

July 2016



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- [COC Nomination Deadline Nears](#)
- [ARC, PLC Acreage Maintenance](#)
- [Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Ends Aug. 1](#)
- [Proper Management of CRP Grass Cover](#)
- [Dairy Producers Can Enroll Today to Protect Milk Production Margins](#)
- [FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal](#)
- [USDA Hosts County Committee Webinar](#)
- [USDA Expands Microloans to Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

Ohio FSA State News and Updates

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COC Nomination Deadline Nears

The election of agricultural producers FSA county committees is important to farmers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and producers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. FSA county committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms.

The COC nomination period runs from **June 15, 2016 through August 1, 2016**. The nomination form is available at USDA Service Centers and [online](#).

For more information, contact your FSA County office or visit the County Committee Elections website to learn more about the County Committee Election process at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>.

ARC, PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the

**Price Support
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Matt Kleski

State Committee:
Bob Boggs,
Chairperson
Bob Cole, member
Bruce Long, member
Jim Rex, member
Jim Zumbrink,
member

Visit Ohio
FSA website for
additional
information at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

Please contact
your [FSA County
Office](#) for questions
specific to your
operation.

farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and 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.

A list of Ohio noxious weeds can be found on the Ohio NRCS website: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxious?rptType=State&statefips=39> and the Ohio Department of Agriculture website at: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/901%3A5-37>.

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

Producers who chose coverage from the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs can visit the FSA county offices to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2016. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 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, dry peas, rapeseed, safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

For more information, producers are encouraged to contact your [county FSA Office](#).

Proper Management of CRP Grass Cover

In the past, aesthetic mowing of CRP grass cover was a widely accepted practice by many participants. Today with more research and understanding, it has been shown that properly managed grass cover will reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and is more beneficial to wildlife than annually mowed grass covers.

Wildlife, especially grassland birds including pheasants and quail, and pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, view properly managed CRP cover as a source of food and habitat suitable to raise their young. Wildlife will not be attracted to CRP cover if plants are not allowed to mature. Game birds and bees are disappearing because of habitat loss.

Properly managed grass cover does not include noxious weeds such as thistle and teasel or woody species like trees and multiflora rose. These noxious weeds must be controlled. This can be done in several ways. Mowing of CRP cover, not to exceed 20% of the total CRP acres in a field, is permitted. This activity must be included in your conservation plan and be conducted outside of Ohio's primary nesting season (**March 1st – July 15th**). The location of this mowing should be changed from year to year. Another option to control noxious weeds is by spot mowing affected areas or spot spraying of an approved herbicide. These treatments will have a minimal effect on the CRP practice cover's ability to meet the purposes of erosion control, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Unauthorized disturbance of CRP cover is considered a violation of the terms and conditions of the CRP contract and conservation plan. Violations could potentially result in hefty penalties including contract termination and refund of all contract related payments.

Properly maintained CRP cover can be very attractive if noxious weeds and invasive species are controlled and grasses and wildflowers are allowed to mature. Please scout your CRP fields before weeds go to seed. Contact your local FSA office for permission to spot treat your CRP grass cover during Ohio's primary nesting season (**March 1st – July 15th**). Plan to have your CRP cover assessed for the need of mid-contract management activities that are designed to enhance your CRP cover for wildlife. Mid-contract management is a contractual obligation that is outlined in your CRP-1 Appendix and conservation plan.

Contact your FSA office for more information on proper maintenance and management of CRP practice cover.

Dairy Producers Can Enroll Today to Protect Milk Production Margins

FSA recently announced that dairy producers can enroll for 2017 coverage in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy) starting July 1. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer.

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, 2016, for coverage in calendar year 2017. Participating farmers will remain in the program through 2018 and pay a minimum \$100 administrative fee each year. Producers have the option of selecting a different coverage level during open enrollment each year.

