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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

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Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions specific to your operation or county

USDA Issues Farm Safety Net and Conservation Payments

USDA Farm Service Agency announced that over \$9.6 billion in payments will be made to producers through the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Conservation Reserve (CRP) programs. The USDA is issuing approximately \$8 billion in payments under the ARC and PLC programs for the 2016 crop year, and \$1.6 billion under CRP for 2017.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in revenue or prices for covered commodities. Over half a million producers will receive ARC payments and over a quarter million producers will receive PLC payments for 2016 crops, starting the first week of October and continuing over the next several months.

Payments are being made to producers who enrolled base acres of barley, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, oats, peanuts, dry peas, soybeans, wheat and canola. In the upcoming months, payments will be announced after marketing year average prices are published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for the remaining covered commodities. Those include long and medium grain rice (except for temperate Japonica rice), which will be

Important Dates:

Oct 20: Final Day to Apply for NRCS 2018 EQIP

Nov 1: Final Day to Apply for 2017 livestock/farm raised fish and honeybee losses

Nov 6: - COC Election Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Nov 10: Offices closed in honor of Veteran's Day

Nov 15: Acreage Reporting Deadline for fall seeded small grains and perennial forage, including established hay

announced in November; remaining oilseeds and chickpeas, which will be announced in December; and temperate Japonica rice, which will be announced in early February 2017. The estimated payments are before application of sequestration and other reductions and limits, including adjusted gross income limits and payment limitations.

Also, as part of an ongoing effort to protect sensitive lands and improve water quality and wildlife habitat, USDA will begin issuing 2017 CRP payments in October to over 375,000 Americans.

Signed into law by President Reagan in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation program in the United States. Thanks to voluntary participation by farmers and landowners, CRP has improved water quality, reduced soil erosion and increased habitat for endangered and threatened species. In return for enrolling in CRP, USDA, through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation, provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Participants enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP payments are made to participants who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.

For more details regarding ARC and PLC programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. For more information about CRP, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

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

The USDA Rural Development (RD) is accepting applications for grants to help farmers, ranchers and producer-based businesses nationwide develop new product lines.

The funding is being provided through the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. VAPG grants can be used to develop new products from raw agricultural products or promote new markets for established products. Veterans, socially-disadvantaged groups, beginning farmers and ranchers, operators of small and medium-sized family farms and ranches and farmer and rancher cooperatives are given special priority.

The deadline to submit paper applications is Jan. 31, 2018. Electronic applications submitted through grants.gov are due Jan. 24, 2018. For more information on this grant program, visit [USDA Rural Development](http://USDA.RuralDevelopment). For assistance in New Jersey, call 856-787-7700.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by Nov. 1, 2017
- An application for payment by Nov. 1, 2017

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- [ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet](#)
- [ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet](#)
- [ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet](#)

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets.

Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of “idle” and “fallow.”

Reporting Cover Crops:

FSA made changes to the types of cover crops. Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- **Cereals and other grasses** - Any cover crop that is classified as a grass plant or cereal grain, and would include, but not be limited to, the following cover crops: cereal rye, wheat, barley, oats, black oats, triticale, annual ryegrass, pearl millet, foxtail millet (also called German, Italian or Hungarian millet), sorghum sudan grass, sorghum and other millets and grasses.
- **Legumes** - Any cover crop that is classified as a legume, including, but not limited to, clovers, vetches, peas, sun hemp, cowpeas, lentils and other legumes.
- **Brassicas and other broadleaves** - Any cover crop that is classified as a non-legume broadleaf, including, but not limited to, Brassicas such as radishes, turnips, canola, rapeseed, oilseed rape, and mustards, as well as other broadleaf plants such as phacelia, flax, sunflower, buckwheat, and safflower.
- **Mixtures** - Mixes of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time, for example, oats and radishes. If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing

and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 days to change the intended use. Producer share interest changes alone will not allow for revisions to intended use after the acreage reporting date. The revision must be performed by either the acreage reporting date or within 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

Acreage Reports:

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Reporting Grazing Allotments:

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. Producers will use form "FSA-578" to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the "Reporting Unit" field. The local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

Definitions of Terms

FSA defines "idle" as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row. For example, the balance of a field that could not be planted due to moisture or a turn area that is not planted would be reported as idle.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season. Resting the ground in this manner allows it to recover its fertility and conserve moisture for crop production in the next growing season.

