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Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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Rhode Island FSA Newsletter

Rhode Island Farm Service Agency

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www.fsa.usda.gov/ri

State Executive Director: W. Michael Sullivan, PhD.

State Committee: Doreen Pezza, Kevin Breene, Judith Carvalho, David Frerichs, Ellen Puccetti

The State Committee meets the second Wednesday of every month subject to change.

County Office: 401-828-3120 Option 2.

County Executive Director: Sheryl Michener

County Committee: Kim Coulter, Vincent Confreda,

Message from the State Executive Director

Remember: NAP perennial crop signup deadlines aren't far off and are required by 20th of November. So, if your concerned with coverage check in soon with the County Office and make sure you act.

Speaking of opportunities, I have a keen interest in seeing Rhode Island youth gain access to the USDA Youth Loan Program. These loans are available to young people from 14 to 20 for up to $5,000 for a project. These projects need to be guided by a teacher, professor or other independent adult with skills and credentials and a parent or guardian must 'sign off' on the loan.

The parental or guardian signature does not influence their credit rating or score, does not make them subject to lien if the youth does not meet their loan obligations, but rather simply tries toward a 3-part loan agreement to encourage young people experimenting with their agricultural interests. These can be young people in high school or even a college/university student who's wants to go further into the study of an independent project where institutional funds might not be possible. Please go to our website or stop by to learn more on these valuable tools to funding the next generation of farmers, ranchers or producers.

Other opportunities: **The 2020 RI Women in Agriculture Conference is scheduled for March 10th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, RI.** This is an all-day training, learning, mentoring and inspirational program is planned. The keynote speaker will be Amberley Snyder, champion barrel racer, she was paralyzed from the waist down in a tragic rollover accident. Amberley's story is told in the Netflix movie "Walk, Ride, Rodeo".

Victor Hoogendoorn, Joseph Silveira, Joseph Polseno

The County Committee meets the first Wednesday of every month subject to change.

Farm Loan Team: 401-828-3120 Option 3.

Dates to Remember:

November 20th-Deadline to enroll Perennial crops under the NAP program.

November 20th-Deadline to receive Emergency Loan Assistance for excessive rainfall that occurred in 2018.

The heroic struggle following her accident is impressive as is her return to rodeo competition. Hers is a story all should hear.

We are hoping all FFA and 4H members who wish to spend the day at this educational event will join us. We are expecting some strong support from several agribusiness partners that are equally committed to providing a free or low-cost opportunity for young people interested in RI agriculture.

Elections for the 2019 County Committee

Voting is now open and this year (**2019**), the following local administrative areas (LAA's) are up for County Committee Elections for Rhode Island;

LAA-5: Bristol County

LAA-2: Kent County

LAA-4: Newport County

It is important that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the USDA.

County committee members are a critical component of FSA operations. Committees should be comprised of members who reflect the diversity of producers involved in production agriculture in Name County. This means that producers representing underserved groups or communities should be on the committee to speak on behalf of their constituency.

Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

County committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on **Nov. 4, 2019**. The last day to return completed ballots to the Name County USDA service center is **Dec. 2, 2019.**

For more information on eligibility to serve on FSA county committees, visit: **fsa.usda.gov/elections**

USDA Reminds Producers: 2019 Enrollment Deadline for the Dairy Margin Coverage Program Is Sept. 20

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds dairy producers that the deadline to enroll in the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program for 2019 is Sept. 20, 2019.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, the program offers reasonably priced protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

As the 2019 enrollment period draws to a close, FSA estimates over $257.7 million in payments to producers who are currently registered. Also, nearly half of the producers are taking advantage of the 25 percent premium discount by locking in for five years of margin protection coverage. FSA has launched a new web visualization of the DMC data, which is available here.

Margin payments have triggered for each month from January through July. Dairy producers who elect higher coverage levels could be eligible for payments for all seven months. Under certain levels, the amount paid to dairy farmers will exceed the cost of the premium.

