

October 2019



Farm Service Agency  News Service

# NEWSLETTER

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## Montana FSA: October 2019 Newsletter

### USDA Farm Service Agency - Montana

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State Executive Director:  
Mike Foster

### Message from the State Executive Director

Winter arrived early in Montana. Producers affected by adverse weather are reminded to keep records and to notify FSA within 30 days of livestock or feed losses. Please take a look at the upcoming deadlines and signups affecting your operations and reach out to your local FSA office for assistance.

Sincerely,  
Mike Foster

**State Committee:**Carl Mattson, *Chair* (Chester)

Chaley Harney (Billings)

Liane Johnson (Cut Bank)

Bob Lee (Judith Gap)

Bruce Tutvedt (Kalispell)

**Directories:**[Online Directory of FSA  
Offices in Montana](#)[PDF of Montana FSA  
Directory](#)[PDF of Montana USDA  
Directory](#)

- **Sept. 3 to March 15:** 2019 Agricultural Risk Coverage Price Loss Coverage Enrollment and Program Election Period
- **Oct. 7 to June 30:** 2020 Agricultural Risk Coverage Price Loss Coverage Enrollment Period
- **Sept. 11:** 2018 and 2019 Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) Sign-up Began
- **Nov. 4:** County Committee Election Ballots to be Mailed to Eligible Voters
- **Nov. 12:** All Hay Bales Must be Removed from Managed Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- **Nov. 15:** 2020 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains. *Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2019 reports for these crops.*
- **Dec. 2:** 2020 Honey NAP Coverage Application Closing Date
- **Dec. 2:** Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office
- **Dec. 6:** 2019 Market Facilitation Program Sign-Up Deadline

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## FSA Maps - 2020 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification: Nov. 15 Deadline

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers, including livestock producers, are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline. Producers are required to complete and submit their FSA maps as part of the crop certification process. The maps can be obtained at the local FSA office.

The 2020 Acreage Reporting/Crop Certification Deadlines are:

- **Nov. 15, 2019:** Apiculture, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter), and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.
- **Jan. 2, 2020:** Honey covered under NAP (or 30 days after placement of colonies)
- **Jan. 16, 2020:** Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed and Cherries
- **July 15, 2020:** Spring Seeded Alfalfa Seed, Forage Seeding, CRP, Perennial Forage not covered under NAP, and all other crops not required to be reported by a previous reporting date

These crops must be reported to FSA by these deadlines to be considered timely filed in order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements. Crops reported after these deadlines may be subject to late-file fees that can be substantial depending on the number of acres reported.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the applicable 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 applicable 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.

**Reporting Organic Crops:** Producers who want to use the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) organic price and selected the "organic" option on their NAP application must report their crops as organic and provide a copy of their current organic plan and recent written certification in effect from a certifying agent.

**Important Reminder:** If a crop report is not submitted by the subsequent year's acreage reporting date (ARD), the acreage report cannot be considered acceptable and producers will not receive planting credit for the crop nor will the crop be eligible for any FSA program benefits for the applicable program year.

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

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## **Montana Farm Service Agency is Hiring Three (3) County Operations Trainees & Five (5) Program Technicians**

Farm Service Agency is an **exciting** and **rewarding** place to start, build, and/or continue your career. Be part of our team and support the well-being of Montana agriculture and the American public.

The **Montana Farm Service Agency** is seeking to fill three (3) full-time, permanent County Operations Trainee positions and five (5) full-time, permanent Program Technician positions at county field office locations across the state of Montana.

FSA's diverse culture and benefits allow for a healthy balance between your career and home life. In addition to a generous salary, positions with FSA offer benefits such as health insurance, life insurance, 401(k) plan, paid holidays, vacation and sick leave, and flexible work schedules.