USDA has a web tool to help producers determine the level of coverage under the Margin Protection Program that will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The online resource, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine 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 needs, based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, Smartphone or tablet 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To complete enrollment, producers must make coverage elections during the enrollment period and pay the annual \$100 administrative fee that provides basic catastrophic protection that covers 90 percent of milk production at a \$4 margin coverage level. For additional premiums, operations can protect 25 to 90 percent of production history with margin coverage levels from \$4.50 to \$8, in 50 cent increments. Once enrolled, dairy operations are required to participate through 2018 by making coverage elections each year. Producers can mail the appropriate form to the producer's administrative county FSA office, along with applicable fees without necessitating a trip to the local FSA office. If electing higher coverage for 2017, dairy producers can either pay the premium in full at the time of enrollment or pay 100 percent of the premium by Sept. 1, 2017. Premium fees may be paid directly to FSA or producers can work with their milk handlers to remit premiums on their behalf.

Also beginning July 1, 2016, FSA will begin accepting applications for intergenerational transfers, allowing program participants who added an adult child, grandchild or spouse to the operation during calendar year 2014 or 2015, or between Jan. 1 and June 30, 2016, to increase production history by the new cows bought into the operation by the new family members. For intergenerational transfers occurring on or after July 1, 2016, notification to FSA must be made within 60 days of purchasing the additional cows.

Dairy operations enrolling in the new program must meet conservation compliance provisions and cannot participate in the Livestock Gross Margin Dairy Insurance Program.

For more information, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop your FSA County office to learn more about the Margin Protection Program.

FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal

The USDA FSA has launched a new tool to provide farmers and ranchers with remote access to their personal farm information using their home computers. Farmers and ranchers can now view, print or export their personal farm data all without visiting an FSA county office.

The program, known as **FSAfarm+**, provides you with secure access to view your personal FSA data, such as base and yields, Conservation Reserve Program data, other conservation program acreage, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation status information, field boundaries, farm imagery, name and address details, contact information and membership interest and shares in the operation. This data will be available in real time, at no cost to the producer and allow operators and owners to export and print farm records, including maps. Producers also can electronically share their data with a crop insurance agent from their own personal computer.

Farm operators and owners first will need "Level 2 eAuthentication" to access the webportal. This level of security ensures that personal information is protected for each user. Level 2 access can be obtained by going to www.eauth.usda.gov, completing the required information and then visiting your local FSA office to finalize access.

For more information on **FSAfarm+**, the customer self-service portal, contact your [FSA County office](#).

USDA Hosts County Committee Webinar

The USDA FSA is co-hosting a County Committee webinar with the Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) and Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food on Tuesday, July 12 at 2:00 p.m. EST.

The webinar will explain how county committees work and cover how to submit a nomination. Webinar attendees will hear current county committee members in New York, Nevada and Illinois talk about their personal experience serving on their local committee.

Producers who want to learn more about county committees are encouraged to attend the webinar.

To join the webinar, visit

<https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/schedule/participantLogin.do?er=keiisil1xv90&eom>. For audio, dial 866-740-1260 and enter the code 7206000 when prompted.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this webinar should contact Cynthia Cuellar at (202) 690-4727 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

USDA Expands Microloans to Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

The FSA offers farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans will be 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. Microloans have helped farmers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

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 FSA.

Individuals interested in applying for a FSA [microloan](#) or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact their local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official.

Dates to Remember

July 15 ---- Final certification date to report burley tobacco; cabbage planted through May 31; corn, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, spring oats, potatoes, popcorn, sugar beets, tomatoes and other crops.

Aug. 1 ---- **Last day** to file County Committee Nomination forms.

Aug. 1 ---- **Last day** to enroll in ARC/PLC coverage for 2016.

Aug. 31 -- **Deadline** to request re-enrollment of continuous CRP contracts expiring Sept. 30, 2016.

Sept. 5 ---- Labor Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Sept. 30 -- **Last day** for dairy producers to make elections for Milk Price Protection Program.

Oct. 1 ---- Deadline to obtain 2017 NAP coverage for Winter Wheat, Rye, Barley and Speltz.

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