

February 2015



Missouri FSA Newsletter

Missouri Farm Service Agency

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

Time is Running Out! First Deadline for Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) is Feb. 27th

Producers are reminded that the deadline to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres is Feb. 27, 2015. Farm owners and producers can choose between the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) through March 31, 2015. The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

Now through Feb. 27, 2015, farm owners with base and planting history between 2009 and 2012 have a one-time opportunity to:

1. Maintain the farm's base acres
2. Reallocate base acres among covered commodities planted on the farm at any time during 2009-2012 crop years (excluding upland cotton bases)

Note: Total current base on the farm cannot increase or decrease.

Owners will also have the one-time opportunity to update their yields. This is the first time that many producers have been able to update yields since 1986. The updated yields will be calculated using 90 percent of the simple average of the 2008-2012 yields.

The yield update is a certification process, therefore, FSA will not accept evidence of these yields. However, certified yields are always subject to spot check.

The following are dates associated with ARC and PLC:

- **Now through Feb. 27, 2015** - Update yield history and/or reallocate base acres
- **Now through March 31, 2015** - Producers make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- **Mid-April through Summer 2015** - Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- **October 2015:** Payments issued for the 2014 crop year, if earned.

Contact your FSA office soon to get the process started if you haven't done so already.

USDA Creates More Bird Habitat Opportunities on Irrigated Farmland

FSA announces more bird habitats to be established in irrigated farmland regions through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Declines in upland bird populations, such as the northern bobwhite quail, pheasant, and prairie chicken, led to the creation of new Conservation Reserve Program features to help restore habitats for these species in these agricultural areas. Since the program's creation in 2004, more than 240,000 acres of marginal cropland has been converted to native grasslands, spurring an increase in upland bird populations.

In recent years, however, applications for this type of habitat creation have slowed. To encourage more participation, USDA's new policy focuses on farmland with center-pivot irrigation systems where there are circular areas of cropland with patches of land beyond the reach of irrigation. Until now, these patches – known as pivot corners – were only eligible for habitat creation when connected by a linear strip of grassland also enrolled in the program. The new policy allows producers interested in habitat creation to use disconnected pivot corners to help increase the population of upland birds.

Other species that can benefit from today's change include the mourning dove, wild turkey, several sparrows, meadowlark and bobolinks.

The Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary program. FSA contracts with agricultural landowners so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed but instead used for conservation. Participants establish long-term plant species that control soil erosion, sequester carbon, improve water quality, and strengthen declining wildlife populations. In return, participants receive annual rental payments between 10 and 15 years.

Interested landowners can enroll pivot corners in the Conservation Reserve Program at any time. Participants and land must meet certain eligibility requirements. Other restrictions may apply. For additional details, contact your local Farm Service Agency office at offices.usda.gov or visit the website at www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Sales Closing Date Quickly Approaching!

Free Basic Coverage Plans and Premium Discounts Available for New, Underserved and Limited Income Farmers

Greater protection is now available from NAP for crops that historically have been ineligible for federal crop insurance. The new options, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, provide greater coverage for losses when natural disasters affect specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, and energy crops.

Previously, the program offered coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. ***Producers can now choose higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price.***

The sales closing date for many NAP crops, including forage and pasture, is March 15, 2015. Since the 15th falls on a weekend, applications will be accepted through Monday, March 16, 2015.

The expanded protection will be especially helpful to beginning and socially disadvantaged producers, as well as farmers with limited resources, who will receive fee waivers and premium reductions for expanded coverage. More crops are now eligible for the program, including expanded aquaculture production practices, and sweet and biomass sorghum. For the first time, a range of crops used to produce bioenergy will be eligible as well.

To help producers learn more about the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and how it can help them, USDA, in partnership with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, created an online resource. The web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage. It also gives them an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

To learn more, visit the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local FSA office.

USDA Can Help You Make Your Farm, Ranch or Small Business More Profitable

USDA is offering grants and loan guarantees to help rural businesses and agricultural producers reduce their energy costs and consumption.

The funding is being provided through USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Loans and grants are available to install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements.

Renewable energy systems include solar, wind, geothermal, anaerobic digesters, and renewable biomass.

Energy efficiency improvements include grain drying and handling, lighting, refrigeration, facility improvements (such as adding insulation or replacing windows), heating and cooling upgrades, motor replacements and automated control upgrades.

Grants of up to 25% of a project's total costs are available.

- The maximum grants are \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements and \$500,000 for renewable energy systems

Loans guarantees of up to 75% of a project's total costs are available.

- The minimum loan is \$5,000
- The maximum loan is \$25 million

Grant application deadlines are April 30, 2015 and June 30, 2015. Guaranteed loan applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Missouri has \$1.8 million in grant funding available for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. For information on REAP contact (573) 876-9321 or email nathan.tutt@mo.usda.gov

Don't miss this great opportunity!

2015 Mid Mo Soil Health Seminar in Boonville, Mo.

The Missouri Farm Service Agency invites you to attend the 2015 Mid Mo Soil Health Seminar in Boonville, Mo., on March 3rd, 4th & 5th. This year's seminar will include information for row crop producers on days 1 and 2 and for livestock producers on day 3. You can register for any or all days by mailing a check and the registration form located at <http://swcd.mo.gov/howard/events.htm> to the Cooper County SWCD at the address listed.

The registration fee will cover your lunch, which will be served by the Farmers' Pick Buffet. Registration will end when 350 seats have been filled for each day or on February 16th, whichever comes first. Your reservation WILL NOT be secured until payment is received.

Participants can register for one, two, or all three days. If you have questions you can contact Randon Leathers at Cooper County FSA at (660)882-5647 ext. 2 or at randon.leathers@mo.usda.gov.

Registration is filling up fast, so please don't wait!

The seminar is brought to you by USDA Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Business Management Analysis, and Cooper and Howard County Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this function should contact Randon Leathers, Cooper County FSA at 660-882-5647 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 by Feb. 27, 2015.

Farming Operation Changes

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchase property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to do so can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

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, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Interest Rates and Dates to Remember

Selected Interest Rates for February 2015	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.625%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.75%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	1.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	2.00%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years)	2.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.250%

Dates to Remember	
Feb. 16	George Washington's birthday. FSA offices are closed.
Feb. 27	Final date to reallocate base acres and/or update yields in preparation for ARC and PLC.
Feb. 28	NAP application closing date for rice. <i>Since the 28th falls on a weekend, applications will be accepted through Mar. 2, 2015.</i>
Mar. 15	NAP application closing date for many NAP crops, including forage and pasture. <i>Since the 15th falls on a weekend, applications will be accepted through Mar. 16, 2015.</i>
Mar. 31	Final date to make an election for ARC or PLC.

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).