Potential applicants interested in learning more about open positions with the Montana Farm Service Agency and/or applying for these positions should click on the links below:

### **County Operations Trainee Positions (3)**

**Dates Open:** Sept. 24 to Oct. 7, 2019

**Pay Scale:** CO 5-9

**Salary:** \$33,949 to \$66,868 per year

**Link to APPLY:** <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/546280900>

### **County Program Technician Positions (5)**

**Dates Open:** Sept. 30 to Oct. 15, 2019

**Pay Scale:** CO 3-7

**Salary:** \$27,030 to \$54,670 per year

**Links to APPLY:**

**Cascade County, Great Falls, MT:** <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/546526100>

**Chouteau County, Fort Benton, MT:** <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/547251400>

**Rosebud County, Forsyth, MT:** <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/54653260>

**Garfield County, Jordan, MT:** <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/546532900>

**Gallatin County, Bozeman, MT:** <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/546534700>

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# Market Facilitation Program Signup: Dec. 6th Deadline

***Enrollment Now Open through Dec. 6 Please call your local FSA to schedule an appointment***

Signup is open for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP), a 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 Dec. 6.

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.

Link to: [MFP Factsheet](#)

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## Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs)

Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) are available when the CCC-determined market repayment rate is below the commodity loan rate. Crop year 2019 lentils and chickpeas have reached LDP levels and wheat HRS is close to LDP levels. LDP rates for lentils are announced weekly and rates for wheat and feed grain commodities are announced daily.

LDPs are only available on a commodity after the commodity is harvested, or sheared if wool or mohair, or extracted if honey. Approved storage is not required for commodities to be eligible for LDP. If an LDP payment is requested, a producer agrees to forego obtaining a loan on the same quantity.

LDP applications can be filed in person, by fax or electronically through the eLDP process using the multi-part form CCC-633EZ.

The CCC-633 EZ is a multi-part form. Page 1 is filed as an intention to request LDP benefits. It must be filed each crop year and will cover all farms and commodities in which a producer has an interest for the 2019 crop year. For Direct Delivery LDPs Page 1 and page 2 must be filed before beneficial interest is lost in the commodity. For all other LDPs pages 2-4 will be filed when a payment is requested. The current version of the form and only one accepted by CCC is dated May 21, 2019. The completion of page 1 does not cause a producer to lose loan eligibility for the commodity. The option of obtaining a loan is maintained until an LDP payment request is filed.

Page 2 of the form is used to request the LDP payment for wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, pulse crops and honey. Page 4 is used to request mohair, wool and unshorn pelt LDP payments. Page 2 and page 4 of the application must be filed in the county FSA office that maintains the farm records for the farm that produced the requested commodity.

To check the LDP rates, producers can access the rates at: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/Index> If searching for the "Pulse Crop LDP Rates" spreadsheet, navigate to the Lentils page. The rate for Montana is in the column labeled East.

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## Marketing Assistance Loans

USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation makes available nonrecourse marketing assistance loans on certain crop year 2019 commodities. These loans can be requested via mail, fax, or in person by properly completing the loan application (CCC-666). Producers requesting a commodity must also have form CCC-633EZ on file for crop year 2019. Loan applications are available at all county FSA offices and online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/>

A commodity loan application must be filed at the county office that maintains the farm records for the farm that produced the commodity for the loan. The 2019 crop commodity loan rates are available at any county FSA office, or online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> and clicking on the "Price Support" link.

Lien searches are required for all applicants and spouses in order to identify prior lien holders. County Offices update CCC-10's by verifying an individual's name according to their driver's license. Lien waivers are required from all lien holders before the commodity loan can be disbursed.

To be eligible for loan the commodity must meet the applicable commodity definition in the Official United States Standards and specific commodity eligibility requirements for a nonrecourse loan. Test weight and moisture levels can impact the eligibility for nonrecourse loans. If there are known quality problems producers should contact their local county FSA office to discuss available loan options.

Farm-stored loans are available in approved storage structures that provide safe storage for the commodity through the maturity date of the loan.

Warehouse-stored loans are also available at CCC-approved storage warehouses or State licensed warehouses which have been assigned a CCC warehouse code. Proof of storage paid through the loan maturity date and proof of payment of in-charges must be provided with the warehouse receipt for the warehouse stored loan. CCC will not adjust the loan rate using premiums and discounts at the time of loan making.

