

July 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Washington State FSA Newsletter

Washington State Farm Service Agency

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Consider Protecting 2019 Crops Now

For crops not insurable through your crop insurance agent, Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is an available tool to help mitigate financial risk for your upcoming 2019 crops. NAP provides coverage for planted crop acreages, when expected production is reduced or lost because of eligible weather related or adverse natural disaster conditions. NAP coverage also provides assistance for crops prevented from being planted due to weather or other eligible disaster conditions.

Farmers and landowners can obtain basic 50/55 catastrophic coverage for 2019 NAP. For organic crops, the organic price option

State Committee:

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

To find contact information for your local office go to

www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

is also available. Basic 50/55 catastrophic level (CAT) coverage provides program benefits if crop production loss exceeds 50 percent of the expected approved yield at 55 percent of the approved NAP price for the crop due to an eligible disaster. Buy-up levels of coverage, previously available by the 2014 Farm Bill, will not be available for 2019 crop NAP coverage. Quality, historical marketing percentage, contract marketing percentage and direct marketing percentage options are also not available.

If you are interested in obtaining 50/55 NAP coverage for the 2019 crop year, purchase the coverage at least 30 days before the crop is planted, but no later than the established NAP application for coverage closing date listed as follows:

August 31, 2018 – Aquaculture; beets (for stecklings); cabbage (for seed or fresh); canola; carrots (for seed); cauliflower (for seed or fresh); Christmas trees; floriculture; mushrooms; onions (for seed, fresh or processing); rapeseed; rutabaga (for seed or fresh); turf grass sod; turnips (for seed or fresh); and any other fall planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates.

September 30, 2018 – Garlic; mint; biennial or perennial grasses or mixed forages for grazing, hay or seed.

November 20, 2018 – Perennial crops not listed under the 9/30 category; asparagus; berries; grapes; honey; hops; tree fruits and nuts.

March 15, 2019 – Artichokes, beets (for seed or fresh); buckwheat; camelina; carrots (for fresh or processing); mustard; radish (for seed or fresh); small grain forage (wheat, barley, oats, peas); and any other spring planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates.

NAP closing dates are also posted on the FSA website www.fsa.usda.gov/wa. Contact your [county FSA office](#) if you are interested in applying for NAP coverage, or if you have any questions regarding NAP availability or application closing dates.

In Lieu of General CRP Signup, FSA Offers Contract Extensions

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract holders with expiring contracts this year may sign-up to extend all, or part, of your contracts for an additional year. FSA will accept applications until **August 17, 2018**. There will be no General CRP signup this year.

The one-year extensions are only available for expiring General or Continuous CRP contracts. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts are not eligible for an extension since CREP producers can re-enroll in new contracts under current provisions. The extension is only available on contracts that will be

14 years or less on September 30, 2018. If you have already implemented early land preparation, your contract is not eligible for the extension. CRP Transition Incentive Program (TIP) applications without an approved TIP contract may back out of the TIP contract without penalty and accept the one year extension.

The rental rate and all other provisions of the current contract will be extended one year. However, the contract date and all other provisions of the current contract need to be extended and the contract resigned by all signatories to the current contract. Tenants may be excluded from the extension if they no longer have an interest in the farm or CRP land.

Contact your [county FSA office](#) if you are interested in extending your expiring CRP contract, or have questions regarding the program.

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Signup Resumes

After a brief pause in the enrollment period, FSA has resumed accepting applications for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP). Applications will be accepted through **August 17, 2018**. However, enrollment will be limited to a few practices. For Washington state, these practices mainly include grass waterways, shallow water areas for wildlife, grass filter strips, riparian buffers and wetland restoration. Some of our popular practices that are not being re-opened include contour grass strips, field borders, State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), and the Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI). The limited practices ensure the most sensitive land that provides multiple benefits is protected while remaining within the program's 24 million-acre statutory cap.

Annual payments for CCRP contracts accepted this year will be based on revised soil rental rates. The signing incentive payment (SIP), practice incentive payment (PIP), and the 10 or 20 percent per acre rental rate incentive are not authorized for all continuous signup practices.

FSA will work with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to determine if a proposed practice for the program is needed, feasible and suitable. The application and all documents necessary to complete a conservation plan must be completed and signed by August 17. NRCS will then complete the conservation plan no later than September 7, 2018. The effective date of the contract will be the first day of the month following the contract's approval. You may defer the effective date of a contract for up to six months but the contract must be approved by September 28, 2018.

To learn more about the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program or to enroll, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Grasslands Program Enrollment Re-Opens with Changes

Landowners and operators can protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands through the Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands (CRPG). In return for following an approved conservation plan, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants based on 75 percent of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) pastureland rental rate for the life of the 15-year contract.

Recently, FSA established new ranking criteria for CRP Grasslands. To guarantee all CRP grasslands offers are treated equally, applicants who previously applied will be asked to reapply using the new ranking criteria. Producers with pending applications will receive a letter providing the options.