2018 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for all New Jersey Counties:

- November 15, 2017 fall seeded small grains and perennial forage, including established hay
- January 2, 2018 honey
- January 15, 2018 apples, peaches, cane berries, strawberries and **grapes* (NEW)**

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above 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 above 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.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

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.\

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

** Crop insurance coverage for Grapes has been expanded by RMA to four New Jersey counties for 2018: Atlantic, Camden, Cumberland and Gloucester. For all other counties in the state, NAP coverage remains available. Due to this expansion of coverage, the acreage reporting deadline has been moved from 7/15 to 1/15 for all NJ counties to match the RMA deadline. Eligibility for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) – which reimburses grape growers for vine replacement and replanting that is needed due to a disaster condition - is unaffected by these changes.*

Application Period for FY2018 Environmental Quality Incentives Program Ends October 20, 2017

New Jersey State Conservationist Carrie Lindig invites New Jersey agricultural producers and forest land owners to visit their local USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to discuss opportunities available through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#). “NRCS provided over \$5 million in EQIP funding to New Jersey agricultural producers and forest land owners in FY2017. Our soil conservationists are ready to help our farmers and forest land owners get a head start on planning their conservation activities for next year,” Lindig said. Farmers still have time to plan next year’s conservation activities, Lindig will keep the application period for FY2018 EQIP open through **October 20, 2017**. Applications received by that date will be reviewed and ranked so that FY2018 funding can be awarded. A second application period will be set in the Spring if funding is still available.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program can help agricultural producers and private, non-industrial forest land owners manage existing resource concerns with technical and financial assistance. The Program can help producers install permanent measures, adopt new management strategies, or develop [Conservation Activity Plans \(CAP\)](#) that are used to identify conservation practices needed to address a specific natural resource need, such as forestry and nutrient management. The Program also includes the [Organic Initiative](#), the [Soil Health Initiative](#), and the [Energy Initiative](#).

In addition to EQIP funding generally available to New Jersey operations, producers in the Raritan Basin can apply for EQIP funds that have been earmarked specifically for their area. The special funding was established through The [Raritan Basin Partners for Source Water Protection](#), a partnership effort led by the New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) and established through the FY2016 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The RCPP-EQIP funds have been set aside for conservation activity in areas of the Raritan Basin where water quality impairments have been identified. Parts of Morris, Hunterdon, and Somerset Counties that drain into the South Branch of the Raritan River and its tributaries are eligible for this RCPP-EQIP assistance. The Locketong and Wickecheoke Creek watersheds of the Delaware River watershed are also included in the project area due to their importance to the D&R Canal. Producers should visit NRCS at the Frenchtown or Hackettstown USDA Service Centers to determine their eligibility for the RCPP-EQIP funding. Applications for FY18 RCPP-EQIP should also be submitted by October 20th. An interactive map that defines the target area is available online (<http://arcg.is/2f9BREh>).

EQIP is a voluntary program open to all eligible agricultural producers involved in livestock, forestry, and organic production. The program offers financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Learn more about NRCS conservation programs on the NJ NRCS website (www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov) or by visiting [your local NRCS service center](#).

NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to help agricultural producers with erosion control, water management, water quality, and other resource concerns through conservation programs authorized by the Farm Bill.

Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, & Warren Counties are Eligible for Emergency Loans

Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, & Warren Counties were declared a contiguous disaster due to drought that occurred from May 1, 2016 through December 10, 2016. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans through December 5th 2017.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.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).