered, are scheduled to be paid in December.

The final payment rates for crops triggering PLC payments are dependent on the 2014 marketing year average price. The final payments rates for crops triggering ARC-CO payments are dependent upon each crops county average yield and the 2014 marketing year average price. The final ARC-CO crop yields will be made available by FSA prior to payments being issued.

2014 ARC-IC – Farm Benchmark and Actual Yield Certification

Producers, who have a 2014 ARC-IC program contract on one or more FSA farms, must complete the certification of ARC-IC yields for each ARC-IC farm and each covered commodity planted in 2014 by not later than September 30, 2015.

Production evidence that can be used to support the certified yields can be from the following sources:

- Crop Insurance loss records
- Sales records (buyer specific)

- Crop Insurance APH data base records
- Farm stored production records, appraisals

Livestock Forage Disaster Program Triggered in Four Additional Counties Bringing Total to 19 Montana Counties

The 2015 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) triggered eligibility in four more Montana counties based on the U.S. Drought Monitor report released on Aug. 27, 2015.

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses due to a qualifying drought or fire on federally managed land. Eligible producers must own or lease grazing land physically located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county.

Three counties - Jefferson, Teton and Toole counties – met the D3 extreme drought criteria – and Madison County met the D2 severe drought criteria for eight consecutive weeks. Qualifying livestock producers with land in **Jefferson, Teton and Toole counties** are eligible for three monthly payments while livestock producers in **Madison County** are eligible for one monthly payment.

In July, Montana FSA announced the 15 counties that met the extreme drought (D3) criteria **Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Flathead, Glacier, Granite, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Pondera, Powell, Ravalli, Sanders and Silver Bow**. Qualifying producers with land in these 15 counties are eligible for four monthly payments.

Montana livestock producers who own or lease grazing land or pastureland physically located in these 19 counties should contact their local FSA office right away to schedule an appointment to begin the enrollment process.

LFP provided almost \$60 million in disaster relief to more than 4,100 Montana livestock producers for the 2012 and 2013 crop years.

Producers must complete an application and provide supporting documentation for 2015 losses by **Feb 1, 2016**. For more information, contact your local FSA office and visit Montana FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt. [See LFP Factsheet Here](#)

Conservation Incentives for Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands

Signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grassland began September 1, 2015. Applications will be scored and ranked nationally based on the competitiveness of the offer. The end of the first ranking period will be Nov. 20, 2015.

The CRP-Grasslands initiative will provide participants who establish long-term, resource-conserving covers with annual rental payments up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land. Cost-share assistance also is available for up to 50 percent of the cost to establish practices, such as cross fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife. Participants may still conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production, conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences.

To learn more about participating in CRP-Grasslands or SAFE, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/mt and www.fsa.usda.gov/crp or consult with the local FSA office. To locate a nearby Farm Service

Agency office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about the 30th anniversary of CRP, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30 or follow on Twitter using #CRPis30.

[Click here for the CRP-Grasslands factsheet](#)

SAFE Acreage Available through CRP Continuous Signup

Montana received an additional 7,500 acres for enrollment in both the Prairie Pothole and Pheasants Winter Cover projects through the CRP State Acres for Wildlife (SAFE) initiative. These enrollment opportunities through SAFE are offered on a continuous, non-competitive, first-come, first-serve basis.

