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North Dakota FSA eNews

North Dakota Farm Service Agency

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From the State Executive Director

Happy New Year to all!

By now you have received a couple of letters and emails from FSA about the 2014 Farm Bill, particularly the ARC/PLC

Brian Haugen

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

programs. Those letters contained information about your existing bases acres (old) or reallocated base acres (new). One letter even mentioned that yield data records are available at the county FSA office. So, to make an informed decision on bases and yields, all the numbers should be right in front of you. If not, please contact your county office. Your local county staff are trained and read to serve you. I urge everyone to make their base and yield decisions well before the February 27 deadline. If you are ready to make your election between ARC and PLC, that can be done at this time also. Don't procrastinate!

Stay warm this month of January,

--Aaron Krauter, State Executive Director

Livestock Indemnity Program – Deadlines Nearing

The deadline to file an application for 2011, 2012, 2013 or 2014 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) is January 30, 2015.

Producers who suffered livestock deaths due to adverse weather from October 1, 2011 through December 30, 2014 may submit a notice of loss and application for payment with their local FSA County Office by the January 30, 2015 deadline. The late passage of the 2014 Farm Bill allowed FSA to take LIP applications retroactively from October 1, 2011.

For 2015 livestock deaths, the notice of loss **MUST** be filed within 30 calendar days from when the loss was apparent. Livestock producers suffering livestock losses may submit the notice of loss by phone, fax, email or in person.

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2012 Livestock Forage Program

Livestock producers who graze eligible livestock in Divide, Burke, Golden Valley, Billings, Stark, Slope, Bowman, McIntosh, Logan, LaMoure, Dickey, Ransom, Sargent, Stutsman, Barnes, Cass, Foster, Eddy, Griggs, Steele, Traill, Grand Forks, Nelson, Benson or Ramsey Counties may be eligible for benefits under the 2012 Livestock Forage Program (LFP).

The deadline to complete the LFP application is January 30, 2015.

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Emergency Livestock Disaster Programs

Livestock producers, including Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish producers, are reminded that the 2015 Emergency Livestock Disaster Program (ELAP) program year began October 1, 2014 and

continues through September 30, 2015.

Producers who suffer livestock losses not covered under LIP, or losses of eligible stored feed stocks, colony-collapse disorder, etc, are reminded to report these losses within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. In addition to filing a notice of loss, a timely filed acreage report for the 2015 program year must also be submitted with the administrative FSA county office. For Honeybee producers who have become aware of colony collapse while in another state, the notice of loss can be filed with the local FSA office in that state.

After producers have timely filed their notice of loss and acreage report, the next step is to make the application for payment. This step must be completed no later than November 1, 2015. Since ELAP funds are limited to \$20 million per fiscal year, the national office must determine if the requested ELAP payments exceed the \$20 million allocation. If the requested 2015 ELAP benefits exceed \$20 million, all payments will be factored.

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Acres Available for CRP Enrollment

FSA has announced that 82,800 acres in North Dakota are now available for wildlife habitat improvement incentives.

FSA is accepting applications to enroll more acres in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program and the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP). Both programs are part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) whereby FSA contracts with landowners so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation. Targeted wildlife species in North Dakota include pheasants, prairie chickens and waterfowl.

Of the new allocation, 50,000 acres are devoted to the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and 32,800 acres are devoted to the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program.

Program participants establish long-term plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality, or strengthen declining wildlife populations. In return, participants receive annual rental payments between 10 and 15 years.

The SAFE program allows state fish and wildlife agencies, non-profit organizations and other conservation partners to target the Conservation Reserve Program within distinct geographic areas to help wildlife. SAFE is limited to 1.35 million acres nationally, with 97 projects in 36 states and Puerto Rico.

The FWP program is a voluntary program to restore farmable wetlands and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation.