For example, a dairy operation that chooses to enroll for 2019 an established production history of 3 million pounds (30,000 cwt.) and elects the $9.50 coverage level on 95 percent of production will pay $4,275 in total premium payments for all of 2019 and receive $15,437.50 in DMC payments for all margin payments announced to date. Additional payments will be made if calculated margins remain below the $9.50/cwt level for any remaining months of 2019.

Enrollment for 2020

For 2020, dairy producers can sign up for coverage under DMC beginning Oct. 7 through Dec. 13, 2019. At the time of signup, dairy producers can choose between the $4.00 to $9.50 coverage levels.

DMC offers catastrophic coverage at no cost to the producer, other than an annual $100 administrative fee. Producers can opt for greater coverage levels for a premium in addition to the administrative fee. Operations owned by limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers may be eligible for a waiver on administrative fees. Producers have the choice to lock in coverage levels until 2023 and receive a 25-percent discount on their DMC premiums.

Producers who locked in coverage in the 2019 sign-up must certify the operation is producing and commercially marketing milk and pay the annual administrative fee during the 2020 enrollment period.

To assist producers in making coverage elections, USDA partnered with the University of Wisconsin to develop a DMC decision support tool, which can be used to evaluate various scenarios using different coverage levels through DMC.

2019 Retroactive Intergenerational Transfers

Participating dairy operations who had an intergenerational transfer between 2014 and 2019 will a have a one-time opportunity to increase their established production history during the 2019 and 2020 annual coverage election periods. Retroactive payments based on the increased production history will apply for 2019 and not prior years.

A dairy operation may add to their approved production history for an intergenerational transfer when a spouse, child or grandchild join a participating dairy operation. Non-lineal relatives, such as siblings, cousins, nieces or nephews, that join the operation will not be eligible for a production history increase.

The increase to the established production history of the participating dairy operation will be determined based on multiplying both the national rolling herd average data for the current year in effect at the time of the intergenerational transfer and the quantity of cows purchased by the joining family member within 60 days of joining the dairy operation. For an intergenerational transfer to be recognized by FSA, the requesting dairy operation will meet all eligibility requirements including an ownership provision for those entering the business.

Applications for an intergenerational transfer must be submitted by Dec. 6, 2019, for approval by the local FSA county committee, to be eligible for the increased production history effective on January 1, 2019.

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-locator.

USDA Opens 2019 Enrollment for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

Agricultural producers can now enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, two popular safety net programs, for the 2019 crop year. Interested producers must sign up for either program by March 15, 2020.

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and made updates to these two USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs. ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level. PLC program provides income support payments on historical base acres when the price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain rice), safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Updated provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill allow producers with an interest in a farm to enroll and elect coverage in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the entire farm, for program year 2019. The election applies to both the 2019 and 2020 crop years. If a 2019 election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2020, the election defaults to the current elections of the crops on the farm established under the 2014 Farm Bill. No payments will be earned in 2019 if the election defaults.

For crop years 2021 through 2023, producers will have an opportunity to make new elections. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Once the 2019 election and enrollment are completed, producers on the farm for 2020 can complete an enrollment contract for the 2020 crop year beginning Oct. 7, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020.

Although 2019 enrollment begins Sept. 3, 2019 and must occur first, a producer waiting until Oct. 7, 2019 to enroll is afforded the opportunity to enroll in either program for both 2019 and 2020 during the same office visit. During this time, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that takes effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update may be completed during the same office visit.

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University are offering web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. These decision tools can be found at fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Producers are reminded that enrolling in ARC or PLC programs can impact eligibility for some forms of crop insurance. Producers who elect and enroll in PLC also have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). Producers of covered commodities who elect ARC are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres. To be eligible for STAX coverage, producers must not enroll their seed cotton base acres into the ARC or PLC programs.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our program fact sheet or our 2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet, or visit fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

USDA Offers Disaster Assistance for Farmers Hurt by 2018, 2019 Disasters

Agricultural producers affected by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019, can apply through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+). Sign-up for this U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program began Sept. 11.