The **Prairie Pothole-Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement SAFE area** includes the following counties: Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Glacier, Hill, Liberty, Phillips, Pondera, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole and Valley. The purpose of this SAFE initiative is to expand habitats for ground nesting ducks and other upland game bird species. The initiative also enhances or augments existing habitats by providing key nesting cover adjacent to duck brood water. [See Factsheet Here](#)

The **Pheasants Winter Cover Enhancement SAFE area** includes the following counties: Daniels, Dawson, McCone, Richland, Roosevelt, Sheridan and Valley. The purpose of this SAFE initiative is to provide and enhance habitat for ring-necked pheasants and other upland birds near existing permanent winter cover. It also expands habitat for ring-necked pheasants and other upland birds by converting eligible croplands to grassy cover and to improve water quality and reduce soil erosion within the project area. [See Factsheet Here](#)

Montana also has the **Montana Sagebrush-Grassland Restoration Area** including Beaverhead, Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Golden Valley, Madison, Musselshell, Petroleum, Powder River, Rosebud and Treasure counties. Currently there are 1,600 acres available for enrollment. The purpose of this SAFE initiative is to improve habitat for sage grouse and other sagebrush obligate through a conservation practice to establish permanent native grasses that include Big Sagebrush. [See Factsheet Here](#)

Other CRP continuous sign-up initiatives include the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI), the Duck Nesting Habitat Initiative, and Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds Initiative. [See Additional Factsheets Here](#)

Emergency Loans – Secretarial Disaster Designations in Montana

FSA's Emergency Loan Program is available for agricultural producers in counties designated as primary or contiguous natural disaster areas (See Map Below of 2015 Montana Designations by County). 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.

- [Cumulative Disaster Designation Map for 2015](#)
- [Emergency Loan Factsheet](#)

For questions about eligibility and/or to apply for an Emergency Loan, contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment with the Farm Loan Program staff serving your area.

Report Changes in Farming Operation

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You will need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property, or a copy of your lease for leased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties.

Update eligibility documents and signature authorization when changes in your operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office promptly about any change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

Montana FSA: Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

DEADLINE POSTER: A printable pdf version of these deadlines is available [HERE](#) and on the Montana FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

SIGNUP PERIODS:

- **June 30 to Sept. 4:** 2015 BCAP Application Period for eligible material owners to harvest and deliver Biomass
- **June 15 to Sept. 30:** 2014 & 2015 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Enrollment Period
- **July 1 to Sept. 30:** Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 Margin Protection Program – Dairy (MPP-Dairy)
- **Sept. 1 to Nov. 20:** Applications Period for CRP Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands Initiative
- **Dec 1, 2015 to Feb. 26, 2016:** CRP General Signup Period

DATES AND DEADLINES:

- **Sept. 1:** Applications Period Begins for CRP Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands Initiative
- **Sept 4:** 2015 BCAP Application Deadline for Eligible Material Owners to Submit BCAP-11s
- **Sept. 7:** USDA Service Centers Closed for Labor Day Federal Holiday
- **Sept. 30:** 2014 and 2015 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) & Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Enrollment Deadline
- **Sept. 30:** Deadline for 2014 Certification of Benchmark and Actual Year Yields for ARC-IC Farms
- **Sept. 30:** 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Annual Fall-Seeded Crops, Perennial Forage and Grazing, Mixed Forage Crops, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Garlic
- **Sept. 30:** Last day of the Registration/Coverage Election Period for 2016 MPP-Dairy Program
- **Nov. 2:** 2015 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Application for Payment Deadline
- **Nov. 9:** County Committee Election Ballots will be Mailed to Eligible Voters
- **Nov. 12:** All Hay Bales Must be Removed from CRP

- **Nov. 16:** 2016 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Perennial Forage, Pasture, Rangeland & Forage (PRF) including Native Grass, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter – HRW), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains
- **Nov. 16:** Deadline for 2015 NAP Production Reports for Annual Fall-Seeded Crops, Perennial Forage, Mixed Forage Crops, Rye, Speltz, Triticale, Wheat and Garlic
- **Nov. 20:** Application Deadline for CRP Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands Initiative
- **Dec. 1:** 2016 NAP Application Closing Date for Honey Producers
- **Dec. 1:** CRP General Signup Begins
- **Dec. 7:** Last Day to Return Voted County Committee Election Ballots to FSA at the local USDA Service Center

For more information about any FSA program, contact you local FSA office and visit Montana FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).