

November 2014



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## State FSA Newsletter

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### State Farm Service Agency

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

#### State Committee:

Damián Rivera  
Carmen Rullán  
Carlos González

#### State Executive Director:

Juan M. Ortiz Serbiá

#### Division Chiefs:

### USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to make their voices heard by voting in the upcoming Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA offices by the Dec. 1, 2014, deadline to ensure that their vote is counted.

FSA County Committee members provide an important link between the local agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity support programs; conservation programs; indemnity and disaster programs; emergency programs and eligibility. County committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

Wanda J. Pérez

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

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office Jan. 1, 2015.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2014 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections). You may also contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA office. Visit <http://go.usa.gov/pYV3> to find an FSA office near you.

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## USDA Extends Dairy Margin Protection Program Deadlines

*Enrollment Continues Through Dec. 5; Comments Accepted Until Dec. 15*

USDA is extending the deadlines for the dairy Margin Protection Program. Farmers now have until Dec. 5, 2014, to enroll in the voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill. The program provides financial assistance to participating farmers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

Producers are encouraged to use the online Web resource at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool) to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. The secure website can be accessed via computer, smartphone or tablet.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also extended the opportunity for public comments on the Margin Protection Program until Dec. 15, 2014.

Comments can be submitted to USDA via the regulations.gov website at <http://go.usa.gov/GJSA>.

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## USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Offers Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Act), also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill) and for an FSA program overview please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled *What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service*

Agency Customers?

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Livestock Disaster Assistance Sign-up Underway

Livestock disaster program enrollment opened on April 15, 2014. These disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

Eligible producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

**Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):**

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation by January 30, 2015.

**Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):**

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Producers who suffered livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

For more information, producers can review the LFP and LIP Fact Sheets on the Farm Bill webpage. Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

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## Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Sign-up Continues

As of Tuesday, April 15, 2014, orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011, can sign up for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own

the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

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## **Filing for NAP Losses**

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

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## **Dairy Indemnity Payment Program**

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the extension of the Dairy Indemnity Payment Program (DIPP) through September 30, 2018. DIPP provides payments to dairy producers and manufacturers of dairy products when they are directed to remove their raw milk or products from the market because of contamination.

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## **Microloan Program**

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

USDA is raising the borrowing limit for the microloan program from \$35,000 to \$50,000, effective Nov. 7, 2014. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$50,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

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## **Beginning Farmer Loans**

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed

loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

Selected Interest Rates for  
November 2014

Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.75%  
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 4.125%  
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%  
Emergency Loans – Amount of Actual Loss 3.75%

Selected Interest Rates for  
December 2014

Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.625%  
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 4.000%  
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%  
Emergency Loans – Amount of Actual Loss 3.75%

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## Make an Appointment with FSA

Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> .

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).