WHIP+ Eligibility

WHIP+ will be available for eligible producers who have suffered eligible losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only). Disaster losses must have been a result of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires that occurred in 2018 or 2019. Also, producers in counties that did not receive a disaster declaration or designation may still apply for WHIP+ but must provide supporting documentation to establish that the crops were directly affected by a qualifying disaster loss.

A list of counties that received qualifying disaster declarations and designations is available at farmers.gov/recover/whip-plus. Because grazing and livestock losses, other than milk losses, are covered by other disaster recovery programs offered through FSA, those losses are not eligible for WHIP+.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available, excluding crops intended for grazing. A list of crops covered by crop insurance is available through USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) Actuarial Information Browser at webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser.

The WHIP+ payment factor ranges from 75 percent to 95 percent, depending on the level of crop insurance coverage or NAP coverage that a producer obtained for the crop. Producers who did not insure their crops in 2018 or 2019 will receive 70 percent of the expected value of the crop. Insured crops (either crop insurance or NAP coverage) will receive between 75 percent and 95 percent of expected value; those who purchased the highest levels of coverage will receive 95-percent of the expected value.

At the time of sign-up, producers will be asked to provide verifiable and reliable production records. If a producer is unable to provide production records, WHIP+ payments will be determined based on the lower of either the actual loss certified by the producer and determined acceptable by FSA or the county expected yield and county disaster yield. The county disaster yield is the production that a producer would have been expected to make based on the eligible disaster conditions in the county.

WHIP+ payments for 2018 disasters will be eligible for 100 percent of their calculated value. WHIP+ payments for 2019 disasters will be limited to an initial 50 percent of their calculated value, with an opportunity to receive up to the remaining 50 percent after January 1, 2020, if sufficient funding remains.

Both insured and uninsured producers are eligible to apply for WHIP+. But all producers receiving WHIP+ payments will be required to purchase crop insurance or NAP, at the 60 percent coverage level or higher, for the next two available, consecutive crop years after the crop year for which WHIP+ payments were paid. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two applicable, consecutive years will be required to pay back the WHIP+ payment.

Additional information about WHIP+ program eligibility and payment limitations can be found at farmers.gov/recover or by contacting your local USDA Service Center.

Additional Loss Coverage

The Milk Loss Program will provide payments to eligible dairy operations for milk that was dumped or removed without compensation from the commercial milk market because of a qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disaster. Producers who suffered losses of harvested commodities, including hay, stored in on-farm structures in 2018 and 2019 will receive assistance through the On-Farm Storage Loss Program.

Additionally, producers with trees, bushes or vines can receive both cost-share assistance through FSA's Tree Assistance Program (TAP) for the cost of replanting and rehabilitating eligible trees and WHIP+ will provide payments based on the loss value of the tree, bush or vine itself. Therefore, eligible producers may receive both a TAP and a 2017 WHIP or WHIP+ payment for the same acreage. In addition, TAP policy has been updated to assist eligible orchardists or nursery tree growers of pecan trees with a tree mortality rate that exceeds 7.5 percent (adjusted for normal mortality) but is less than 15 percent (adjusted for normal mortality) for losses incurred during 2018.

[Only include the following if applicable for your state] Additionally, the disaster relief measure expanded coverage of the 2017 WHIP to include losses from Tropical Storm Cindy, and peach and blueberry crop losses that resulted from extreme cold.

Prevented Planting

Agricultural producers faced significant challenges planting crops in 2019 in many parts of the country. All producers with flooding or excess moisture-related prevented planting insurance claims in calendar year 2019 will receive a prevented planting supplemental disaster ("bonus") payment equal to 10 percent of their prevented planting indemnity, plus an additional 5 percent will be provided to those who purchased harvest price option coverage.

As under 2017 WHIP, WHIP+ will provide prevented planting assistance to uninsured producers, NAP producers and producers who may have been prevented from planting an insured crop in the 2018 crop year and those 2019 crops that had a final planting date prior to January 1, 2019.

For more information on FSA disaster assistance programs, please contact your local USDA service center or visit farmers.gov/recover. For all available USDA disaster assistance programs, go to USDA's disaster resources website

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