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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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Crop Acreage Reporting

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 can no longer accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the applicable acreage reporting deadline.

County Offices are currently scheduling appointments, so producers can timely report their spring planted acreages. July 15, 2019 is the final day to report crops for the 2019 crop year.

www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

State Executive Director:
Vacant

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

Producers who want to use Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) organic price and elected the “organic” option on their NAP application for coverage must report their crops as organic. When certifying organic acres, the buffer zone acreage must be included in the organic acreage. Producers must also provide a current organic plan, organic certificate or documentation from a certifying agent indicating an organic plan is in effect. This documentation must include:

- Name of certified individuals
- Address
- Telephone number
- Effective date of certification
- Certification number
- List of commodities certified
- Name and address of certifying agent
- A map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, including the buffer zone areas.

Deadline to Submit 2018 NAP Production Quickly Approaching

For 2018 crops that had Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, annual reporting of actual harvested production is required to retain eligibility for 2018 NAP program benefits and actual production history (APH) yield purposes. The deadline to submit production for all NAP covered crops is **July 15, 2019**. This is also the deadline for providing final cleaned seed production for producers of grass and vegetable seeds with 2018 NAP coverage. In addition to providing final harvested production (including cleaned seed totals), form CCC-452 APH must be completed to reflect acres planted and actual production for the NAP covered crop on each unit. If actual harvested production is not timely submitted, NAP benefits for crop losses will not be earned and the NAP yield will begin to drop significantly, which affects future year NAP coverage levels. If you have any questions about production reporting or NAP payment requirements, contact your county FSA office.

FSA to Offer 1-Year Extensions for Certain Expiring Contracts

Producers with CRP contracts set to expire on September 30, 2019, will be receiving a letter soon, informing them of a possible option to extend the contract for 1 year. This option will be available so long as the contract has been in effect for less than 15 years this September. CRP contracts can never exceed 15 years. Although specific rules about the extensions have not been announced yet, the 1-year extension should be available on all contracts that will remain within the 15-year limit. All parties to the current contract must agree to the extension. We anticipate that rental rates on the extended contracts will remain unchanged.

Expiring CRP Land Can Earn Benefits if Transitioned to a Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmer or Rancher

Producers with certain CRP contracts expiring this fall can earn an additional two years of payments if the land is leased or sold to a beginning, veteran or underserved farmer or rancher. In the last year of the CRP contract the participants can enroll the land in the Transition Incentives Program (TIP) to obtain the additional payments. TIP provides annual rental payments to the current contract holders for two more years after the CRP contract ends, but the land can be returned to production during this time. The land must be transitioned to someone other than a family member to qualify for these payments.

To be eligible, the participant(s) on the contract with a least a 50% share of the contract must meet the definition of “retired or retiring” within 5 years. The definition of retired or retiring for this purpose means the person does not provide active labor in the production of agricultural crops, or will stop providing such labor within 5 years. Most landowners who do not provide personal labor for crop production meet this definition, as would a farmer or rancher who actually retires.

Although no details about this year’s TIP signup have been issued yet, it is anticipated that sign up will begin shortly. Beginning, veteran or underserved farmers and ranchers and CRP participants may enroll in TIP if the CRP contract will expire September 30, 2019. The TIP payments will be at the same rate as the current CRP contract and are issued each fall just like CRP payments.

The beginning, veteran or underserved farmer or rancher must obtain a conservation plan developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) before the TIP contract can be approved. The plan will specify the provisions for sustainable grazing or crop production on the enrolled land. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected land. If the land will be leased, the lease must be a 5-year, nonrevocable lease.

All enrollment steps must be completed, the conservation plan must be done and signed by all parties, the lease or sales agreement must be done and submitted, and the TIP contract must be signed by all parties and approved by FSA by September 30 in order to enrolled in TIP.

Continuous CRP (CCRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Enrollment to Resume

FSA will begin accepting CCRP and CREP offers again June 3 through August 23. Enrollment will be based on a partial rollout of 2018 Farm Bill provisions. Some of the highlights of this signup are below.

For CCRP:

- Offers will be accepted to both re-enroll expiring CRP contracts or to enroll “new land” not currently in CRP. Offers that include CRP land expiring this September must be submitted no later than August 23.
- Rental rates will be based on the rates used in 2018, but they will be factored by 90% as called for in the farm bill.
- Signing Incentive Payments (SIP), Practice Incentive Payments (PIP) will not be authorized, nor will the 20% rental rate incentives applied to water quality practices.
- 50% cost sharing to establish the practice will be authorized, as in the past.

- Authorized practices are limited to those that focus on improving water quality, including contour grass strips (CP15A) grass filter strips (CP21), riparian buffers (CP22), wetland restoration (CP23/23A), and marginal pasture land wetland buffers (CP30).
- Offers will not be accepted during this signup for SAFE (state acres for wildlife), HELI (highly erodible land initiative), field borders or pollinator habitat.
- Eligible land includes (depending on the practice offered) marginal pasture land (grass land without annual cropping history), cropland and expiring CRP. To be eligible, cropland not currently in CRP must generally have been in annual crops, summer fallow or CRP during 4 of the 6 years 2012-2017.
- At least one mid-contract management activity will again be required during the life of the contract, but 50% cost sharing will no longer be authorized for these activities.
- After an offer is determined to meet the basic eligibility requirements, NRCS must determine if the offered land is eligible for the chosen practice. They will then develop a conservation plan covering practice establishment and maintenance.
- Contracts offered for land with a CRP contract expiring this September must have a start date of October 1. New land contracts can start the first of the month following the month of approval. However, producers can request that the start date be delayed up to 6 months from the approval date.