Loans mature on demand, but no later than the last day of the ninth calendar month after the month in which the loan was disbursed. If at maturity of the loan the warehouse receipt is forfeited or the farm-stored commodity is delivered to CCC, the settlement value will be determined based on the CCC's schedule of premiums and discounts based on the grade and quality factors shown on the warehouse receipt. Discounts applied to determine settlement value are included for, but not limited to vomitoxin, falling numbers, damaged kernels, grade, and test weight.

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## Beneficial Interest Requirements for Loan and LDP's

Producers are required to maintain beneficial interest in the commodity tendered for loan or LDP. Beneficial interest includes having control and title in the commodity. Loss of any one element causes loss of beneficial interest.

Sales agreements, including options to purchase, priced later and contracts for future delivery can impact beneficial interest. Once beneficial interest is lost, the commodity remains ineligible for loan or LDP, even if the producer regains control or title at a later date. Some contracts may also have provisions, such as restrictions on ability to mortgage the commodity or storage earned prior to delivery, that impact when beneficial interest is lost even if no payment has been issued to the seller. Even without a sales contract, delivery location, such as a feed lot, ethanol plant, seed plant or licensed warehouse can also impact when beneficial interest is considered lost.

Producers planning to use any of the various types of sales contracts can request to have the contract reviewed by the local county FSA office to determine how the contract would impact beneficial interest.

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## 2019 Enrollment for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs Underway

Agricultural producers can now enroll in the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\)](#) and [Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#) programs, two popular safety net programs, for the 2019 crop year. Interested producers must sign up for either program by March 15, 2020.

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and made updates to these two USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs. ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level. PLC program provides income support payments on historical base acres when the price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price.

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 rice), safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Updated provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill allow producers with an interest in a farm to enroll and elect coverage in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the entire farm, for program year 2019. The election applies to both the 2019 and 2020 crop years. If a 2019 election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2020, the election defaults to the current elections of the crops on the farm established under the 2014 Farm Bill. No payments will be earned in 2019 if the election defaults.

For crop years 2021 through 2023, producers will have an opportunity to make new elections. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Once the 2019 election and enrollment are completed, producers on the farm for 2020 can complete an enrollment contract for the 2020 crop year beginning Oct. 7, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020.

Although 2019 enrollment begins Sept. 3, 2019 and must occur first, a producer waiting until Oct. 7, 2019 to enroll is afforded the opportunity to enroll in either program for both 2019 and 2020 during the same office visit. During this time, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that takes effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update may be completed during the same office visit.

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University are offering web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. These decision tools can be found at [fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](https://fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

Producers are reminded that enrolling in ARC or PLC programs can impact eligibility for some forms of crop insurance. Producers who elect and enroll in PLC also have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through the [USDA Risk Management Agency \(RMA\)](https://fsa.usda.gov/rma). Producers of covered commodities who elect ARC are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres. To be eligible for STAX coverage, producers must not enroll their seed cotton base acres into the ARC or PLC programs.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our [program fact sheet](#) or our [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#), or visit [fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](https://fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

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## USDA Offers Disaster Assistance for Montana Farmers Affected by 2018, 2019 Disasters

Agricultural producers affected by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019 can apply through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+). Sign-up for this USDA program began Sept. 11.

### WHIP+ Eligibility

WHIP+ will be available for eligible producers who have suffered eligible losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only). Disaster losses must have been a result of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires that occurred in **2018 or 2019**. Also, producers in counties that did not receive a disaster declaration or designation may still apply for WHIP+ but must provide supporting documentation to establish that the crops were directly affected by a qualifying disaster loss.

