

October 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## New York State FSA Newsletter

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### New York State Farm Service Agency

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### USDA Opens 2020 Enrollment for Dairy Margin Coverage Program; Ends Dec. 13, 2019

Dairy producers can now enroll in the [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) for calendar year 2020. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) opened signup for the program that helps producers manage economic risk brought on by milk price and feed cost disparities.

The DMC program offers reasonably priced protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. The deadline to enroll in DMC for 2020 is Dec. 13, 2019.

Dairy farmers earned more than \$300 million dollars from the program in 2019 so far. Producers are encouraged to take advantage of this very important risk management tool for 2020.

All producers who want 2020 coverage, even those who took advantage of the 25 percent premium discount by locking in the

Mark Dennis

**Farm Program Chief:**

Vacant

**Farm Loan Chief:**

John Liddington

[To find contact information for your local New York office click here.](#)

**October Interest Rates:**

**Farm Storage Facility**

**Loans:**

3 year: 1.5%

5 year: 1.5%

7 year: 1.625%

10 year: 1.625%

12 year: 1.75%

**Commodity Loans:** 2.75%

**Farm Loan Programs:**

Farm Operating: 2.625%

Farm Ownership: 3.250%

Conservation Loans: 3.250%

Direct Down Payment: 1.5%

Joint Financing: 2.5%

coverage level for five years of margin protection coverage are required to visit the office during this sign-up period to pay the annual administrative fee.

Dairy producers should definitely consider coverage for 2020 as even the slightest drop in the margin can trigger payments.

**More Information**

The 2018 Farm Bill created DMC, improving on the previous safety net for dairy producers. DMC is one of many programs that FSA and other USDA agencies are implementing to support America's farmers.

For more information on enrolling in DMC and taking advantage of an online dairy decision tool that assists producers in selecting coverage for 2020, visit the [DMC webpage](#).

For additional questions and assistance, contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](http://farmers.gov/service-locator).

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## Dates To Remember

Oct 31	Deadline to Apply for Organic Certification Cost-Share Program
Nov 4	County Committee (COC) Election Ballots Mailed
Nov 11	All Offices Closed for Veterans Day
Nov 15	Acreage Reporting Deadline - Fall Planted Small Grains
Nov 20	NAP Deadline for Fruit Trees, Nut Trees and Perennial Crops
Nov 28	All Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Day
Dec 2	NAP Deadline for Honey and Maple Sap
Dec 2	Last Day to Return COC Election Voting Ballots to FSA Office
Dec 6	Market Facilitation Program (MFP) Sign-Up Deadline

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## USDA Safety Net Program Enrollment Opens for 2020

Agricultural producers now can enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs – two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) safety net programs – for the 2020 crop year. Meanwhile, producers who enrolled farms for the 2018 crop year have started receiving more than \$1.5 billion for covered commodities for which payments were triggered under such programs.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and updated both programs.

Signup for the 2020 crop year closes June 30, 2020, while signup for the 2019 crop year closes March 15, 2020. Producers who have not yet enrolled for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office.

ARC and PLC have options for the farm operator who is actively farming the land as well as the owner of the land. Farm owners also have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields beginning with crop year 2020. If the farm owner and producer visit the FSA county office together, FSA can also update yield information during that visit.

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 and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

### 2018 Crop Year ARC and PLC Payments

FSA began processing payments last week for 2018 ARC-County (ARC-CO) and PLC on covered commodities that met payment triggers on enrolled farms in the 2018 crop year. In addition to the \$1.5 billion now in process, FSA anticipates it will issue another \$1 billion in November once USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service publishes additional commodity prices for the 2018 crop.

Producers who had 2018 covered commodities enrolled in ARC-CO can visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc) for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity. For farms and covered commodities enrolled in 2018 PLC, the following crops met payment triggers: barley, canola, corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, peanuts, and wheat.

Oats and soybeans did not meet 2018 PLC payment triggers.

2018 PLC payment rates for the following covered commodities have not been determined: crambe, flaxseed, large and small chickpeas, long and medium grain rice, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, seed cotton, sesame seed, sunflower seed and temperate Japonica rice.

### More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC including two online decision tools that assist producers in making enrollment and election decisions specific to their operations, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#).

## Costs for Organic Certification

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) 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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## Upcoming Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

***The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for New York State:***

<b>November 15, 2019</b>	Fall Planted Small Grains
<b>December 2, 2019</b>	Maple
<b>January 2, 2020</b>	Honey
<b>January 15, 2020</b>	Apples, Grapes & Peaches

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

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

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office. To locate your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov)

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## MAL and LDP Policy

The 2018 Farm Bill extends loan authority through 2023 for Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar and extra-long staple cotton.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2019 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest. Requests for loans and LDPs shall be made on or before the final availability date for the respective commodities.

Commodity certificates are available to loan holders who have outstanding nonrecourse loans for wheat, upland cotton, rice, feed grains, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, large and small chickpeas), peanuts, wool, soybeans and designated minor oilseeds. These certificates can be purchased at the posted county price (or adjusted world price or national posted price) for the quantity of commodity under loan, and must be immediately exchanged for the collateral, satisfying the loan. MALs redeemed with commodity certificates are not subject to Adjusted Gross Income provisions.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, producers must have form [CCC-633EZ, Page 1](#) on file at their local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested.

Marketing loan gains (MLGs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are no longer subject to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant rules.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions state that a producer whose total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds \$900,000 is not eligible to receive an MLG or LDP. Producers must have a valid CCC-941 on file to earn a market gain of LDP. The AGI does not apply to MALs redeemed with commodity certificate exchange.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, please visit a nearby USDA Service Center or FSA's website [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

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## Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

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 syrup, 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 loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security. Loans exceeding \$100,000 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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport) or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department's self-service website for farmers.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has [increased the limits](#) for several loan products.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](http://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

### About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and

alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](https://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America's agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

For more information or to locate your USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov).

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## 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, 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.

**Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2018 to Dec. 31, 2019 must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent.**

For more information or to locate your USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov).

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## USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

*Producers, Including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans

totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans), or contact your local FSA office.

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