

February 2017



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Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

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

Greetings from the Wisconsin State Office

With the approach of spring, signup season is well underway at FSA. We have a number of signups going on now in our local county offices. Please review the Dates to Remember and articles below to ensure you don't miss an important upcoming deadline. Contact your local offices to learn more or schedule an appointment. To find your local office visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Dates to Remember

March 15, 2017

Deadline to purchase Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2017 spring-seeded crops

March 31, 2017

Last day to obtain Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) on 2016 small grain crops

May 1, 2017

Deadline to purchase NAP coverage for 2017-2018 Nursery crops

May 29, 2017

USDA Service Centers closed in observance of Memorial Day

May 31, 2017

Final day to obtain a Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) on 2016 coarse grain crops

Apply Now for NRCS EQIP: Deadline Approaching March 3

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reminds farmers and landowners to stop into your local USDA Service Center NOW if you are interested in applying for enrollment in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

EQIP is the primary program available to farmers for farm and woodland conservation work, offering payments for over 110 basic conservation practices and the **2017 funding deadline is March 3, 2017**.

All eligible applications for EQIP received by March 3, 2017, will be evaluated and ranked for funding in Fiscal Year 2017. Farmers may contact their local USDA Service Center to get started on producer eligibility and planning. Farmers who are interested in practices that may require permits, such as manure storage or streambank restoration, are encouraged to begin planning and seeking permits as soon as possible. Applicants with shovel-ready projects (designs completed and permits obtained) will receive higher priority.

Please call or stop into your local NRCS Service Center now to ensure staff have time to meet with you, discuss your operation, and the opportunities EQIP has to offer in helping you reach your conservation goals. Find your nearest Service Center by visiting <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

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Enrollment for 2017 Farm Safety Net Coverage, ARCPLC, Going on Now

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 begin visiting FSA county offices to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

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, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Changes Made to IRS 1099-G Forms

In years past, IRS Forms 1099-G were issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

This year, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than \$600 do not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who received payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties was \$600 or more.

The same changes will apply to those who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

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March 15 NAP Coverage Deadline for Spring-Seeded Crops

March 15 is the last day for producers to apply for Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on spring-planted crops. The application and service fee must be filed by March 15, the deadline date for 2017 spring planted crops.

NAP coverage is available for crops on which a Federal Crop Insurance Policy is not available in the county. The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 per producer with farming interest in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees.

The 2014 Farm Bill authorizes additional coverage levels ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Additional coverage must be elected by a producer by the application closing date. Producers who elect additional coverage must pay a premium in addition to the service fee. Crops intended for grazing are not eligible for additional coverage.

To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop. More information about NAP may be found on the FSA website located at www.fsa.usda.gov/NAP.

To access the NAP Crop Eligibility, Premium, and Payments Estimator, visit <http://fsa.usapas.com/NAP.aspx>

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Microloan Program Available as a Financing Option

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations.

The program operates similar to the Operating Loan program but includes reduced requirements for managerial experience and loan security, as well as reduced paperwork.

The microloan program can be used for such expenses as annual crop inputs, marketing and distribution expenses, purchase of livestock and equipment, and minor farm improvements such as wells and refrigeration units.

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$50,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are normally repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates will be the same as the regular Direct Operating Loan rates.

To learn more about the Microloan program, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans or contact your local office at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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