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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Washington State FSA Newsletter

Washington State Farm Service Agency

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Perdue Names Appointees to the Washington USDA Farm Service Agency State Committee

U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue recently announced the individuals who will serve on the Washington USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) state committee. The state committee is responsible for the oversight of farm programs and county committee operations, resolving appeals from the agriculture community, and helping to keep producers informed about FSA programs.

State Committee:

Melanie Wyss, Chair
Jesus Limon, Member
Robyn Meenach, Member
Maureen Harkcom, Member
Bruce Nelson, Member

To find contact information for
your local office go to
www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

Each state committee has five members, one chairperson and four members. The individuals appointed to serve on this committee include:

- Committee Chair Melanie Wyss - Okanogan County
- Maureen Harkcom - Lewis County
- Jesus Limon – Douglas County
- Robyn Meenach - Spokane County
- Bruce Nelson - Whitman County

The Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs. The agency offers farmers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. FSA continues to conserve natural resources and also provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including special emphasis on beginning, underserved and women farmers and ranchers.

Report Damage or Loss of NAP Covered Crops

If winter or early spring weather caused damage to, or loss of, your NAP covered perennial and/or fall planted crops, you must report this to your local [county FSA office](#).

NAP notices of loss must be submitted, in writing, to your local FSA county office for weather related events or adverse natural occurrences that cause damage to or loss of the NAP covered crop. To report crop damage or loss you must complete, sign and file form CCC-576 with your FSA office by the earlier of either of the following:

- 15 calendar days after the disaster occurrence or date of loss or damage to the crop or commodity first becomes apparent
- 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date

As the 2018 crop year progresses, it is imperative that a notice of loss is filed (for all affected NAP covered crops) within the timeframe reflected above for each weather-related event or adverse natural occurrence. This will ensure FSA is notified that your NAP covered crop or crops have been damaged or lost.

When a covered crop is lost or damage is significant, replanting is required if feasible and the final planting date has not passed. When you determine that the crop will be destroyed, abandoned, and not taken to harvest as intended, you must report this to your local FSA office so a field visit can be conducted by a certified loss adjuster. Once the crop appraisal has been completed, the loss adjuster will release the field and you can

destroy the covered crop and replant to a different crop or harvest the acres for a different use.

Failure to timely notify your FSA county office of NAP covered crop damage or losses will result in denial of NAP payment benefits. Destroying a NAP covered crop or harvesting for a different use without a loss adjuster appraisal will result in those acres being determined ineligible for NAP payment benefits.

If you have any questions about NAP policy requirements, contact your local [county FSA office](#).

Report Livestock Losses to Claim Indemnity Assistance

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides financial assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Adverse weather includes losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold. To be considered extreme, heat or cold must meet temperature thresholds and occur for two or more consecutive days.

For 2018, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2018 and no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event or attack. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- 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 = 1.5% and non-adult beef cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3.5%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2018 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the adverse weather event occurred or the loss was apparent
- An application for payment by March 31, 2019.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your [county FSA office](#) or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

FSA Offers Options for Expiring CRP Land Preparation

Producers with Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts that expire this September can request approval to destroy the cover earlier than this fall in order to return the land to production. Only land in general CRP is eligible. Acreage within 120 feet of a water body is excluded. Any cover destruction prior to October 1 must receive prior FSA approval before it begins.

If you will be planting a fall-seeded crop this year, you can destroy the cover as early as May 1. If you will be planting a spring-seeded crop next year, you can destroy the CRP cover by any means as early as July 1 this year.

Cover destruction occurring May 1 – June 30 is limited to herbicide applications, or mowing plus herbicide applications. Starting July 1, other forms of cover destruction can be used. An NRCS plan may be required depending on the land.

If you choose to destroy cover prior to the end of your contract, your payment will be reduced by the amount of time between when the cover is destroyed and the end of the contract. For example, if you destroy the cover on May 1, you will lose your 2018 payment on the impacted acres for the period May 1 – September 30.

Contact your local [county FSA office](#) on specifics applicable to your contract and to initiate an application for this activity.

USDA Announces Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit your local FSA office to sign contracts and enroll for the 2018 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2018.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, you must enroll by signing a contract each program year. All owners, operators and tenants with an interest in the base acres on the farm must sign the annual contract. Cash leases may be provided in lieu of obtaining a signature from an owner.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2018 enrollment period, you will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. If you made your elections, you must still enroll during the 2018 enrollment period.

