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## Kansas FSA Newsletter

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### Kansas Farm Service Agency

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### USDA's Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a comprehensive and detailed approach to support farmers, ranchers, and forest land owners in their response to address the causes of climate change in April 2015. The framework consists of 10 building blocks that span a range of technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon storage, and generate clean renewable energy through mitigation.

USDA's strategy focuses on climate-smart practices designed for working production systems that provide multiple economic and environmental benefits in addition to supporting resilience to extreme weather, reduced emissions and increased carbon storage.

**Executive Officer:**  
Jack Salava

**Division Chiefs:**  
Terry Hawk  
Rod Winkler  
Robert White

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

Through this comprehensive set of voluntary programs and initiatives spanning its programs, USDA expects to reduce net emissions and enhance carbon sequestration by over **120 million metric tons** of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e) per year – about 2% of economy-wide net greenhouse emissions – by 2025. That’s the equivalent of taking **25 million cars** off the road, or offsetting the emissions produced by powering nearly **11 million homes** last year.

For more information on the Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry click the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/documents/climate-smart-fact-sheet.pdf> . For additional information on ways to consider greenhouse gases when managing land, refer to the USDA Climate Hub webpage: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.

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## USDA Streamlines Crop Reporting, Provides New Self-Service Portal

***July 15 is the final date to timely report 2016 crops in Kansas***

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filing at one location, data that’s important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

Since 2009, USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. Producers must still visit both locations to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps or provide program-specific information. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate

completion of the second report. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as **FSAFarm+**, gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details, or online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ks>.

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## **FSA County Committee Nomination Period Now Open**

The nomination period for FSA County Committees began on June 15, 2016. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the applicable County FSA Office by close of business on Aug. 1, 2016.

County Committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice on federal farm program implementation at the local level. To be eligible to serve on the FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) where they are nominated. All producers, including women, minority and beginning farmers and ranchers are encouraged to participate in the nomination and election process.

Producers may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Organizations representing minority and women farmers and ranchers may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and more information about county committee elections is available online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues. FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 7. Ballots are due back in the applicable County Office by mail or in person no later than Dec. 5, 2016. All newly elected county committee members and alternates will take office January 1, 2017.

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## **Marketing Assistance Available for 2016 Crops**

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized 2014-2018 crop year 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.

To be eligible for a MAL or an LDP, producers must have a beneficial interest in the commodity, in addition to other requirements. A producer retains beneficial interest when control of and title to the commodity is maintained. For an LDP, the producer must retain beneficial interest in the commodity

from the time of planting through the date the producer filed Form CCC-633EZ (page 1) in the FSA County Office. The Form should be filed before harvest begins.

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## **Enrollment Period for 2016 ARCPLC Programs 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, must 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](http://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>.

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## **2017 Dairy Margin Protection Program Enrollment Open Soon**

The Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy) 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. MPP-Dairy gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation.

Enrollment for 2017 coverage begins July 1 and ends on Sept. 30, 2016. Participants 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. MPP-Dairy payments are based on an operation's historical production.

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. An enhanced Web tool, available at [www.dairymarkets.org/mpp](http://www.dairymarkets.org/mpp) allows dairy farms to quickly combine their operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs.

Dairy operations enrolling in the program must meet conservation compliance provisions. Producers participating in the Risk Management Agency Livestock Gross Margin insurance program may register for MPP-Dairy, but the MPP-Dairy will only begin once their livestock dairy insurance coverage has ended.

Visit FSA online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy) or stop by a local FSA office to learn more about MPP-Dairy.

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## **Conservation Reserve Program General Signup 49 and CRP Grasslands Initiative Results**

General CRP Signup 49 ended on February 26, 2016, with Kansas producers submitting a total of 2,795 offers for 212,939 acres. Nationally, 26,000 offers were received for 1.8 million acres. The acceptance announcement made on May 5, 2016, in conjunction with the CRP Grassland Initiative, reflects 495 offers for 44,156 acres were accepted in Kansas. This is the most selective signup period in CRP's 30 year history with a record high Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) cutoff level required of 292 points. The acceptance percentage based upon acres is just below 21 percent of the acres offered.

