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Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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West Virginia FSA Newsletter

West Virginia
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Report: Farmers Prevented from Planting Crops on More than 19 Million Acres

Agricultural producers reported they were not able to plant crops on more than 19.4 million acres in 2019, according to a new report released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This marks the most prevented plant acres reported since USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) began releasing the report in 2007 and 17.49 million acres more than reported at this time last year.

Of those prevented plant acres, more than 73 percent were in 12 Midwestern states, where heavy rainfall and flooding this year has prevented many producers from planting mostly corn, soybeans and wheat.

Cover Crops

USDA supported planting of cover crops on fields where farmers were not able to plant because of their benefits in preventing soil erosion, protecting water quality and boosting soil health. The report showed where producers planted 2.71 million acres of cover crops so far in 2019, compared with 2.14 million acres at this time in 2018 and 1.88 million at this time in 2017.

To help make cover crops a more viable option, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) adjusted the haying and grazing date of cover crops, and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service held signups in select states that offered producers assistance in planting cover crops. Meanwhile, USDA added other flexibilities to help impacted producers, including adjusting the deadline to file acreage reports in select states.

About the Report

This data report aggregates information from crop acreage reports as of August 1, 2019, which producers file with FSA to maintain program eligibility and to calculate losses for various disaster assistance programs. The crop acreage data report outlines the number of acres planted, prevented from planting, and failed by crop, county and state. To find more information, view the Aug. 12 report.

Because some producers have not completed their filing and data are still being processed, FSA will make available subsequent data reports in September, October, November, December and January. You can find reports from 2007 to the present on FSA's Crop Acreage Data webpage.

To receive FSA program benefits, producers are required to submit crop acreage reports annually regarding all cropland uses on their farm. This report includes data for producers who had already filed for all deadlines in 2019, including the mid-July deadlines, which are for spring-seeded crops in many locations.

Other Prevented Planting Indicators

In addition to acreage reports filed with FSA, producers with crop insurance coverage for prevented planting file claims with their insurance providers. These claims are provided to RMA and may differ from the prevented planted acres reported to FSA. More information on prevented plant coverage is available on the RMA website.

Official USDA estimates of total acres planted, harvested and to be harvested, yield, and production are available from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service at nass.usda.gov.

Reminder to FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm Service Agency would like to remind farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their loans, of key items for maintaining loan collateral. It is required that borrowers must obtain prior consent, or approval, by either FSA, for direct loans, or by a guaranteed lender, for any transaction affecting real estate security. Examples of these transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind;
- Easements of any kind;
- Subordinations;
- Partial releases, and
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements set forth in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read Your FSA Farm Loan Compass.

USDA Opens Signup for Market Facilitation Program

Enrollment Now Open through Dec. 6

Signup opens today for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program to assist farmers who continue to suffer from damages because of unjustified trade retaliation from foreign nations. Through MFP, USDA will provide up to $14.5 billion in direct payments to impacted producers, part of a broader trade relief package announced in late July. The sign-up period runs through Dec. 6.

MFP payments will be made to producers of certain non-specialty and specialty crops as well as dairy and hog producers.

Non-Specialty Crops

MFP payments will be made to producers of alfalfa hay, barley, canola, corn, crambe, dried beans, dry peas, extra-long staple cotton, flaxseed, lentils, long grain and medium grain rice, millet, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, rye, safflower, sesame seed, small and large chickpeas, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, temperate japonica rice, triticale, upland cotton, and wheat.

MFP assistance for 2019 crops is based on a single county payment rate multiplied by a farm's total plantings to the MFP-eligible crops in aggregate in 2019. Those per acre payments are not dependent on which of those crops are planted in 2019. A producer's total payment-eligible plantings cannot exceed total 2018 plantings. View payment rates by county.

Dairy and Hogs

Dairy producers who were in business as of June 1, 2019, will receive a per hundredweight payment on production history, and hog producers will receive a payment based on the number of live hogs owned on a day selected by the producer between April 1 and May 15, 2019.

Specialty Crops

MFP payments will also be made to producers of almonds, cranberries, cultivated ginseng, fresh grapes, fresh sweet cherries, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts. Each specialty crop will receive a payment based on 2019 acres of fruit or nut bearing plants, or in the case of ginseng, based on harvested acres in 2019.

More Information

Payments will be made in up to three tranches, with the second and third tranches evaluated as market conditions and trade opportunities dictate. If conditions warrant, the second and third tranches will be made in November and early January.

MFP payments are limited to a combined $250,000 for non-specialty crops per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined $250,000 for dairy and hog producers and a combined $250,000 for specialty crop producers. However, no applicant can receive more than $500,000. Eligible applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) for tax years 2015, 2016, and 2017 of less than $900,000, or 75 percent of the person's or legal entity's average AGI for those tax years must have been derived from farming and ranching. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

More information can be found on farmers.gov/mfp, including payment information and a program application.

USDA Now Making Payments for New Dairy Margin Coverage Program

Income-over-feed margin for May triggers fifth payment for 2019

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) opened enrollment for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program on June 17 and has started issuing payments to producers who purchased coverage. Producers can enroll through Sept. 20, 2019.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC replaces the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). The program offers 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. To date, nearly 10,000 operations have signed up for the new program, and FSA has begun paying approximately $100 million to producers for January through May.

May Margin Payment

DMC provides coverage retroactive to January 1, 2019, with applicable payments following soon after enrollment.

The May 2019 income over feed cost margin was $9.00 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the fifth payment for eligible dairy producers who purchase the $9.50 level of coverage under DMC. Payments for January, February, March and April also were triggered.

With the 50 percent hay blend, FSA's revised April 2019 income over feed cost margin is $8.82 per cwt. The revised margins for January, February and March are, respectively, $7.71, $7.91 and $8.66.

Coverage Levels and MPP Reimbursements

Dairy producers can choose coverage levels from $4 up to $9.50 at the time of signup. More than 98 percent of the producers currently enrolled have elected $9.50 coverage on up to 95 percent of their production history.

More Information

On December 20, 2018, President Trump signed into law the 2018 Farm Bill, which provides support, certainty and stability to our nation's farmers, ranchers and land stewards by enhancing farm support programs, improving crop insurance, maintaining disaster programs and promoting and supporting voluntary conservation. FSA is committed to implementing these changes as quickly and effectively as possible, and today's updates are part of meeting that goal.

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.

Report Changes in the Intended use of a Crop: Grain to Hay – Haying to Grazing – Silage to Hay

Conditions may have changed since you planted and certified the intended use of your crop. Plans may have changed due to lack of precipitation, heat and high winds, lack of irrigation water or because of storm damages such as hail.

If your plans have changed and you're going to graze instead of hay your crop or cut for hay or silage instead of harvesting for grain, then you must report the change of intended use to the local County FSA Office. Failure to timely report your decision to change the use of crops can result in the loss of Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) benefits. Producers can report the change in intended use of a crop up until the final acreage reporting deadline.

When grass fails to meet your pasture needs, you may consider grazing hay fields rather than harvesting third or fourth cuttings. Changing the use to grazing may require producers to meet with the FSA appraiser and establish representative samples for a fall appraisal.

Crops with NAP coverage that will not be harvested must be inspected by an FSA Loss Adjuster in order to maintain NAP eligibility. Destruction of the crop or allowing deterioration of the crop without an inspection can result in the loss of program eligibility.

Failure to timely report these changes can result in the loss of NAP benefits. All producers considering a change of intended use, destruction of the crop prior to the end of the crop year, or those who may be unsure of their certification should contact the local County FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov.

CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and Farm Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for West Virginia is March 15 through July 15. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.