For CREP:

- The Washington CREP allows for the enrollment of land in riparian buffer, riparian hedgerow, grass filter strip, wetland restoration and marginal pasture land wetland buffer practices. Enrollment is limited to land along salmon bearing streams, or in some cases land along tributaries to these streams. Participants receive enhanced payments from FSA and financial assistance from Washington to assist in the successful establishment of the practice. Contracts can be 10-15 years.
- The provisions for CCRP listed above also apply to CREP with the following exceptions:
 - Rental rates will be based on the rates used in 2018, but they will not be reduced using a 90% factor.
 - SIP, PIP and rental rate incentives are authorized. A SIP is a one-time up-front payment equal to \$100/acre for all practices except wetland restoration, which is \$150/acre. A PIP is calculated like an additional 40% cost sharing, bringing the total compensation for practice installation up to 90% of the eligible costs. State cost sharing equals 10% of the eligible costs, so in most cases producers receive 100% reimbursement for installing CREP practices. Rental rate incentives increase the annual payment by 50% up to 110% of the soil rental rates used for CCRP.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) to Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

FSA supports the RMA in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been and will continue to assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse directly to RMA. Producer can report suspected cases to the county office staff, the RMA office or the Office of the Inspector General.

Breaking-out New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Compliance (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan. Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the AD-1026 "Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) certification to identify the proposed actions and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

Farm Loan Information on farmers.gov

Agricultural producers with farm loans through USDA can now view information on current and past loans through a new feature on farmers.gov. [Farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) has a portal that provides 24/7 access to loan information, makes it easier for customers to track loan transactions and payments and saves trips to the USDA service center to obtain loan-related information.

My Financial Information

The "My Financial Information" tab on the farmers.gov portal enables individual producers to view:

- loans and financial information;
- interest payments (including year-to-date interest paid for the past five years);
- loan history;
- paid-in-full and restructured loans; and
- account alerts displayed to give borrowers important notifications regarding their loans.

Currently, access is only available for customers doing business as individuals. Access for customers doing business as an entity (such as an LLC or Trust) or on behalf of another individual will be available in the future.

How to Access

To access loan information, visit farmers.gov and sign in to the site's authenticated portal, available on the menu at the top right of the site. To access, you will need a Level 2 USDA eAuthentication account.

If you do not have a Level 2 USDA eAuthentication account, sign up for one today. This account gets you access to your loan information and other self-service features available through the farmers.gov portal. To enroll, you will need to:

1. Contact your local service center to ensure you have a USDA customer record on file with a correct email address.
2. Register for a Level 2 USDA eAuth Account.

3. Complete identity verification by using the online self-service identity verification method or by visiting a local registration authority at a USDA service center office. A local registration authority is a USDA employee who verifies the identity of a customer in-person using their official government-issued photo ID.
4. Now that you've got an eAuth account, contact your local USDA service center to ensure your account is linked with your USDA customer record.
5. You're ready to log in!

Farm Service Agency Accepting Nominations for Local Committees

Farmers and ranchers have an opportunity to influence federal farm programs with their local knowledge. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency is seeking nominations for farmers and ranchers willing to represent their peers on the agency's county committees. All county FSA offices will accept nominations through August 1, 2019 for this fall's elections.

Washington State FSA is Hiring Manager Trainees!

The USDA Farm Service Agency will be filling two vacancies for county operation trainees (COTs). FSA develops new local leaders through a 1-year training program. Each COT is guided through the training program by experienced County Executive Directors (CED). Emphasis is placed on acquiring an in-depth knowledge of FSA programs administered at the county level as well as developing managerial skills. A combination of classroom-type training, hands-on experience and formal management training prepare the COT to step into the managerial role of CED to provide oversight for FSA commodity, conservation and livestock programs for one or more counties. Successful candidates for these positions possess leadership and supervisory skills and a willingness to learn.

These positions are open externally to the public until June 12, 2019 and announced on www.USAJOBS.gov. These are amazing opportunities to enter the Federal workforce, which offers excellent benefits.

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

Important Dates and Deadlines

April 1 – July 1, 2019 – CRP primary nesting season during which most activities on CRP are prohibited on contracts with an established cover. Some exceptions to this limit can be approved by FSA if a request is submitted in advance.

May 1 – July 1, 2019 – Producers can request authority to destroy the CRP cover if the land will be planted to a fall crop this year.

June 3, 2019 - Continuous CRP and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sign up starts.

July 15, 2019 – Deadline to report 2018 crop year production for NAP covered crops

July 15, 2019 – Final acreage reporting date for 2019 crops

August 1, 2019 - Deadline for COC Election Nominations

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