Also on May 5, USDA announced the first offers accepted under the new CRP Grasslands Initiative implemented from the 2014 Farm Bill. During the first ranking period, which ended November 20, 2015, Kansas producers submitted 201 offers for 27,440 acres. Nationally, 4,629 offers were submitted for just over 1.0 million acres. Only 5 offers were accepted in Kansas for 981.5 acres. Offers not accepted during the first period will be rolled into the next ranking period to be added with the new offers received during this period. To make application, see your local USDA Service Center. CRP Grasslands is a "working lands program" permitting grazing and haying while helping preserve grassland covers, expiring CRP covers and other established grasslands. Offers continue to be accepted on a continuous basis at your local USDA Service Center.

The 2014 Farm Bill established a nationwide acreage limit for all CRP categories of 24.0 million acres, beginning October 1, 2016. Current enrollment in the program today of 23.8 million acres, coupled with a record demand to enroll land under continuous, general and CRP Grasslands, leaves limited available acres below the national established cap. In Kansas, this resulted in 168,783 General Signup acres and 26,458.5 CRP Grassland offered acres not accepted.

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## **Direct and Guaranteed Farm Loans Available**

FSA's loan programs are designed to help family farmers to start, purchase or expand their farming operation. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who need additional financial and business experience to qualify for commercial credit. In other cases, applicants are farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters, or who need additional resources with which to establish and maintain profitable farming operations.

Some customers obtain their credit needs through the use of loan guarantees. Under a guaranteed loan, a commercial lender makes and services the loan, and FSA guarantees it against loss up to a maximum of 90 percent in most cases. In certain limited circumstances, a 95-percent guarantee is available. FSA has the responsibility of approving all eligible loan guarantees and providing oversight of lenders' activities. FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$1,399,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the customer's ability to repay the loan.

For those not yet meeting the qualifications for a loan guarantee from a commercial lender, FSA also makes direct loans, which are serviced by an FSA official. Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real

estate. Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements. The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000. Term operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA Farm Loan Program Office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan. Eligibility and approval requirements must be met, and can be discussed with your local office. Funding for these programs is limited.

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## Producers Should Consider NAP Crop Coverage

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). 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.

Landowners, tenants or sharecroppers who are entitled to an ownership share of a crop or crops and who share in the risk of producing eligible crops can obtain NAP coverage. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.

The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://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.

For most Kansas Counties, sale closing dates are as follows:

Small Grains (Hay or Graze Coverage)

- September 1 (annually)

Perennial Forage (Native and Improved Grasses) and Perennial Fruits and Vegetables

- December 1 (annually)

Annual Forage (Sorghum) and annual Fruits and Vegetables

- March 15

Please confirm with your local service center all details regarding crops available for coverage and sales closing dates.

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## FSA Unveils Monthly Webinar Series

The FSA Outreach and Education Division will host a series of webinars each month to inform producers about FSA programs and initiatives. To register for any of the below listed webinars, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach) and click on "Outreach Webinars."

**June 7 @ 2 p.m. EDT**

Cooperative Agreements Regarding Outreach and Education, Technical Assistance and Financial Education for FSA Programs, Functions and Activities

FSA will review proposals submitted by non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education in the second round of proposals for FSA cooperative agreements July 11, 2016. Join the webinar to learn about proposal types, eligible expenses and FSA programs the agreements support.

**July 19 @ 2 p.m. EDT**

Understanding Receipt for Service

To ensure that all USDA customers and potential customers are being served properly in local offices, the 2014 Farm Bill requires that a receipt be provided. Learn more about Receipt for Service, how it affects you and what you can expect when you visit a local Farm Service Agency county office.

**Aug. 9 @ 2 p.m. EDT**

Need Commodity Storage? The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Can Help

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade permanent or portable facilities to store commodities. Learn how this program may be able to help your operation.

The webinars will be recorded for future viewing and can be accessed on

[www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach).

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## **Disaster Assistance Options Available for Livestock Producers**

Livestock disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs through the 2018 program year. To expedite applications, all producers who experiences losses are encouraged to bring records documenting those losses to their local FSA Office. Producers should record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records

Eligible producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation by January 30, 2017. Currently, there are no eligible Kansas counties for the LFP program.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Producers who suffered livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by March 31, 2017.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP):

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by LFP and LIP. Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses during the 2016 program year must submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office by November 1, 2016.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

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