A list of counties that received qualifying disaster declarations and designations is available at [farmers.gov/recover/whip-plus](https://farmers.gov/recover/whip-plus). The list can be obtained by clicking on "What are the program requirements", scrolling down to "Eligible Locations" and clicking on "available here". Because grazing and livestock losses, other than milk losses, are covered by other disaster recovery programs offered through FSA, those losses are not eligible for WHIP+.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available, excluding crops intended for grazing. A list of crops covered by crop insurance is available through USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) Actuarial Information Browser at [webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser](https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser).

The WHIP+ payment factor ranges from 75 percent to 95 percent, depending on the level of crop insurance coverage or NAP coverage that a producer obtained for the crop. Producers who did not insure their crops in 2018 or 2019 will receive 70 percent of the expected value of the crop. Insured crops (either crop insurance or NAP coverage) will receive between 75 percent and 95 percent of expected value; those who purchased the highest levels of coverage will receive 95-percent of the expected value.

At the time of sign-up, producers will be asked to provide verifiable and reliable production records. If a producer is unable to provide production records, WHIP+ payments will be determined based on the lower of either the actual loss certified by the producer and determined acceptable by FSA or the county expected yield and county disaster yield. The county disaster yield is the production that a producer would have been expected to make based on the eligible disaster conditions in the county.

WHIP+ payments for 2018 disasters will be eligible for 100 percent of their calculated value. WHIP+ payments for 2019 disasters will be limited to an initial 50 percent of their calculated value, with an opportunity to receive up to the remaining 50 percent after January 1, 2020, if sufficient funding remains.

Both insured and uninsured producers are eligible to apply for WHIP+. But all producers receiving WHIP+ payments will be required to purchase crop insurance or NAP, at the 60 percent coverage level or higher, for the next two available, consecutive crop years after the crop year for which WHIP+ payments were paid. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two applicable, consecutive years will be required to pay back the WHIP+ payment.

Additional information about WHIP+ program eligibility and payment limitations can be found at [farmers.gov/recover](https://farmers.gov/recover) or by contacting your local [USDA Service Center](#).

## Additional Loss Coverage

The **Milk Loss Program** will provide payments to eligible dairy operations for milk that was dumped or removed without compensation from the commercial milk market because of a qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disaster.

The **On-Farm Storage Loss Program** will provide assistance to producers who suffered losses of harvested commodities, including hay, stored in on-farm structures because of a qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disaster.

Additionally, producers with trees, bushes or vines can receive both cost-share assistance through FSA's Tree Assistance Program (TAP) for the cost of replanting and rehabilitating eligible trees and WHIP+ will provide payments based on the loss value of the tree, bush or vine itself. Therefore, eligible producers may receive both a TAP and a 2017 WHIP or WHIP+ payment for the same acreage. In addition, TAP policy has been updated to assist eligible orchardists or nursery tree growers of pecan trees with a tree mortality rate that exceeds 7.5 percent (adjusted for normal mortality) but is less than 15 percent (adjusted for normal mortality) for losses incurred during 2018.

## Prevented Planting

Agricultural producers faced significant challenges planting crops in 2019 in many parts of the country. All producers with flooding or excess moisture-related prevented planting insurance claims in calendar year 2019 will receive a prevented planting supplemental disaster ("bonus") payment equal to 10 percent of their prevented planting indemnity, plus an additional 5 percent will be provided to those who purchased harvest price option coverage.

As under 2017 WHIP, WHIP+ will provide prevented planting assistance to uninsured producers, NAP producers and producers who may have been prevented from planting an insured crop in the 2018 crop year and those 2019 crops that had a final planting date prior to January 1, 2019.

For more information on FSA disaster assistance programs, please contact your local [USDA service center](#) or visit [farmers.gov/recover](https://farmers.gov/recover). For all available USDA disaster assistance programs, go to [USDA's disaster resources website](#).

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## Timely Filing a NAP Notice of Loss

Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must timely report damage or loss to their administrative County Office. For all low yield and value-loss crop claims, a CCC-576 Part B Notice of Loss must be filed within 15 calendar days of earlier of the date disaster occurs (or becomes apparent) or the normal harvest date. However, all producers should be aware that deadlines to provide initial notice to FSA do now vary by method of harvest and crop.