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 prices or revenues for covered commodities. 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 and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame,

soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, visit your local [county FSA office](#).

Prevent Payment Delays or Losses by Reporting Operation Changes

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, or if there has been a death related to your farm operation, make sure you report the changes to your [county FSA office](#) as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property for any land changes. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Make sure to update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur.

It is your responsibility to report changes timely so that records can be kept current and accurate which may prevent loss of program benefits. Contact your [county FSA office](#) if you need to report changes to your operation.

Resources Available for Navigating FSA Loans

In 2017, FSA updated “Your Guide to FSA Farm Loans” to address program changes and include the microloan program. The guide is targeted to new customers interested in farm financing. It focuses primarily on the types of loans available and the loan application process. The guide can be found for free online at https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdafiles/Farm-Loan-Programs/pdfs/fsa_br_01_web_booklet.pdf.

“Your FSA Farm Loan Compass” booklet was recently developed specifically for farmers and ranchers who have an existing farm loan with FSA. It provides detailed guidance outlining borrower responsibilities and the servicing options that FSA offers. It also addresses common questions borrowers may have as you navigate through loan program requirements and the financial concepts involved.

“Your FSA Farm Loan Compass” and “Your Guide to FSA Farm Loans” are available on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/dafn. You are encouraged to download and share them with others in your community who may require assistance in understanding FSA’s loans and servicing processes. For additional information about FSA farm loans, please contact your loan officer or other FSA staff at your [county FSA office](#).

Additionally, the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) released “Farm Service Agency Loans: the Ins and Outs of Growing a Farm with Federal Loans”, an illustrated guidebook for farmers looking to secure credit from USDA. It is a comprehensive plain language guide to FSA loans, including microloans. The book helps farmers navigate the ins and outs of the loan process with a light touch, charming illustrations, and from the perspective and curiosity of a young farmer. The guide is available for free download at <http://www.youngfarmers.org/>. Its publication is funded by a cooperative agreement with USDA’s FSA Office of Program Education and Stakeholder Engagement to reach new audiences.

Where to Find Farm Financing Assistance

The process for applying for an FSA loan begins at the local county FSA office. The FSA Loan staff are located in eight county offices across Washington State and each team cover several counties. Prospective borrowers living outside of one of the counties where loan staff are located can still go to your local FSA office. Staff in those offices can help connect you with FSA loan officials. You can also arrange to meet loan staff in the outlying FSA offices.

The Chelan County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Chelan and Douglas counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at 509-662-1141.

The Franklin County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Benton, Columbia, Franklin and Walla Walla counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at (509) 416-5722.

The Grant County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Adams and Grant counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at (509) 754-2463 ext. 2.

The Lewis County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, south King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, and Wahkiakum counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at (360) 748-0084.

The Okanogan County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Ferry and Okanogan counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at (509) 422-3292.

The Spokane County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Asotin, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens and Whitman counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at (509) 924-7350 ext. 2.

The Whatcom County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Island, north King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at (360) 318-8121.

The Yakima County FSA Office Farm Loan team covers Kittitas, Klickitat and Yakima counties. The Farm loan team can be reached at (509) 367-8573.

Your first stop will be at your own local county office. They will be able to direct you to the Farm Loan Team that will be able to help you. If you are interested in getting a head start on the process, there are several web sites that will provide a variety of information concerning farming and loans.

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/index>

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/outreach-and-education/partner-organization-resources/index>

<http://www.youngfarmers.org/fsaloansguide/>

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

2018 NAP Application for Coverage Deadline Fast Approaching

The deadline to obtain NAP coverage for spring planted crops not insurable through your crop insurance agent is **March 15, 2018**. Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

coverage is an available tool to help mitigate financial risk. NAP covers uninsurable crops that are damaged, lost or prevented from being planted due to natural weather related disaster conditions.

Basic catastrophic (CAT) coverage is available to protect against losses that exceed 50 percent of the expected yield at 55 percent of the approved NAP price for the crop. Or you can select buy-up coverage to increase the level of coverage, ranging from 50 to 65 percent of expected production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the approved NAP price for the covered crop. You can request organic or direct market price options, if available, and a historical marketing percentage option for multiple marketed crops. Buy-up coverage includes a premium cost, in addition to the administrative fee. Beginning, limited resource, and traditionally underserved farmers can request waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium cost reduction.