CRP Grassland offers will be ranked on the following criteria: current and future land use; whether the applicant is a beginning, socially disadvantaged, or veteran farmer/rancher; maximization of grassland preservation; type of vegetation cover; environmental factors and cost.

In another change, CRP Grassland rental rates will be based on updated National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) pastureland rental rates.

To learn more about the Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands or to enroll, contact your [county FSA office](#).

CRP Soil Rental Rates Reduced

The Farm Service Agency periodically reviews and updates soil rental rates to ensure that Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payment rates are set at the minimum amount needed to attract offers for enrollment in the program, thus minimizing market distortions. FSA recently updated county-average rental rates based on 2017 National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Cash Rent Survey results for dryland rent estimates. Most rental rates in Eastern Washington decreased.

The 2018 rates are not appealable and affect all Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) new contracts, including CRP Grasslands, Continuous CRP and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). For Continuous CRP offers already in process but not approved, the soil rental rate in effect when the offer was filed will be used to calculate the Maximum Payment Rate for that contract.

Improvements Made to Tree Assistance Program

USDA's Farm Service Agency recently released signup information for the [Tree Assistance Program](#), a nationwide program that provides orchardists and nursery tree growers with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 prescribed several changes to the program, including the removal of the \$125,000 per person and legal entity payment limitation. The [notice](#) outlined when producers should file applications for any recent losses, given the changes to the program.

Eligible producers should file for TAP assistance by the later of these two dates:

- 90 days of the disaster or when damages from the disaster are noticed; or
- 60 days after the regulation is published on the Federal Register later this summer.

The following producers can file applications:

- Producers who did not previously apply for TAP for 2017 or 2018 losses; and

- Producers who had applied and received an adverse determination that their 2017 or 2018 TAP application was filed late.

Additionally, producers with 2017 losses can also file an application or revise an original application because of the changes made through the Act.

For more information on TAP, contact your [county FSA office](#).

USDA Reopens Application Period for Producers Recovering from Cattle Loss, Other Disasters

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting disaster assistance program applications from agricultural producers who suffered livestock, honeybees, farm-raised fish and other losses due to natural disasters. FSA re-opened the application period for two disaster assistance programs in response to statutory changes made by Congress earlier this year.

FSA will accept new applications for losses for calendar year 2017 or 2018 filed under the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) or [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP). If you already submitted an application and received a decision on your application for these years, you do not need to file again. However, you can reapply if you have additional losses or their application was disapproved because it was filed late.

In February, Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, which made several changes to these two disaster programs, including:

Removing ELAP's \$20 million fiscal year funding cap, enabling FSA to pay producers' 2017 applications in full and their 2018 applications as soon as they are approved.

- Removing the per-person and legal entity annual program payment limitation of \$125,000 for LIP for 2017 and future years. (The income limitation applies as it did before, meaning producers with an adjusted gross income of more than \$900,000 are not eligible.)
- Changing LIP to allow producers to receive a payment for injured livestock that are sold for a reduced price due to an eligible event. Previously, the program only covered financial loss for livestock death above normal mortality.

If you are interested in LIP or ELAP, contact your [county FSA office](#). To apply, you will need to provide verifiable and reliable production records and other information about your operation.

FSA to Review Price-Loss Coverage Yields

Throughout the summer, the Farm Service Agency will conduct spot-checks to ensure that Price-Loss Coverage (PLC) yields are accurate. FSA will randomly select for review farms with a PLC yield higher than a nationally-established threshold and all farms exceeding the threshold by 140 percent. Producers will be notified to provide required production to support the PLC yield of the selected farms. The review can result in PLC yields being re-adjusted, beginning with the 2014 crop year, which may necessitate the refund of payments. PLC yields will not be increased as a result of the spot-checks. The reviews can be made for any farm with a PLC yield—that is, all farms with base. The farms may or may not be participating in ARC-CO or IC, or PLC.

Authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, the PLC program triggers price support payments when the effective price of a covered commodity is less than the respective reference price for that commodity. The effective price equals the higher of the market year average price (MYA) or the national average loan rate for the covered commodity. Spot-checks are a tool for FSA to maintain the integrity of the program. If you have questions about the Price-Loss Coverage program or the spot-checks, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Nomination Period Opens for FSA County Committee Elections

Farmers and ranchers have an opportunity to influence federal farm programs with your local knowledge. The Farm Service Agency is seeking nominations for farmers and ranchers willing to represent your peers on FSA's county committees. All county FSA offices will accept nominations through **August 1, 2018** for this fall's elections.

There's nothing else like it in the federal government. Farmers and ranchers on FSA county committees make decisions which impact program payments. They can settle appeals of agency decisions. And, they're responsible for hiring FSA managers at the county level.

FSA encourages all interested agricultural producers, including women and minority growers, to seek nomination. Eligible candidates must participate or cooperate in any Farm Service Agency program and be of legal voting age. Even if farmers and ranchers are not currently participating in FSA programs, you are considered eligible to vote if you have farm records on file with FSA.