Crops that are either hand-harvested or other crops determined by FSA to deteriorate quickly and therefore need prompt appraisal must notify FSA within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This initial notice may be by the filing of the CCC-576 Part B, e-mail, FAX, or a phone call. When initial notice is by email, FAX, or phone, County Offices will provide a Receipt for Service with additional requirements. A **signed CCC-576 Notice of Loss** will still be required within 15 calendar days of earlier of date of occurrence/appearance of damage or harvest date.



Other crops, such as forages and grains, continue to have the 15 day requirement to file a required CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. This Notice of Loss must be filed within 15 calendar days of the earlier of date of occurrence/appearance of damage or harvest date.

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

Further, to receive NAP assistance for claimed losses producers **must** timely file an Application for Payment on CCC-576 (Parts D through H) along with all required production records. Each producer on the unit must file their own application for payment. The deadline to apply for payment is 60 calendar days after the end of coverage for the crop year on the unit. There are no late-file provisions for NAP Applications for Payment.

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## FSA Disaster Programs Notice of Loss Requirements

It's important for agricultural producers to report losses immediately as all disaster programs are dependent on the timely reporting of loss. A notice of loss can be filed via phone, email, fax or in-person office visit.

- **ELAP – Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program:** Submit Notice of Loss **30** calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- **LIP - Livestock Indemnity Program:** Submit Notice of Loss within **30** calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- **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. **Note:** A producer's signature is required on form CCC-576 when a Notice of Loss is submitted.
- **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

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## Livestock Losses

The [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

**For 2019 livestock losses, eligible livestock owners must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.**

Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- [Proof of death documentation](#)
- [Copy of growers contracts](#)
- [Proof of normal mortality documentation](#)

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.0% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3.6%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

In addition to filing a notice of loss, producers must also submit an application for payment and supporting documentation by March 1, 2020.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt) or [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov).

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## New Application Filing Deadline for the 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. Prior to the 2019 ELAP program year, ELAP was administered on a fiscal year basis. With the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill, FSA made a discretionary change to amend the ELAP program year from fiscal year to calendar year.

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.

For the 2019 ELAP program year, producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 must file:

- A **notice of loss within 30 calendar days** of when the loss is apparent
- An application for payment by January 30, 2020

For subsequent ELAP program years (January 1 through December 31), the following filing deadlines are applicable:

- A **notice of within 30 calendar days** of when the loss is apparent
  - An application for payment by 30 calendar days after the program year in which the loss occurs (January 30)
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## Emergency Loans Available in Montana Disaster Areas

FSA's Emergency Loan Program is available for agricultural producers in counties designated as primary or contiguous natural disaster areas. See map below of current Disaster Designations in Montana. Contact your local FSA office for specific designations in your area and time frames to apply. Eligible producers have **eight months** from the date of the disaster designation to apply for low-interest emergency loans to 1.) restore or replace essential property; 2.) pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year; 3.) pay essential family living expenses; or 4.) refinance certain debts, excluding real estate. Producers interested in applying for an emergency loan, or other FLP loans, should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with the Farm Loan Program staff serving your area.

[Current Disaster Designations in Montana - \(by county\) Emergency Loan Factsheet \(pdf\)](#)

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## Youth Loans

FSA makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

### Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. [Youth Loan Factsheet](#)

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## USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Producers' Costs for Organic Certification

USDA Farm Service Agency announced that organic producers and handlers can apply for federal funds to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP). Applications for fiscal 2019 funding are due Oct. 31, 2019.

OCCSP received continued support through the 2018 Farm Bill. It provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Eligible expenses for cost-share reimbursement include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

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, including crops, livestock, wild crops, handling and state organic program fees.

### More Information

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit the [OCCSP webpage](#), view the [notice of funds availability on the Federal Register](#), or contact your [FSA county office](#). To learn more about USDA support for organic agriculture, visit [usda.gov/organic](http://usda.gov/organic).

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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).