

January 2017



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Montana FSA: January 2017 eNewsletter

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Livestock producers in 14 Montana counties have until Jan. 30, 2017 to enroll in the 2016 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)

Eligible 2016 LFP counties include Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Fallon, Flathead, Granite, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, Park, Powder River, Powell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Teton

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers in qualifying counties for drought on dryland pasture. Eligible livestock producers must own or lease dryland pasture physically located in a qualifying county and eligible livestock must use this ground during the normal grazing period for the county. The following 14 counties have met the qualifying drought criteria for 2016 in Montana: Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Fallon, Flathead, Granite, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, Park, Powder River, Powell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Teton.

Livestock eligible for LFP include alpacas, beef cattle over 500 lbs, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been

Montana USDA Office Directories

[Online Directory of FSA Offices in Montana](#)

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[FSA Factsheets Website](#)

grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland during the county's grazing period.

Eligible land includes dryland native pasture, improved pasture, and small grains, annual ryegrass and forage sorghum planted specifically for grazing. Irrigated acres used for grazing or aftermath grazing are not eligible under this program.

If all eligibility requirements are met, livestock producers in Carter County will receive four monthly payments; livestock producers in the following 13 counties will receive one monthly payment: Big Horn, Carbon, Fallon, Flathead, Granite, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, Park, Powder River, Powell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Teton.

Reasonable Accommodations:

People with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs and/or events should contact the County Executive Director in the FSA Office in your area or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Alternatively, you may also contact Montana FSA Civil Rights Coordinator Jennifer Cole at (406) 587-6786 or jennifer.cole@mt.usda.gov.

Livestock producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office with any questions regarding eligibility.

Producers must complete an application and provide supporting documentation for 2016 losses by **Jan. 30, 2017**. Please contact the local FSA office ASAP to schedule an appointment to begin the application process and for questions on FSA programs. For more information, visit Montana FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt and www.usda.gov/disaster.

[LFP Factsheet](#) (pdf)

Registration is Open for Montana's Next Generation Conference Jan. 27 and Jan. 28 in Shelby

Registration is now open for [Montana's Next Generation Conference](#). The conference, which will take place Friday and Saturday, January 27-28, 2017, in Shelby, MT will focus on business planning for the farm or ranch and production workshops.

The conference begins Fri., Jan. 27 at 11 a.m. at the [Shelby Civic Center](#). Dave Pratt from 'Ranching for Profit,' will lead participants through two sessions, 'The Three Secrets for Increasing Profit,' and 'Hard Work and Harmony.' Dave will give both farmers and ranchers a fresh look at their agricultural operation, to see how to make it profitable enough to pass on to the next generation, particularly in this period of declining commodity prices. Events Friday evening will include a trade show, a roast beef dinner and time for networking with neighbors, sponsors, and industry professionals.

Saturday, Jan. 28 events at the Shelby High School will feature industry speakers and professionals offering 42 workshop options covering crops and livestock production, financial management, record keeping, leasing, succession planning, and much more. Saturday's workshops will provide pertinent information for both the beginning and experienced producer.

The January 28 workshops will fulfill [Farm Service Agency's](#) production and financial management training requirements for producers. Pesticide applicator points will be available throughout the day.

Online registration is available at <https://events.ticketprinting.com/event/20952> or registration forms are available at http://www.mariasriverlivestock.com/next_generation_conference.html, or by calling 406-873-2239. Updates will be available via the Montana's Next Generation Conference Facebook page.

Early bird registration cost is \$25 a day for individuals or \$40 a day for couples if registrations are submitted by January 13. Late registrations will be accepted until January 20 at \$30 a day for individuals or \$50 a day for couples. Daycare will be available for both days at \$15 per child, which includes snacks and meals.

For more information see http://www.mariasriverlivestock.com/next_generation_conference.html, or contact Lacy Roberts at (406) 873-5618, ext. 2 or Kari Lewis at (406) 873-2239.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this event should contact Lacy Roberts at (406) 873-5618, ext. 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1 (800) 877-8339 by Jan. 20, 2017.

Upcoming FSA Dates and Deadlines

- **NOW!!:** File form CCC-633 EZ page 1 with FSA before losing beneficial interest to maintain Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) eligibility. (To request payments, producers need to submit page 2 of the CCC-633EZ.)
- **Jan. 15:** 2017 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed and Cherries
- **Jan. 16:** USDA Service Centers closed on observance of the Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., a Federal Holiday
- **Jan. 30:** Deadline for 2016 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation
- **Jan. 30:** Deadline for 2016 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Application for Payment
- **Jan. 30:** Deadline for Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Application for Payment and Supporting Documentation for Loss for 2016 (or 90 days after disaster event or loss was apparent)
- **Feb. 1:** Final Availability Date for Loans and LDPs for Mohair, Unshorn Pelts (LDP only) & Wool
- **Feb. 20:** USDA Offices Closed in observance of Washington's Birthday (aka President's Day) Federal Holiday
- **March 15:** 2017 NAP Application Closing Date for Spring Crops (except spring seeded rye, speltz, triticale, wheat, and mixed forage)
- **May 29:** USDA Service Centers Closed in observance of the Memorial Day Federal Holiday
- **March 31:** Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat and Sesame Seed
- **May 31:** Final availability date for Loans and LDPs for Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower Seed

