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New Mexico FSA Newsletter

New Mexico Farm Service Agency

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Low Interest Emergency Physical Loss Loans Available for 16 New Mexico Counties

In response to Winter Storm Goliath that caused physical damage and losses, 16 New Mexico counties are eligible for low interest (3.25% for April) emergency physical loss loans for damages and losses that occurred between Dec. 26, 2015 and Jan. 6, 2016.

Nine counties having primary designations: Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Guadalupe, Lea, Lincoln, Quay and Roosevelt.

In addition to the primary counties, seven New Mexico counties were named as contiguous disaster counties and eligible producers may qualify for FSA emergency physical loss loan assistance as well. Approved contiguous counties: Harding, Otero, San Miguel, Sierra, Socorro, Torrance and Union.

Emergency loans may be made available to any applicant with a qualifying loss in the counties

Oscar Rivera
Brandon Terrazas

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

named above. Approval is limited to applicants who suffered severe physical losses only.

Physical loss loans may be made to eligible farmers and ranchers to repair or replace damaged or destroyed physical property essential to the success of the agriculture operation, including livestock losses. Examples of property commonly affected include; essential farm buildings, fixtures to real estate, equipment, livestock, perennial crops, fruit and nut bearing trees, and harvested or stored crops and hay.

The final date for making application under this designation is Nov. 9, 2016.

Please contact FSA for more information on loan eligibility and the application process. FSA office information is available at <http://offices.usda.gov>. Additional FSA disaster assistance program information is available at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Ends Aug. 1

Producers who chose coverage from the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit FSA county offices through Aug. 1, 2016, to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2016.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2016 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

The two 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>.

New USDA Commitments to Help Build Up Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers

USDA prioritized \$5.6 billion over the next two years within USDA programs and services that serve new and beginning farmers and ranchers. A new, tailored web tool was designed to connect burgeoning farm entrepreneurs with programs and resources available to help them get started.

The new web tool is available at www.usda.gov/newfarmers. The site was designed based on feedback from new and beginning farmers and ranchers around the country, who cited unfamiliarity with programs and resources as a challenge to starting and expanding their operations. The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to grow their business, to filing taxes as a new small business owner. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the site's Discovery Tool to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs.

Using the new web tool and other outreach activities, and operating within its existing resources, USDA has set a new goal of increasing beginning farmer and rancher participation by an additional 6.6 percent across key USDA programs, which were established or strengthened by the 2014 Farm Bill, for a total investment value of approximately \$5.6 billion. Programs were targeted for expanded outreach and commitment based on their impact on expanding opportunity for new and beginning farmers and ranchers, including starting or expanding an operation, developing new markets, supporting more effective farming and conservation practices, and having access to relevant training and education opportunities. USDA will provide quarterly updates on its progress towards meeting its goal. A full explanation of the investment targets, benchmarks and outcomes is available at: [BFR-Commitment-Factsheet](#).

As the average age of the American farmer now exceeds 58 years, and data shows that almost 10 percent of farmland in the continental United States will change hands in the next five years, we have no time to lose in getting more new farmers and ranchers established. Equally important is encouraging young people to pursue careers in industries that support American agriculture. According to [an employment outlook report](#) released by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Purdue University, one of the best fields for new college graduates is agriculture. Nearly 60,000 high-skilled agriculture job openings are expected annually in the United States for the next five years, yet only 35,000 graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher in agriculture related fields are expected to be available to fill them. The report also shows that women make up more than half of the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and environment higher education graduates in the United States. USDA recently released a [series of fact sheets](#) showcasing the impact of women in agriculture nationwide.

The announcement builds on USDA's ongoing work to engage its resources to inspire a strong next generation of farmers and ranchers by improving access to land and capital; building market opportunities; extending conservation opportunities; offering appropriate risk management tools; and increasing outreach and technical support. To learn more about USDA's efforts, visit the [Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Results Page](#).

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection."

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap that allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for their operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey,

renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and some loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will no longer require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

New Mexico Hosts Agricultural Institute to Prep Future Farmers, Ranchers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) invites beginning farmers and ranchers to attend the 2016 AgriFuture Educational Institute on May 16-18 in Las Cruces.

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA), FSA and other organizations involved in New Mexico agriculture are coordinating and hosting the conference for beginning farmers and ranchers as well as those aiming for other careers in agriculture.

According to USDA's most recent agriculture census, New Mexico saw a slight uptick in the average age of farmers in New Mexico from 59.6 years old in 2007 to 60.5 years old in 2012. At the same time, the census showed a dramatic increase in the number of people age 34 and younger who are agricultural producers, from 818 in 2007 to 1,200 in 2012.

The institute is open to beginning farmers and ranchers age 40 and under as well as all current agricultural producers interested in serving as mentors. Veterans are encouraged to attend.

A variety of agricultural topics will be addressed in the breakout sessions. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour a wide variety of agricultural businesses in and around Las Cruces.

The 2016 event builds on the success of the inaugural AgriFuture, hosted in 2014.

To attend the conference, register at <http://2016-agrifuture.eventbrite.com>. The registration fee for beginning producers is \$50 for the Institute and includes lodging. The fee for current agriculture producers (those who can potentially mentor beginning farmers and ranchers) is \$100. The deadline to register is April 29, 2016.

Institute activities are being planned by NMDA, FSA and the following organizations: Ag New Mexico Farm Credit Service, Dairy Producers of New Mexico, Farm Credit of New Mexico, New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, New Mexico Beef Council, New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau, New Mexico State University's Cooperative Extension Service, New Mexico Wool Growers Inc. and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For questions, please call NMDA at 575-646-3702.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting/event/function should contact Maurice Portillo at 505-761-4900 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 by May 16, 2016.

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