To apply for NAP coverage, submit an application for coverage and pay the administrative fee by the application closing date for the crop. The NAP administrative fee is \$250 per crop, up to a \$750 cap per county. The maximum fee for multiple crops in multiple counties is \$1,875 per crop year. Producers who select buy-up coverage will be billed for the premium amount due, which is based on 5.25 percent of the coverage value based on the level of coverage selected for your share of the acres planted to the covered crop. An online NAP premium calculator is available to help you determine what level of coverage will work best for you and what the associated premium cost will be. The NAP premium calculator can be accessed by clicking on: <http://fsa.usapas.com/NAP.aspx>

NAP coverage should be purchased at least 30 days before the crop is planted, to ensure coverage attaches immediately to the crop upon planting. But coverage for eligible spring planted crops must be purchased by no later than close of business on Thursday **March 15, 2018**. To learn more about the NAP program and to obtain coverage, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments Deadline

For farmers and landowners with 2017 crops in an approved storage facility on the farm or in a warehouse, the deadline to request a marketing assistance loan (MALs) or loan deficiency payments (LDPs) is approaching. For wheat, barley, oats, honey, canola, flaxseed, rapeseed, sesame seed, and crambe the deadline to request a loan or LDP is **March 31, 2018**.

MALs (otherwise known as commodity loans) are a marketing tool that enables you to obtain an influx of cash for operating expenses, using the stored crop as loan collateral. This allows you to delay sale of your crop until more favorable marketing conditions emerge. Commodity loans mature nine months after the month the loan is approved and funds disbursed.

LDPs are a direct payment made in lieu of a commodity loan, and are available when the Commodity Credit Corporation determined value (lesser of the 30 day or 5 day average terminal market price for the crop adjusted for differentials and market adjustments) falls below the county loan rate. To be eligible for an LDP, you must have form CCC-633EZ Page 1 on file at your local [county FSA office](#) before you lose beneficial interest in your crop.

For corn, dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, mustard seed, safflower seed, sunflower seed, soybeans, and grain sorghum, the deadline to request a loan or LDP is **May 31, 2018**

No office? No problem! FSA Now Offers Text Message Alerts

Keep up with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) News

Receive text message alerts from FSA while on-the-go, in the field, on the tractor or even on horseback.

Contact your local FSA office to subscribe to receive text message alerts on your cell phone and stay updated on:

- Deadline reminders
- Program notifications
- Reporting requirements
- Local outreach events.

Standard text messaging rates apply. Expect to receive no more than two text messages from FSA each month, on average. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Contact your local FSA office to subscribe to the text message alerts service. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Wireless Access Available in USDA Service Centers

FSA offers producers, who are doing business with USDA, the ability to wirelessly access records using your own cell phone, laptop or tablet. This access is to assist you in conducting FSA business while visiting a USDA Service Center.

Guest accounts are only for individuals that are working on business with USDA. The wireless network is not for personal use and is strictly to be used for USDA business. Any violations to this policy could result in loss of privileges to use the wireless network.

Security:

- All USDA customers and affiliates should have an up-to-date antivirus program running on their devices.
- Network security is important and Guest Access should be limited to the duration of the visit to the USDA site.

Requesting Access:

To request Guest Access to FSA Wi-Fi please contact your [county FSA office](#) at least 24 hours in advance and let them know you will need access.

If you have any questions on this material, please contact your [county FSA office](#).

Important Dates and Deadlines

Feb. 19, 2018 – FSA offices closed for President's Day.

March 15, 2018 – Deadline to request 2018 NAP coverage for artichokes, beets (seed or fresh), buckwheat, camelina, carrots (fresh or processing), small grain forages (wheat, barley, oats, peas), and any other spring planted crops not mentioned in other NAP application for coverage closing dates.

March 31, 2018 – Final date to file an application for a Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) payment for 2017 livestock deaths. Notice of loss must have been previously filed.

March 31, 2018 – Final date to request a 2017 crop Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) for wheat, barley, oats, honey, canola, crambe, flaxseed, rapeseed, and sesame seed.

May 31, 2018 – Final date to request a 2017 crop Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) for corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans, and sunflower seeds.

For previous issues of the FSA Washington newsletter and a list of annual program **reminders**, check the [newsletter page](#) on the FSA Washington website.

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).