



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Nebraska FSA and NRCS State Office Newsletter - June 2024

[Farm Service Agency](#) | [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) | [Risk Management Agency](#)

In This Issue:

- [A Message from the FSA Acting State Executive Director](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [Farm Service Agency Seeking Nominations for Farmers, Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees](#)
- [USDA Reminds Producers of Livestock Indemnity Program to Assist with Weather-Related Losses](#)
- [Include Prevented Plant, Failed Acres in Acreage Report to FSA](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [Ask the Expert: A Q&A on Youth Loans with Tina Mellinger](#)
- [FSA Loan Interest Rates for June](#)
- [Communication Is Key in Lending](#)
- [Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers and Ranchers](#)
- [Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership Funding Opportunity and Proposal Submission Deadline Approaching](#)

A Message from the FSA Acting State Executive Director

Traffic is picking up at county Farm Service Agency offices across the state as folks come in to work with us to complete their 2024 acreage certification. The deadline for certification of spring crop, perennial forage (pastures) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres is July 15. While we've had great spring moisture in many areas of the state, I know some locations have received too much in too short of a timeframe. Please remember to also report failed or prevented plant acres as part of your certification.

With spring officially turning to summer in the past week, temperatures seem to be cranking up. If you are a livestock producer, please familiarize yourself with the Farm Service Agency's [Livestock Indemnity Program](#). Livestock Indemnity Program, or LIP, provides financial assistance for livestock lost above normal mortality rates due to extreme

weather conditions, which can include excessive heat. More information on this program can be found below.

It's the start of the FSA County Committee election season, with nominations for local county committee representatives now being accepted through Aug. 1. County Committees play an important role in your local agriculture community because they are made up of farmers and ranchers, elected by farmers and ranchers. County Committees provide a local voice on FSA programming and county office operations. Want to learn more? Read below and then stop in and visit with your County Executive Director.

That's all for this month. Happy Fourth of July to you.

--Tim Divis

Dates to Remember

July 4, 2024 - USDA Service Centers closed for federal holiday

July 15, 2024 – FSA deadline to report all spring-seeded crops, perennial forage and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres

July 15, 2024 – End of primary nesting season for CRP program purposes

Aug. 1, 2024 – FSA deadline for producers to request a farm transfer or a farm reconstitution

Aug. 1, 2024 – FSA deadline for producers to file nomination form for FSA County Committee candidacy

****Please note any above NAP calendar reference may not be inclusive for all NAP-covered crops; NAP participants should contact their County FSA Office to confirm important program deadlines.*

Farm Service Agency Seeking Nominations for Farmers, Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees

Nominations are now being accepted for farmers and ranchers to serve on local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees. These committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2024.

Elections for committee members will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Customers can locate their LAA through a geographic information system locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections and determine if their LAA is up for election by contacting their local FSA office.

Agricultural producers may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee if they:

- Participate or cooperate in a USDA program.
- Reside in the LAA that is up for election this year.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority, women, urban and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster recovery, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as making decisions on county office employment and other agricultural issues.

More Information

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election, including if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. This form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by the Aug. 1, 2024, deadline. Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters in November 2024.

USDA Reminds Producers of Livestock Indemnity Program to Assist with Weather-Related Losses

The [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) provides financial assistance to producers who suffer livestock losses above normal mortality due to adverse weather, which can include extreme heat. Producers also can receive some compensation for livestock that have been injured as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event and were sold at a reduced price due to that injury within 30 calendar days of the end date of the weather event.

Livestock producers who have experienced weather-related livestock losses or injury are reminded that reporting and documenting those losses is an important part of the LIP application process. A phone call to the county FSA office can serve as official notice of loss and allows county office staff to discuss with the producer the loss documentation requirements. Contact information for county FSA offices can be found at offices.usda.gov.

Adequate documentation must be provided that proves the beginning inventory and deaths or injury of eligible livestock that occurred as a direct result of an eligible loss condition in the calendar year for which assistance is being requested. Documentation

also must provide sufficient data that identifies the quantity and the livestock kind/type and weight range. Documents providing acceptable evidence may include, but are not limited to, any or a combination of the following:

- contemporaneous producer records existing at the time of event – for example, pictures with a date
- rendering truck receipts or certificates
- veterinary records
- records assembled for tax purposes
- private insurance documents
- bank or other loan documents
- brand inspection records

Livestock owners or contract growers who suffered livestock losses will file a notice of loss and an application for payment at the USDA Service Center responsible for the physical location county where the livestock deaths or injuries occurred. While producers are encouraged to contact the county FSA office to report losses as soon as they become apparent, producers have until March 3, 2025, to file the application for payment and provide the supporting documentation for 2024 losses.

Include Prevented Plant, Failed Acres in Acreage Report to FSA

To comply with program eligibility requirements, producers are encouraged to contact the county FSA office to file an accurate acreage certification report by the applicable deadline. This includes reporting any prevented plant and failed acreage. Reporting prevented plant and failed acres ensures maintenance of acreage history and is important to maintain eligibility for potential program benefits.

