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Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

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

From The Desk of the State Director

I hope this email newsletter finds you well.

With the near completion of the fall harvest, one must begin planning for the next crop year. The 2014 farm bill authorized some new farm programs that may be interest to you. In particular, the Agriculture Revenue Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) require your attention with base allocation and program participation selection. The new Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP) also has a signup date that is fast approaching. Please contact your local FSA office for further information or consider attending one of the Farm Bill informational meetings being held throughout the state.

On behalf of Wisconsin agriculture, thank you for your work.

Brad Pfaff , State Executive Director

Producers Invited to Attend Farm Bill Meetings

FSA Offices across the State are holding informational meetings on programs enacted by the 2014 Farm Bill. These include the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Programs, Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers and many others.

A list of all meetings that are being held across the State is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/wi .

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in the meeting/event/function should contact the FSA County Executive Director for the County in which the meeting is scheduled or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 by no later than three days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Report Perennial Forages & Fall Seeded Crops to FSA by November 17th

Producers are reminded of the requirement to report their perennial forages and fall seeded crops by November 17, 2014 to their FSA county office to meet FSA program eligibility requirements. FSA and the Risk Management Agency (RMA), which oversees the Federal Crop Insurance Program, now have common acreage reporting dates. Due to this, perennial forages and fall seeded small grains for harvest in 2015 must be reported to FSA by November 17, 2014.

Perennial forages include alfalfa, alfalfa grass mixtures, red clover, and others that are intended for harvest in 2015. This also includes pasture acreage and cover crops. Fall seeded small grains include winter wheat, rye and others. Producers who are interested in participating in any 2015 USDA farm programs or just want to keep their acreage history up to date need to report the location, acreage and planting date of the applicable crop.

Producers with crop insurance must also report their applicable forages and fall seeded small grains to their insurance company.

Late-filed provisions may be available to producers who are unable to meet the reporting deadline as required. Filing an acreage report on these crops after the November 17, 2014 deadline will require the payment of a late-filing fee which amounts to a minimum of \$46.00 per FSA established farm number.

Producers should contact their county FSA office immediately to make an appointment to complete perennial forage and fall seeded crop acreage reporting by the November 17th deadline. More information on FSA programs is at www.fsa.usda.gov/wi.

FSA Reminds Producers of Upcoming Important Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Deadlines

FSA reminds producers interested in participating in the 2015 Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) of the upcoming application deadline dates that must be met for NAP qualification. The NAP program is designed to cover losses caused by damaging weather conditions.

November 20, 2014 is the application closing date for perennial crops of fruit and other crops such as apples, pears, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, honey, maple sap, asparagus and other perennial crops.

The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include buy-up protection for 2015. Details regarding the buy up coverage options are still being developed.

Until these buy-up options are available, producers are encouraged to enroll in NAP under the basic coverage, 50 percent of the yield and 55 percent of the established price, by the applicable crop application deadlines. The NAP service fee for this coverage is \$250 per crop per county not to exceed \$750 per producer and not to exceed \$1875 nationally.

A waiver of the basic service fees for NAP coverage is available for limited resource farmers (income determination based on total household income and income from farming, beginning farmers (someone is considered a beginning farmer if they have not operated or not substantially participated in the operation of a farm for more than 10 years) and socially disadvantaged (SDA) farmers (someone is considered socially disadvantaged if they are a member of a group whose members have been subject to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identities as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) Females are considered SDA producers.

In addition, when available, the premiums for buy-up coverage will be reduced by 50 percent for limited

resource, beginning farmers and SDA farmers.

Losses are generally determined by the percentage of loss compared to the producer's actual yield history.

Producers interested in NAP are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for additional information or to schedule an appointment to apply for coverage. Visit the Wisconsin FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/wi for more details.

USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Underway

USDA encourages farmers to make their voices heard by voting in the upcoming Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee election. USDA has mailed ballots for the 2014 elections to eligible producers across the country. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA office by the December 1, 2014 deadline to ensure that their vote is counted. It is also very important that the ballot be signed as indicated or it won't be counted.

FSA County Committee members provide an important link between the local agricultural community and USDA. Farmers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity support programs; conservation programs; indemnity and disaster programs; emergency programs and eligibility. County committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters who do not receive ballots in the coming weeks may pick one up at their local FSA office. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than December 1, 2014. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office January 1, 2015.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2014 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. You may also contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA office. Visit <http://go.usa.gov/pYV3> to find an FSA office near you.

USDA Extends Dairy Margin Protection Program Deadline

Enrollment Continues Through December 5; Comments Accepted Until December 15

USDA has extended the deadline for enrollment into the Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers for 2014 and/or 2015. Farmers now have until December 5, 2014 to enroll in the voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill.

MPP-Dairy offers protection to dairy producers when the difference (the margin) between the all-milk price and national average feed cost falls below a certain producer selected amount.

