



August 2015

NEWSLETTER



NEW JERSEY FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWSLETTER

Did You Receive a Notification Letter from FSA?

FSA mailed letters called "Notification of Base and Yields for ARC/PLC" to all owners and operators that are associated with farms in our database. This letter lists each farm's Base Acres, PLC Yields, Program Election and Historic Irrigation Percentage (HIP) by crop as they exist at the closure of the ARC/PLC reallocation and election period (which ended April 7th, 2015) and has a brief explanation of appeal rights at the bottom.

The information contained in the notification is relevant only to FSA's new programs called Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), and it should be noted that it does not reflect the current planting practices of farms. In many cases, the Base Acres and PLC yields are an average of crop acreages and yields that were reported to FSA as far back as the mid-1980's, and are used only for the purposes of the ARC/PLC program.

USDA Opens Enrollment Period for ARC/PLC Safety-Net Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that eligible producers may now formally enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2014 and 2015. The enrollment period began June 17, 2015, and will end Sept. 30, 2015.

The new programs, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, trigger financial protections for agricultural producers when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices or revenues. More than 1.76 million farmers have elected ARC or PLC. Previously, 1.7 million producers had enrolled to receive direct payments (the program replaced with ARC and PLC by the 2014 Farm Bill). This means more farms have elected ARC or PLC than previously enrolled under previously administered

Nationwide, 96 percent of soybean farms, 91 percent of corn farms, and 66 percent of

wheat farms elected ARC. 99 percent of long grain rice farms, 99 percent of peanut farms, and 94 percent of medium grain rice farms elected PLC. For data about other crops and state-by-state program election results go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Covered commodities under ARC and PLC 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.

Producers enrolled in ARC or PLC Programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC or PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

For more information please contact your local FSA office

TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) SIGN-UP

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experience losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2015 must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent. 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

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FSA SERVICE CENTERS

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1971 Jacksonville – Jobstown Rd. Columbus, NJ 08022
Phone: (609) 267-1639

Monmouth, Mercer, and Middlesex Counties
PO Box 5033 – 4000 Kozloski Rd. Freehold, NJ 07728
Phone: (732) 462-0075

Hunterdon and Somerset Counties
687 Pittstown Road Frenchtown, NJ 08825
Phone: (908) 782-4614

Warren, Sussex, and Morris Counties
101 Bilby Road, Suite 1-H Hackettstown, NJ 07840
Phone: (908) 852-2576

Cumberland, Cape May, and Atlantic Counties
1318 S Main Road, Building 5A, Vineland, NJ 08360
Phone: (856) 205-1225

Salem and Gloucester Counties
51 Cheney Road Woodstown, NJ 08098
Phone: (856) 769-1126

2016 NAP Closing Dates

9/1/2015

- Aquaculture
- Christmas Trees
- Flowers
- Grass (SOD)

9/30/2015

- Barley
- Clover
- Grass
- Mixed Forage
- Rye
- Wheat

11/20/2015

- Apples
- Apricots
- Blueberries
- Caneberries
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Grapes
- Honey
- Nectarines
- Onions
- Peaches
- Pears
- Plums

12/31/2015

- Asparagus
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Greens
- Herbs
- Horseradish
- Leeks
- Lettuce
- Peas
- Potatoes
- Radishes
- Turnips

3/15/2016

- Beans
- Brussel Sprouts
- Cantaloupe
- Celery
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Honeydew
- Oats
- Peppers
- Pumpkins
- Sorghum
- Squash
- Sunflower
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon
- Yams

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.

Enrollment for 2016 Dairy Margin Protection Program Started July 1

FSA today announced that as of July 1, 2015, dairy farmers can enroll in Margin Protection Program **for coverage in 2016**. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy operations when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

The Margin Protection Program gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation. Enrollment begins July 1 and ends on Sept. 30, 2015, for coverage in 2016. Participating farmers will remain in the program through 2018 and pay a \$100 administrative fee each year. Producers also have the option of selecting a different coverage level during open enrollment each year. Margin Protection Program payments are based on an operation's historical production. An operation's historical production will increase by 2.61 percent in 2016 if the operation participated in 2015, providing a stronger safety net.

USDA also has an online resource available to help dairy producers decide which level of coverage will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The enhanced Web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine their unique operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs based on price projections. Producers can also review historical data or

estimate future coverage based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, mobile phone, or tablet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Dairy operations enrolling in the program must meet conservation compliance provisions. Producers participating in the Livestock Gross Margin insurance program may register for the Margin Protection Program, but this new margin program will only begin once their livestock dairy insurance coverage has ended. Producers must also submit form CCC-782 for 2016, confirming their Margin Protection Program coverage level selection, to the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. If electing higher coverage for 2016, dairy producers can either pay the premium in full at the time of enrollment or pay a minimum of 25 percent of the premium by Feb. 1, 2016.

For more information, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy for more information, or stop by your Local County Office to learn more about the Margin Protection Program. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Filing a Notice of Loss

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), 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.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

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.

Microloans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000, on Nov. 7, 2014. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

The microloan change allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to small and midsized farming operations. To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers and ranchers access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans. **Important Note:** Microloans cannot be used to purchase real estate.

Since 2010, more than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers and FSA has increased its lending to targeted underserved producers by nearly 50 percent.

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.

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, 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.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2015
- An application for payment by November 1, 2015

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

These ELAP Fact Sheets are available online at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

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 available at your local USDA Service Center or at www.fsa.usda.gov

Important Dates to Remember

August 15

- Reporting deadline for processing beans

September 7

- Office Closed- Labor Day

September 30

- Deadline to sign ARC/PLC Contracts

November 1

- Last day to file 2015 ELAP Honeybee Application for Payment.

November 9

- COC Election Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters

November 15

- Reporting deadline for 2016 Fall forage seeding, perennial forage, fall-seeded small grains

December 7

- Last Day to Return Election Ballots to County Office

Selected Interest Rates for August 2015

Farm Operating Loans - Direct	2.625%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct	4.00%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	2.125%-2.50%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.25%

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CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

CRP Grasslands helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands.

Farm Service Agency will accept applications on an ongoing basis beginning Sept. 1, 2015, with those applications scored against published ranking criteria, and approved based on the competitiveness of the offer. The ranking period will occur at least once per year and be announced at least 30 days prior to its start. The end of the first ranking period will be Nov. 20, 2015.

The CRP-Grasslands initiative will provide participants who establish long-term, resource-conserving covers with annual rental payments up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land. Cost-share assistance also is available for up to 50 percent of the covers and other practices, such as cross fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife. Participants may still conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production, conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences.



GRASSLANDS

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).