

September 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

### Wisconsin Farm Service Agency **A Message from the State Director**

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Phone: 608-662-4422  
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**State Executive Director:**  
Sandy Chalmers

**Farm Loan Chief:**  
Tom Brandt

**Farm Program Chiefs:**  
Greg Biba

September 20 is the deadline to sign up for 2019 Dairy Margin Coverage. Wisconsin continues to lead the nation in the number of dairy operations enrolled and amount paid. To date, Wisconsin FSA paid out \$51 million on margins from January to June, and the July margin was announced Friday, August 30.

Wisconsin FSA is seeing quite a bit of interest in the 2019 Market Facilitation Program. Read about the details in the article below. I do recommend that you call for an appointment, so we can prepare for your visit.

We will be seeing most of you in the next few weeks for your MFP visit. Wisconsin FSA employees look forward to serving you.

Best wishes,

John Palmer

Sandy Chalmers

**State Committee:**

Lisa Condon, Chair

Thomas Gillis

David Heideman

Kevin Hoyer

Tom McClellan

[www.fsa.usda.gov/wi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wi)

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## Dates to Remember

**September 20, 2019:** Deadline to enroll in 2019 [Dairy Margin Coverage Program \(DMC\)](#).

**September 30, 2019:** [NAP](#) application deadline for 2020 crops including alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, clover, grasses, mixed forages, rhubarb, rye, triticale, vetch, wheat, and other winter-seeded small grains and perennial forage.

**November 15, 2019:** [Acreage reporting](#) deadline for 2020 fall mint and fall-seeded small grains.

**December 6, 2019:** Deadline to signup for the 2019 [Market Facilitation Program \(MFP\)](#).

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## USDA Opens Signup for Market Facilitation Program

Signup began July 29, 2019 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 December 6, 2019.

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](https://farmers.gov/mfp), including payment information and a program application.

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## Livestock Inventory Records

Producers are reminded to keep updated livestock inventory records. These records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can assist producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, 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. For grazing or feed losses, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock

- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts

For more information on documentation requirements, visit [www.farmers.gov/recover](http://www.farmers.gov/recover) or contact your local FSA office. To find your local office visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Rural Development – Farm Labor Housing Programs

USDA Rural Development’s Farm Labor Housing (FLH) Program provides low cost financing for the development of affordable rental housing for both year-round and migrant “domestic farm laborers” and their households. “**On Farm**” projects provide housing for domestic farm laborers employed by the farm borrowers. “**Off Farm**” projects provide housing for domestic farm laborers employed by numerous farm entities.

The loans terms are a fixed one percent interest rate with up to a 33 year payback period. Funds may be used for the development of new rental housing and/or the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing. Eligible borrowers include individual farmers, family farm corporations, partnerships, association of farmers, non-profit corporations, cooperatives, public bodies, and limited partnerships with a single, non-profit general partner. Eligible tenants include households where a substantial portion of income is from farm labor. The primary tenant must be a US Citizen or Permanent Resident.

For more information, visit our [website](#) or contact your [local Rural Development Office](#).

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## New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department’s self-service website for farmers.

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has [increased the limits](#) for several loan products.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow.

After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](https://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

### **About Farmers.gov**

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](https://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America’s agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

For more information or to locate your USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov).

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## **Upcoming NASS Fall Surveys Used by FSA and RMA for Farm Programs and Crop Insurance Programs**

From September through December, farmers throughout the United States may be receiving one of the following surveys in the mail or be contacted in person or by phone to complete these surveys.

- September Agricultural Survey
- Small Grains County Agricultural Practices Survey
- Row Crops County Agricultural Practices Survey

- December Agricultural Survey

These surveys will ask farmers about acres of crops harvested and yields for 2019. NASS uses the data to set national, state and county level estimates. The survey results are used by FSA to administer farm programs such as ARC-CO and by RMA to administer crop insurance programs.

If farmers ask you whether they should complete the surveys, please encourage them to do so and why they are important. With the unusual weather conditions this year and its potential impact on Wisconsin crops, it is critical that farmers respond to help insure the best data is available to make sound marketing decisions and administer farm programs.

For any questions about these surveys, contact Greg Bussler, USDA NASS Wisconsin State Statistician, at (608) 224-4852 or [greg.bussler@usda.gov](mailto:greg.bussler@usda.gov).

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## 2019 USDA-NRCS Public Conservation Meetings Announced

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin has announced the [schedule for 2019](#) Local Working Group (LWG) meetings. Eighteen meetings will be held across Wisconsin in August and September to gather input and help set priorities for U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs under the 2018 Farm Bill.

Farmers representing a variety of crops and livestock raised within the local area, private woodland owners, representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations, and representatives of other agriculture and natural resource agencies are welcome and should be represented.

Wisconsin LWGs represent two or more counties grouped together by geography, similar land use, resources, and type of agriculture. [See a map of Local Working Groups](#). This will allow greater flexibility and access to funding for the groups.

One of the main programs discussed at the meetings will be the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a federal conservation program that helps agricultural producers in a manner that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. EQIP offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners with needed conservation practices for water quality, soil health, wildlife and other natural resources.

Local Working Group meetings are open to the public. Anyone interested in becoming a member in LWGs should contact their local [NRCS Service Center](#). Contact your local NRCS District Conservationist if you are interested in participating. For detailed information on local work groups, see [What are Local Working Groups](#) and see the [Schedule of Meetings](#).

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## Current Interest Rates

\*Interest rates are announced at the beginning of each month.

[Click here to find notification of current FSFL and commodity loan interest rates](#)

[Click here to view current Farm Loan interest rates](#)

**Farm Loan Interest Rates                      SEPTEMBER 2019**

Farm Operating- Direct	2.750%
Farm Operating- Microloan	2.750%
Farm Ownership- Direct	3.500%
Farm Ownership- Microloan	3.500%
Farm Ownership- Direct, Joint Financing	2.500%
Farm Ownership- Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loan- Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%

**Farm Storage Facility Loans                      SEPTEMBER 2019  
(FSFL)**

3-year FSFL	1.625%
5-year FSFL	1.625%
7-year FSFL	1.750%
10-year FSFL	1.875%
12-year FSFL	1.875%

**9-Month Commodity Loans                      SEPTEMBER 2019**

Marketing Assistance Loan	2.875%
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