Eligible producers may purchase coverage for their dairy operation by paying an annual administrative fee of \$100 and a premium, as applicable, for higher levels of coverage. Producers in the dairy operation will have to select a desired coverage level ranging from \$4.00 to \$8.00, in \$0.50 increments and a desired coverage percentage level ranging from 25 to 90 percent, in 5 percent increments. Producers will also have to decide whether or not to participate in the MPP-Dairy Program or the Livestock Gross Margin program administered by the Risk Management Agency (RMA), but they will not be allowed to participate in both.

Producers are encouraged to use the online Web resource at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. The secure website can be accessed via computer, smartphone or tablet.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also extended the opportunity for public comments on both the Margin Protection Program and the Dairy Product Donation Program until December 15, 2014.

Comments can be submitted to USDA via the regulations.gov website at <http://go.usa.gov/GJSA>.

USDA Releases New State-by-State "Made in Rural America" Report

As part of the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) commitment to strengthening rural economies, Secretary Tom Vilsack announced a new state-by-state "Made in Rural America" report illustrating the impact of USDA investments in rural communities. Each state factsheet highlights specific USDA investments in rural businesses, manufacturing, energy, water and other infrastructure development. They also outline how USDA is helping rural communities attract businesses and families by investing in housing and broadband.

These fact sheets reflect Secretary Vilsack's efforts to strengthen the "four pillars" of a new economy in rural America: developing a robust bio-based economy; promoting exports and production agriculture fueled by increased productivity and research; encouraging conservation including land management, stewardship and outdoor recreational opportunities; and building a strong local and regional food system to harness entrepreneurial innovation and help small and medium-sized family farms succeed in rural America.

The report's state by state fact sheets are available at www.usda.gov/opportunities.

Livestock Disaster Assistance Sign-up Underway

These livestock disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after October 1, 2011.

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, 2015. 33 counties in Wisconsin are eligible for LFP in 2012. No counties in Wisconsin met the drought eligibility conditions required for the program in 2013 or 2014.

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 in calendar year 2014 should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

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

The enrollment deadline for the 2015 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) is November 1, 2015. The deadline for 2012, 2013 and 2014 ELAP has already passed.

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. For 2015 program year losses, a notice of loss must be filed by the earlier of; 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the participant, or November 1, 2015. An application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2015.

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.

USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Key Dates for New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs

USDA announced key dates for farm owners and producers to keep in mind regarding the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). 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.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

- Through February 27, 2015: Land owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- November 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015: Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- October 2015: Payments for 2014 crop year, if earned.

USDA helped create online tools to assist in the decision process, allowing farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. The new tools are now available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Covered commodities include barley, corn, grain sorghum, oats, soybeans, sunflower seed, wheat and others.

Producers can contact their local FSA office for more information or to schedule an appointment.

USDA Expands Access to Credit to Help More Beginning and Family Farmers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced improvements to farm loan programs by expanding eligibility and increasing lending limits to help more beginning and family farmers. As part of this effort, USDA is raising the borrowing limit for the microloan program from \$35,000 to \$50,000; simplify the lending processes; updating required "farming experience" to include other valuable experiences; and expanding eligible business entities to reflect changes in the way family farms are owned and operated. The changes become effective November 7.

The microloan changes will allow beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to [small and midsized farming operations](#).

In addition to farm related experience, other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm loan eligibility such as operation or management of a non-farm business, leadership positions while serving in the military, or advanced education in an agricultural field. Also, individuals who own farmland under a different legal entity operating the farm now may be eligible for loans administered by FSA. Producers will have an opportunity to share suggestions on the microloan process, and the definitions of farming experience and business structures through December 8, 2014, the public open comment period.

For more information on farm loans, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local Farm Service Agency office.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Contact your local FSA office if you have any questions.

Dates to Remember

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).

November 17th: Deadline to timely file 2015 acreage reports on perennial forages and fall-seeded grains

November 20th: Deadline to apply for 2015 NAP coverage on perennial crops

December 1st: Deadline for completed County Committee election ballots to be returned or postmarked

December 5th: Deadline to enroll for coverage in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers for 2014 and/or 2015

December 31st: Deadline to file a 2014 crop report without a fee assessed

January 2nd: Deadline to timely file 2015 acreage report and colony inventory for honey

January 30th: Deadline to apply for assistance from the LIP program for eligible livestock losses from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014

January 30th: Deadline to apply for assistance in eligible counties for the 2012 Livestock Forage Disaster Program

January 30th: Deadline to request early termination for certain CRP contacts

January 31st: Deadline to apply for assistance from the TAP program for eligible tree losses from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014

February 1st: Deadline to timely file 2015 acreage report for maple sap

February 27th: Deadline for ARC/PLC base reallocations and/or yield updates on an FSA farm number basis

March 16th: Deadline to apply for 2015 NAP coverage on spring planted crops

March 31st: Deadline for ARC or PLC election on an FSA farm number basis

Ongoing:

- Continuous Conservation Reserve program enrollment
- Farm Storage Facility Loan program applications

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