Interested landowners can enroll acres in a designated wildlife project in their state at any time. Participants and land must meet certain eligibility requirements. Other restrictions may apply. For additional details, contact your local Farm Service Agency office at offices.usda.gov or visit the website at www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

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Continuous CRP Signup Options

2014 and prior years have been interesting, weather-wise, with excess rain in various parts of the state. The extra moisture may have contributed to erosion of sensitive cropland. In addition to the popular conservation practices of SAFE and/or FWP, producers should also consider enrolling land into practices such as Grassed Waterways, Contour Grass Strips, Living Snow Fences, Field Windbreaks, Filter Strips and/or Riparian Buffers. These conservation practices, along with others, address site specific conservation concerns.

In addition to cost-share assistance to establish the cover associated with the practice, the named practices are also eligible for additional cost-share assistance, known as Practice Incentive Payments. The PIP is an additional cost-share payment equal to 40% of eligible cost-share establishment, bringing the total cost-share assistance to 90%.

Furthermore, most of the above practices are eligible for the Signup Incentive Payment, which is a one-time, up-front payment equal to \$100 per acre. Now is the time to visit your local FSA and NRCS Offices to begin the planning and enrollment process.

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IRS Reporting For Tax Year 2014

Producers which are recipients of program payments during calendar year 2014 will receive form IRS-1099-G detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on IRS-1099-G is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace producer's responsibilities to report income to IRS. The mailing of form IRS-1099-G will occur in late January 2015.

CCC will not issue form IRS 1099-G when CCC program payments total less than \$600. In addition, producers which receive program payments from multiple counties will receive only one IRS Form 1099-G showing all payments from all counties.

FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

Although refund information is not shown on the IRS 1099-G, a Customer's financial data including refund information, program payment amounts, and prior year CCC-1099 information is conveniently available via the internet through the FSA "Financial Inquiries" database (FSA-FI). Instructions for obtaining a FSA-FI user ID and password are available on the FSA web site at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauth/WhatIsAccount.html>

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Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

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Receiving FSA/CCC Payments by Treasury Check

FSA/CCC makes payments electronically through a program called Direct Deposit. Direct Deposit is a safe, convenient, and reliable way to receive your FSA/CCC payment through a financial institution. A financial institution can be a bank, credit union, or thrift account. Many financial institutions offer basic, low-cost accounts in addition to full-service checking or savings accounts.

If you currently receive your FSA/CCC payments by Treasury check, please contact your local county FSA office to complete a form SF-3881.

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Register to Use the FSA Financial Services Website

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Financial Services Website allows producers to generate reports that show both current and historical financial information. Once a producer has signed up for an e-Authentication Level 2 account, the producer will have access to the Financial Services Website. Sign-up for an e-Authentication Level 2 account at FSA web site: www.eauth.egov.usda.gov

When obtaining a Level 2 account, you must complete a customer profile and submit online. Once your customer profile is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail, and you must respond to it within 7 days to activate your account. Once completed, you must complete the "Identity Proofing" process by visiting a local USDA Service Center and presenting a photo ID, such as your driver's license.

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Suspension of Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and LDPs for Mohair

Effective December 17, 2014, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 excludes funding for mohair MAL's and LDP's through the balance of FY 2015 (September 30, 2015).

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2014 Wool

Wool producers are reminded that the deadline to apply for loans or LDP's on wool shorn in calendar year 2014 is January 31, 2015.

Recently, only graded wool with a micron level less than 18.6 was in an LDP status. Graded wool with other microns and ungraded wool currently are not in LDP status. To be considered graded wool, the wool must be tested by a CCC approved testing facility and a copy of the core test results from the approved facility showing the laboratory analysis must be provided before benefits will be issued.

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Restrictions on Removing CCC Loan Collateral

Producers with grain under Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan the loan collateral cannot be removed without prior authorization or repayment. Unauthorized removal, which includes removal for cleaning for seed is considered a violation and is subject to monetary and administrative penalties. CCC loans are subject to spot check. Determined shortages must be repaid with principal plus interest, and additional monetary penalties plus loss of future loan eligibility and restrictions on LDP's may apply. Producers planning to remove CCC loan grain must contact their local county FSA office staff for additional information.

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Late-filed Acreage Reports for Base Reallocation

Owners and operators will be given an opportunity to request corrections to acreage history for crop years 2009 through 2012 providing supporting documentation is available. Further, producers will be given an opportunity to submit late-filed acreage reports of P&CP (planted and considered planted) or subsequently planted crop acreage.

