

July 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

Farm Service Agency

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To find contact information for your local office go to

<http://offices.usda.gov>

A Message from the SED

If you remember, a few months ago, I shared some valuable information about disaster programs available through FSA. It seems our story hasn't changed. We are still having severe weather events across the state. I would like to again remind everyone that disaster programs are available through local FSA offices. Please review the information below and contact your local office with any questions.

Available programs and loans include:

HayNet - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze.

www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, tropical storms, tornados, lightning, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to a natural disaster.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) - provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed that was purchased or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for the producer's eligible livestock. In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled; forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to floodwaters. For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds and tornadoes.

Emergency Loan Program - Available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Secretarial Disaster designation. These low-interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to severe weather events.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.

Prevent Plant or Failed Acres - To establish or retain FSA program eligibility, farmers and ranchers must report prevented planting and failed acres (crops and grasses). The deadline to report prevented planting acres on form FSA-576, Notice of Loss, was extended to July 15, 2017. Failed crops should be reported as soon as the loss becomes apparent. For more information on disaster assistance programs and loans visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local FSA Office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Russ Raeder

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Dates to Remember

AUGUST 1, 2017

2017 Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage (**ARC/PLC**) enrollment deadline for 2017 contracts

AUGUST 1, 2017

Final Date to **request farm reconstitutions or transfers** for 2017

AUGUST 1, 2017

End of Primary Nesting Season for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts

SEPTEMBER 1, 2017

Enrollment period for 2018 **Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP)** signup begins

Dates to Remember (continued)

SEPTEMBER 1, 2017

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) deadline for 2018 Value Loss Crops including ginseng, turf grass sod, aquaculture, mushrooms, and Christmas Trees

SEPTEMBER 4, 2017

USDA Service Centers closed in observance of Labor Day

SEPTEMBER 30, 2017 (October 2, 2017 due to Sept. 30 falling on a non-workday)

NAP application deadline for 2018 crops including alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, clover, grasses, mixed forages, rhubarb, rye, triticale, vetch, wheat, and other winter-seeded small grains and perennial forage

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Deadline to Enroll in Agriculture Risk Coverage and/or Price Loss Coverage Approaching

Farmers and ranchers have until **August 1, 2017** to enroll in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and/or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2017 crop year. These programs trigger financial protections for participating agricultural producers when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices or revenues.

Producers have already elected ARC or PLC, but to receive program benefits they must enroll for the 2017 crop year by signing a contract before the August 1 deadline. Please contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment if you have not yet enrolled.

Covered commodities under the programs 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.

For more program information, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

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CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Enrolled Acres

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 Wisconsin's primary nesting season of May 15 to August 1. 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 Natural Resources Conservation Service (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.

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Be Involved in Your Local County Committee Election

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. To be eligible for nomination and hold office as a committee member or alternate, a person must fulfill each of the following requirements: (1) be a producer with an interest in farming or ranching operations, (2) participate or cooperate in any FSA program provided for by law, (3) be a U.S. citizen, (4) be of legal voting age, (5) meet the basic eligibility requirements, and (6) reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in which they will be serving.

All nomination forms for the 2017 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2017. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: "Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member" available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

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Find Useful Farm Loan Information on FSA's Website

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) website has undergone full redesign over the past few months, including the [Farm Loan Programs Page](#).

The redesigned site allows the public to click links such as: [Farm Operating Loans](#), [Microloans](#), [Youth Loans](#), [Minority and Women Farmers](#), [Beginning Farmer Loans](#), [Emergency Loans](#) and, more importantly, the sites provide links to the application forms for each subject.

In addition to application forms, the site provides information regarding loan purposes, maximum loan limitations, repayment terms, interest rates and eligibility criteria. The revised Farm Loan Program website also offers a [Lender Toolkit](#) for our partners in ag lending using the [Guarantee Loan Program](#). The toolkit provides the most frequently used forms for loan making and servicing and describes how lenders obtain the status of Standard Eligible Lender, Certified Lender, or Preferred Lender.

To access the Farm Loan Programs Site visit:

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

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Wisconsin FSA Is Hiring!

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is an exciting and rewarding place to start, build, and/or continue your career. Be part of our team and support the well-being of Wisconsin agriculture and the American public.