The acreage reporting deadline for all spring-seeded crops, Conservation Reserve Program acres, perennial grass acres and cover crop acres is **July 15, 2024**.

Prevented planting is the inability to plant the intended crop acreage with proper equipment by the final planting date for the crop type because of a natural disaster.

Failed acreage is acreage that was timely planted with the intent to harvest, but because of disaster-related conditions, the crop failed before it could be brought to harvest.

Prevented planted acres must be reported within 15 days of the final planting date of the crop. If reported more than 15 days after the final plant date, prevent plant can still be filed if FSA staff perform a field visit to verify the disaster conditions. The acreage must have been prevented from being planted as a result of a natural disaster and not a management decision. Failed acres must be reported to the county FSA office before destruction of the crop. The acreage must have been planted under normal conditions but failed as a result of the natural disaster and not a management decision.

Contact the county FSA office for additional information regarding the reporting of prevented plant and failed crop acres.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies, it's important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.

Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans. Contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Ask the Expert: A Q&A on Youth Loans with Tina Mellinger

In this *Ask the Expert*, Tina Mellinger answers questions about Farm Service Agency (FSA) Youth Loans. Tina is a Farm Loan Manager in Ohio and has worked for FSA for 37 years. Her FSA farm loan team makes an average of around 50 loans each year, with around five of those being Youth Loans. Her entire career has been centered around loan-making. At the beginning of her career, she worked for Rural Development making home loans.

Tina grew up on a 50-cow dairy farm in southeastern Ohio. She earned an animal science and ag education degree from the Ohio State University.

To read the full blog, visit farmers.gov/blog/ask-expert-qa-on-youth-loans-with-tina-mellinger.

FSA Loan Interest Rates for June

OPERATING/OWNERSHIP

Farm Operating: 5.375%
Farm Operating – Limited Resource: 5%
Farm Ownership: 5.625%
Farm Ownership – Limited Resource: 5%
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 3.625%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.625%
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.75%

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN

3-year term: 4.75%
5-year term: 4.5%
7-year term: 4.5%
10-year term: 4.5%
12-year term: 4.625%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 6.125%

Communication Is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be successful. FSA staff will provide guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial credit. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

If a farm loan borrower can't make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your county FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract holders are encouraged to transition their CRP acres to beginning, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers through

the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the landowner or operator for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires.

CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants must agree to sell, have a contract to sell, or agree to lease long term (at least five years) land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who is not a family member.

Beginning, veteran or social disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning two years before the expiration date of the CRP contract. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands. New landowners or renters that return the land to production must use sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information, contact the county FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership Funding Opportunity and Proposal Submission Deadline Approaching

The Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP) is a component of Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) that focuses on wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement activities. Through WREP, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) enters into agreements with eligible partners to target and leverage resources for carrying out high priority wetland activities on eligible lands. Only state agencies, county and local governments, non-governmental organizations and American Indian tribes are eligible to submit WREP proposals. Partners interested in receiving funding should sign up before Aug. 16, 2024.



Potential partners may submit WREP proposals for an individual landowner project, a group of landowner projects, or specific wetland and habitat types within a watershed or geographic area.

NRCS hosted a training workshop for existing or prospective new partners. The link to the recording of this training is available on the [WREP webpage](#).

Wetland reserve easements protect important wetlands within an agricultural landscape, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, protect biological diversity and provide opportunities for educational, scientific and limited recreational activities.

Through WREP agreements, partner benefits include wetland restoration and protection in areas where priorities align to enable greater impacts on the landscape; ability to cost-share restoration or enhancements beyond NRCS requirements through leveraging; and ability to provide in-kind staff capacity for acquisition, due diligence, and restoration

activities. WREP partners must contribute a financial or technical assistance match and maintain an active System for Award Management (SAM) status. Partner proposals need to be submitted by Aug. 16 to be considered for this year's funding. Partners interested in WREP are encouraged to work with their NRCS state office in developing a proposal that meets the criteria for an Agricultural Conservation Easement.

For more information about conservation programs and other assistance available, contact [your local NRCS field office](#) or visit www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov.



Nebraska FSA and NRCS State Office Information

Farm Service Agency

1121 Lincoln Mall Suite 330
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: (402) 437-5581
Fax: (844) 930-0237

Tim Divis, FSA

Acting State Executive Director
timothy.divis@usda.gov

FSA State Office Programs Chiefs

Cathy Anderson, *Production & Compliance*
Pat Lechner, *Price Support & Conservation*
Mark Wilke, *Farm Loans*
Tim Divis, *Executive Officer*
Patty Wilke, *Administrative Officer*

Natural Resources Conservation Service

1121 Lincoln Mall Suite 360
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: (402) 437-5300

Robert Lawson, NRCS

State Conservationist
robert.lawson@usda.gov

FSA State Committee

Roy Stoltenberg, *Cairo, Chair*
Bill Armbrust, *Elkhorn*
Aaron LaPointe, *Winnebago*
Becky Potmesil, *Alliance*
Paula Sue Steffen, *Humboldt*

Visit the Nebraska FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

Visit the Nebraska NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov/ne.

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).