Additionally, owners and operators will be able to submit a request for prevented planting credit for 2009 through 2012 providing the prevented planting request for the crop had not been previously processed and acted upon by FSA.

Since physical evidence will likely be absent, producers will be required to prove existence and disposition of the crop. However, if evidence accepted and approved by RMA or any other USDA agency is provided in support of crop existence, proof of crop disposition will not be required.

If a late-filed acreage report or revision changes what FSA will recognize as initial crop acreage for any program purpose, the revised acreage will be used for all program purposes without any exception and without regard to who requested the late-filed acreage report or revision.

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Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule. Spouses may not sign FSA-211s on behalf of each other or sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Spouses must have a power of attorney on file or sign personally for claim settlements, such as promissory notes, and on security documents for price support loans.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

A spouse's authority to sign documents on behalf of the other spouse does not entitle the spouse to review or receive agency records of the other spouse.

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FSA Announces Key Dates for New 2014 Farm Bill – ARC and PLC Programs

FSA announced key dates for farm owners and producers to keep in mind regarding the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). The new programs are designed to help producers better manage risk for price losses or revenue losses.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

- September 29, 2014 to February 27, 2015: Land owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- November 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- Spring 2015 through summer 2015: Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- October 2015: ARC or PLC payments for the 2014 crop year are issued, if triggered.

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Yield Update for Farm Bill – RMA Yield Data Available

FSA offers farmers new information to update program payment yields that will help them better select protections offered by the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. The new programs, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, are cornerstones of the commodity farm safety, offering farmers protection when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices and revenues.

The Farm Bill provides landowners with the option of updating their farm program payment yields and this is the first time that many producers have been able to update yields since 1986. FSA has worked with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to make available certified yield data that producers can use to better calculate how the new safety net programs can offer the best protection against market swings.

Producers can check with their local FSA county office to see if data is available for them. This data belongs to the producer and only the producer associated with the crop insurance records will be provided this service. Updating yield history or reallocating base acres can occur until Feb. 27, 2015.

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USDA Provides Greater Protection for Fruit, Vegetable and Other Specialty Crop Growers

Greater protection is now available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for crops that traditionally have been ineligible for federal crop insurance. The new options, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, provide greater coverage for losses when natural disasters affect specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, and energy crops. The NAP deadline for spring planted and forage crops is March 16, 2015.

Previously, the program offered coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses

that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Producers can now choose higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price.

The expanded protection will be especially helpful to beginning and traditionally underserved producers, as well as farmers with limited resources, who will receive fee waivers and premium reductions for expanded coverage. More crops are now eligible for the program, including expanded aquaculture production practices, and sweet and biomass sorghum. For the first time, a range of crops used to produce bioenergy will be eligible as well.

To help producers learn more about the NAP and how it can help them, USDA, in partnership with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, created an online resource. The Web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage. It also gives them an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

If the application deadline for an eligible crop has already passed (for example the 2015 Honey crop), producers will have until Jan. 14, 2015, to choose expanded coverage through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. To learn more, visit the website www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local FSA office.

FSA, which administers the program, also wants to hear from producers and other interested stakeholders who may have suggestions or recommendations on the program. Written comments will be accepted until Feb. 13, 2015 and can be submitted through www.regulations.gov.

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Change in Farming Operation

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties.

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January Loan and Interest Rates

Commodity Loans - 1.125%
Operating Loans - 2.625%
Farm Ownership Loans - 4.00%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment Loans - 1.50%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss - 3.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7-Year - 2.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10-Year - 2.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12-Year - 2.375%

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Important Dates and Deadlines

January 14 - Deadline to purchase NAP buyup coverage for Honey and Rye

January 30 - Deadline to apply for 2011-2014 Livestock Idemnity Program (LIP)

January 30 - Deadline to apply for 2012 Livestock Forage Program (LFP)

February 27 - ARC/PLC Base and Yield Update Deadline

March 16 - 2015 NAP Deadline - Spring Planted and Forage Crops

March 31 - PLC,ARC-CO, ARC-IC Election Deadline

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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).