Farm Service Agency Loan Rates for January 2017

Price Support Loans

- [Farm Storage Facility Loan](#) (FSFL) Program
- 3 year loan – 1.500%
- 5 year loan – 1.875%
- 7 year loan – 2.250%
- 10 year loan – 2.375%

- 12 year loan – 2.500 %
FSFL Microloans are also available for the 3, 5, and 7 year terms at the 3, 5, and 7 year term rates for a maximum aggregated loan amount of \$50,000 and at a reduced down payment of 5% (regular FSFL loans require 15% down and have a maximum loan amount of \$500,000).
- [Commodity Loan](#) – 1.875%

Farm Loans

- [Operating Loan](#) – 2.375%
- [Operating Microloan](#) – 2.375%
- [Farm Ownership Loan](#) – 3.625%
- [Farm Ownership Microloan](#) – 3.625%
- [Emergency Loan](#) – 3.375%

Call your [local FSA office](#) for additional information.

Ongoing FSA Notice of Loss Requirements

Montana farmers and ranchers are reminded to timely report all crop and livestock losses to your local FSA office. For any questions, please contact your local FSA county office.

NAP – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program: Submit Notice of Loss within 15 calendar days of the earlier of a natural disaster occurrence, the final planting date if planting is prevented by a natural disaster, the date that damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent; or the normal harvest date.

ELAP – Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program: Submit Notice of Loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or Nov. 1st after the end of the program year in which the loss occurred.

LIP - Livestock Indemnity Program: Submit Notice of Loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.

TAP - Tree Assistance Program: Final Date to Submit an Application and Supporting Documentation is the later of 90 calendar days of the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent

Visit FSA's national disaster assistance [website](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index) at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index> and [FSA's program factsheets](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/fact-sheets/index) page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/fact-sheets/index>.

USDA Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2017 Continues

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Nov. 1, 2016, to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities 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. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Allows for Transfer of Certain Conservation Reserve Program Land to New Farmers; Provides Priority Enrollment in Working Lands Conservation Programs

Beginning Jan. 9, 2017, USDA will offer an early termination opportunity for certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts if the land is transferred by sale, or lease to own transaction, to either a beginning farmer or rancher or a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, including family members. The repayment of all previous payments plus interest is waived. Land that was transferred prior to January 9, 2017, is not eligible.

The land that is eligible for the early termination must have an Erodibility Index (EI) of less than 15.

Acres terminated early from CRP will be eligible for priority enrollment consideration into the CRP Grasslands, if eligible; or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) or Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

This change to the CRP program is just one of many that USDA has implemented based on recommendations from the Land Tenure Advisory Subcommittee formed by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in 2015.

With CRP enrollment close to the Congressionally-mandated cap of 24 million acres, the early termination will also allow USDA to enroll other land with higher conservation value elsewhere.

According to the Tenure, Ownership and Transition of Agricultural Land survey, conducted by USDA in 2014, U.S. farmland owners expect to transfer 93 million acres to new ownership during 2015-2019. This represents 10 percent of all farmland across the nation. Details on the early termination opportunity will be available starting on Jan. 9, 2017, at local USDA service centers. For more information about CRP and to find out if your acreage is eligible for early contract termination, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or go online at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp and/or www.fsa.usda.gov/mt. To locate your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Organic Producers and Handlers May Apply for Certification Cost Share Reimbursements; Expanded Eligibility for Transition and State Certification Cost

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that starting March 20, 2017, organic producers and handlers will be able to visit over 2,100 USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices to apply for federal reimbursement to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic or transitional certification.

USDA reimburses organic producers up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification, but only about half of the nation's organic operations currently participate in the program. Starting March 20, USDA will provide a uniform, streamlined process for organic producers and handlers to apply for organic cost share assistance either by mail or in person.

USDA is making changes to increase participation in the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance Organic Certification Cost Share Program, and at the same time provide more opportunities for organic producers to access other USDA programs, such as disaster protection and loans for farms, facilities and marketing. Producers can also access information on nonfederal agricultural resources, and get referrals to local experts, including organic agriculture, through USDA's Bridges to Opportunity service at the local FSA office.

Historically, many state departments of agriculture have obtained grants to disburse reimbursements to those producers and handlers qualifying for cost share assistance. FSA will continue to partner with states to administer the programs. For states that want to continue to directly administer the programs, applications will be due Feb. 17, 2017.

Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic or transitional certification fees to a [USDA-accredited certifying](#) agent. Application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/ arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage are all eligible for a cost share reimbursement from USDA.

Once certified, producers and handlers are eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 75 percent of certification costs each year up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope—crops, livestock, wild crops and handling. Today's announcement also adds transitional certification and state organic program fees as additional scopes.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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).