FSA's diverse culture and benefits allow for a healthy balance between your career and home life. In addition to a generous salary, FSA offers a friendly and professional working environment with a diverse workforce, flexible hours/work schedules, and other family-friendly benefits such as: paid vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, retirement and supplemental savings plan, a wide array of health, dental, vision, and life insurance plans, flexible spending accounts, and long-term care insurance. Working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will afford you the opportunity to contribute to projects that positively impact the lives of over 300 million people. Explore a career with the USDA at www.usajobs.gov. New job openings are posted on a regular basis. Interested individuals can search for career opportunities based upon keywords and/or specific locations as well as create search profiles and job announcement notifications.

Currently, the Wisconsin Farm Service Agency is accepting applications for two positions throughout the state. The FSA is seeking candidates with farm experience and/or knowledge to perform work in support of Wisconsin agriculture and farmers.

Individuals who are interested in applying for job opportunities with the Wisconsin FSA will need to apply on-line at <http://www.usajobs.gov>. Applicants will need to enter the appropriate job announcement number below into the keyword search or click on the link below:

Program Technician Job Announcements:

Prairie du Chien, WI (Crawford County) - [Job Announcement Number: WI-2017-0023](#)
Application deadline: 10:59 p.m. Central Time: Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Wausau, WI (Marathon County) - [Job Announcement Number: WI-2017-0024](#)
Application deadline: 10:59 p.m. Central Time: Wednesday, August 9, 2017

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Deadline for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) EQIP Approaching

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).

Farmers and forest landowners will want to plan ahead and sign up early for USDA conservation funding. Farmers and forest landowners interested in the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) **need to apply by October 20, 2017**, for funding in 2018. Applications are being taken at all Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices in Wisconsin.

EQIP is the primary program available to farmers for farm and woodland conservation work, offering payments for over 110 basic conservation practices.

All eligible applications received by October 20, 2017, will be evaluated, prioritized and ranked for funding in 2018. 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, to begin planning and seeking permits as soon as possible. Applicants with shovel-ready projects (designs completed and permit applications submitted) will receive higher priority.

Deadline for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) EQIP Approaching (continued)

Signup by October 20, 2017 for Several Special Initiatives Focusing on Conservation Efforts

Special sign-up opportunities are also now open for On-Farm Energy, Organic, Specialty Crops and Seasonal High Tunnel conservation practices, as well as a number of landscape based initiatives. All offer technical and financial assistance through EQIP.

On-Farm Energy: NRCS and producers develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. Audit data is used to develop energy conservation recommendations.

Organic: NRCS helps certified organic growers and producers, working to achieve organic certification, install conservation practices to address resource concerns on organic operations.

Specialty Crops: NRCS offers a fund pool for fruit crop producers; in Wisconsin, this is applicable to cranberry and orchard growers. The practices offered are the same as the general local work group sign-up but give these niche farmers an opportunity to apply for EQIP without competing with main-stream crop producers.

Seasonal High Tunnel (Hoop House): NRCS helps producers plan and implement high tunnels - steel-framed, polyethylene-covered structures that extend growing seasons in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality, fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment, and better air quality due to fewer vehicles being needed to transport crops. Supporting conservation practices such as grassed waterways, and diversions are available to address resource concerns on operations with Seasonal High Tunnel structures.

Honey Bee: The upper Midwest is the resting ground for over 65 percent of commercially managed honey bees in the country. The NRCS is helping farmers and landowners implement conservation practices that will provide safe and diverse food sources for honey bees. Pasture management, wildlife habitat, and appropriate cover crops are used as tools to improve the health of our honey bees, which support more than \$15 billion worth of agricultural production.

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative: Through this Initiative, NRCS and its partners will help producers in selected watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity. Designated subwatersheds within the Kickapoo River and Rush River basins are eligible.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI): Through GLRI, NRCS offers financial assistance to agricultural producers for implementing practices that improve water quality in selected watersheds. Eligible watersheds in Wisconsin include the Door-Kewaunee Rivers, Lower Fox River, Manitowoc-Sheboygan, and the Milwaukee River.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program: The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. Current active projects for water quality improvement are located within the Oconomowoc River watershed, the Baraboo River watershed, the Milwaukee River watershed, Yahara River watershed, and portions of the Pecatonica River watershed in Lafayette County. Projects to improve fish and wildlife habitat include monarch habitat statewide, stream and riparian habitat in the Driftless Area, as well as a project to improve young forest habitat for Golden-winged Warblers in 20 northern Wisconsin counties.

Landowners interested in applying for EQIP funding should contact their local NRCS office at the [USDA Service Center](#) in their county. For more information, visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.

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