

March 2016



NEWSLETTER

Missouri FSA Newsletter

Missouri Farm Service Agency

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Please [contact](#) your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

Check out our [State Events](#) page for upcoming agricultural events.

Last Chance to Get Coverage on Your 2016 Spring Crops, Forage and Pasture

March 15 is the final sales closing date for FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for spring-seeded crops, forage and pasture.

NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. **Beginning, socially disadvantaged (including women) and limited resource farmers are eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.**

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Contact your local FSA office today if you are interested in NAP and to see if you may qualify for free catastrophic level coverage.

Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit your local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Missouri:

- **May 15, 2016:** Spring oats and potatoes
- **July 15, 2016:** CRP, burley tobacco, corn, cotton, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, popcorn, rice, soybeans & all other crops.

Please note: November 15, 2015, was the final reporting date for 2016 pasture, rangeland, forage & apiculture.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office.

Breaking 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 Conservation (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 with changes will complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

A reminder for farmers with federal crop insurance – in order to be eligible for insurance premium support, a completed and signed AD-1026 must be on file with FSA.

USDA Financial Assistance Available to Help Organic Farmers Create Conservation Buffers

USDA is assisting organic farmers with the cost of establishing up to 20,000 acres of new conservation buffers and other practices on and near farms that produce organic crops.

The financial assistance is available from the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

For conservation buffers, funds are available for establishing shrubs and trees, or supporting pollinating species, and can be planted in blocks or strips. Interested organic producers can offer eligible land for enrollment in this initiative at any time.

Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic to learn more about how FSA can help organic farmers.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2016
- An application for payment by November 1, 2016

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available:

- [ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet](#)
 - [ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet](#)
 - [ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet](#)
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Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

USDA Grants Help Cut Energy Costs for Farmers and Rural Small Businesses

USDA is offering grants and loan guarantees to help rural businesses and agricultural producers reduce their energy costs and consumption.

The funding is being provided through USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Loans and grants are available to install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements.

Renewable energy systems include solar, wind, geothermal, anaerobic digesters, and renewable biomass.

Energy efficiency improvements include grain drying and handling, lighting, refrigeration, facility improvements (such as adding insulation or replacing windows), heating and cooling upgrades, motor replacements and automated control upgrades.

Grants of up to 25% of a project's total costs are available.

- The maximum grants are \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements and \$500,000 for renewable energy systems

Loans guarantees of up to 75% of a project's total costs are available.

- The minimum loan is \$5,000
- The maximum loan is \$25 million

Grant application deadline is **May 2, 2016**. Guaranteed loan applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Nationwide, there is \$35 million in grant funding available for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. For information on REAP contact (573) 876-9321 or email nathan.tutt@mo.usda.gov

Don't miss this great opportunity!

Interest Rates and Dates to Remember

Selected Interest Rates for March 2016	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.625%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	1.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years)	2.000%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.500%

Dates to Remember	
Mar. 15	NAP application closing date for spring-seeded crops, forage and pasture.
Mar. 31	Final availability date for 2015 Marketing Assistance Loans & LDPs for small grain & honey.
May 1	NAP application closing date for ornamental nursery.
May 1	Beginning of the primary nesting season for Missouri. No maintenance (mowing, spraying, burning or disking) on CRP acreage.
May 15	Final date to report spring oats & potatoes.
Aug. 1	Final date to sign 2016 ARC and PLC program contracts.

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).