Each county committee draws its members from local administrative areas. Nominated by local farmers and ranchers, candidates must live in the county's local administrative area they will represent and must be eligible to vote in the county election. Members serve on staggered three-year terms so that one-third of the seats are up for re-election each year. Persons interested in nominating a candidate can contact your local FSA office or check the Farm Service Agency website www.fsa.usda.gov/wa to find out which local administrative areas are up for election. [Direct link for map](#).

Elected county committee members receive an hourly wage for their attendance and representation at county committee meetings.

The 2018 FSA county committee elections will take place in the fall and newly elected committee members begin their terms the following January. FSA will send ballots to all eligible voters.

Additional information and nomination forms may be requested from any Farm Service Agency office. Nomination forms may also be obtained online at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/county-committee-elections/index>

Loan Staff to Schedule Summer Visits with FSA Borrowers

During the summer months FSA may make a field visit to your farm if you are an FSA borrower. Your FSA loan official will make an appointment with you to view your crops, livestock or machinery that FSA may have a security interest. Your loan official will also review records and discuss any environmental issues or concerns.

FSA refers to the summer field visits as "chattel checks." During the chattel check, your FSA loan official will review your "normal income security." The normal income security is the crops and

livestock, that FSA financed and that you produce on your farm or ranch. Your loan official will also view the "basic security." This refers to real estate, equipment, machinery, and foundation and breeder livestock herds, and flocks that secure your loan. This property must be maintained and kept in good repair throughout the term of the loan. It is also very important that you do not sell or trade any of this security property without discussing it first with your FSA Farm Loan official. If you have any questions, please call or email your FSA loan official or your county FSA office.

Spring-Planted Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline Nears

Once all your spring crops are planted, you are encouraged to visit your county FSA office to file an accurate crop acreage certification report by the applicable deadline. Acreage reporting is necessary to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements. The upcoming crop acreage reporting deadlines are as follows:

- **July 15, 2018** - Spring planted crops, including cabbage planted April 20 to June 10, 2018, onions planted March 14 to April 20, 2018, and CRP acres.
- **August 15, 2018** - Buckwheat, cabbage planted June 11 to August 10, 2018 If your crop acres have 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 you acquire 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 of the purchased or leased acreage must be provided to the county office. For perennial forage crops reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," or "left standing" the acreage must be reported by **July 15, 2018**.

FSA offices now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. Use form "FSA-578" to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs). The local FSA office will need a copy of your grazing agreement, so FSA can record the allotted animal units (AU), grazing period start, end date and the percent of public land.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that an acreage report for any covered crop must be filed at least 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop acreage reports or deadlines, please contact your county FSA office.

The Farm Service Agency is Hiring

The USDA Farm Service Agency will be filling vacancies for permanent positions in multiple counties. These positions are open externally to the public until **July 5, 2018**. These are amazing opportunities to enter the Federal workforce, which offers excellent benefits.

The following is a list of each vacancy announcement along with the link to apply through [USAJOBS.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) :

County Operations Trainee – Spokane County
Vacancy #: WA-2018-0014

The full announcement is available in USAJOBS at the following link:
<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/502731500>

Program Technician – Lincoln County

Vacancy #: WA-2018-0015

The full announcement is available in USAJOBS at the following link:

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/502849800>

Program Technician – Pierce County

Vacancy #: WA-2018-0016

The full announcement is available in USAJOBS at the following link:

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/502849900>

Program Technician – Yakima County

Vacancy #: WA-2018-0017

The full announcement is available in USAJOBS at the following link:

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/502978100>

Please share these opportunities with anyone who may be interested. Questions regarding employment opportunities can be directed to Mitzi Stephens, Administrative Specialist/HR, at 509-323-3007 or mitzi.stephens@wa.usda.gov.

Important Dates and Deadlines

July 4, 2018 – USDA Service Centers closed in commemoration of Independence Day.

July 5, 2018 – Deadline to apply for FSA vacancies.

July 15, 2018 – Final date to report 2017 production for ARC/IC programs.

July 15, 2018 – Final acreage reporting date for spring-seeded crops. (See article above)

August 1, 2018 - Deadline for ARC/PLC enrollment.

August 1, 2018 – Deadline to submit nominees for county committee elections.

August 17, 2018 – Deadline to request CRP contract extension.

August 17, 2018 – Deadline to apply for Continuous CRP.

August 31, 2018 – Deadline to obtain 2019 crop year NAP coverage for aquaculture; beets (for stecklings); cabbage (for seed or fresh); canola; carrots (for seed); cauliflower (for seed or fresh); Christmas trees; floriculture; mushrooms; onions (for seed, fresh or processing); rapeseed; rutabaga (for seed or fresh); turf grass sod; turnips (for seed or fresh); and any other fall planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates.

September 30, 2018 – Deadline to obtain 2019 crop year NAP coverage for garlic; mint; biennial or perennial grasses or mixed forages for grazing, hay or seed.

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

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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).

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