



# MEMO

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural  
Services

Farm Service  
Agency

Gray/Roberts FSA  
PO Box 1621  
Pampa, Texas  
79066-1621

806-665-6561  
844-325-7528 fax

**To:** (b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

**Date:** April 4, 2017

**From:** Leasha R. Hobbs, Program Technician

**Subject:** CRP Contract Revision

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I have enclosed the following forms for signature. I have included these forms for you as an (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) and for the (b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

CCC-931C

This form certifies that adjusted gross income does not exceed the allowed limits. Please answer questions 5-8, sign and date where indicated.

AD 1026: As a producer this form certifies that you will adhere to any conservation plan that is in effect.

If you have any questions let me know.

Leasha R. Hobbs  
Gray/Roberts County  
Lead Program Technician  
[Leasha.Hobbs@tx.usda.gov](mailto:Leasha.Hobbs@tx.usda.gov)



April 20, 2017

Farm Service Agency

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

Gray/Roberts County  
PO Box 1621  
Pampa, Texas 79065  
806-665-6561  
806-665-7796 (fax)

We had to update the CRP contract to include all owners on the contract. Please sign in section 12-4 under your name and return via fax, email or regular post.

If you have any questions, please call.

Thanks,

Janae Albus  
Program Technician  
Gray/Roberts County  
Farm Service Agency  
PO Box 1621  
Pampa, Texas 79066-1621  
[janae.albus@tx.usda.gov](mailto:janae.albus@tx.usda.gov)  
806-665-6561  
1-844-325-7528 (fax)



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Gray/Roberts FSA  
PO Box 1621  
Pampa, Texas  
79066-1621

806-665-6561  
844-325-7528 fax

To: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

Date: March 10, 2017

From: Leasha R. Hobbs, Program Technician

Subject: CRP Contract Revision

Joe,

I have enclosed the forms necessary to update the CRP contract on (b) (3) in Gray County. There will be two steps to this revision because the deceased participants (b) (3) died in two different payment years.

1. The 2016 contract will be revised from August 12, 2016 (date of (b) (6) death) until September 30, 2016.
2. The 2017 contract will be revised from October 1, 2016 until November 10, 2016 (date of (b) (6) death.)

Please read the following instructions and return forms as soon as possible.

**When signing for (b) (3) or for the estate, you will enter *executor* in the representative capacity box or beside your name if a representative box is not provided.**

CRP-1: This is the updated CRP Contract. Please sign where indicated. There are two versions (b) (3) for 2016 and (b) (3) for 2017.

CCC-902: This form addresses your basic farming operation and establishes eligibility for the USDA programs. Read over the form and sign where indicated.

CCC-931C: There are two forms one for 2016 and 2017.

This form certifies that adjusted gross income for the participant does not exceed the allowed limits. Please answer questions 5-8, sign and date where indicated.

AD 1026: As a producer this form certifies that you will adhere to any conservation plan that is in effect.

FSA-570: Read, sign and date where indicated.

Conservation Plan: Please read and sign where indicated. Enclosed one for 2016 revision and one for 2017 revision.

I have also included an appendix that includes basic information about the CRP program.

If you have any questions let me know.

Leasha R. Hobbs  
Gray/Roberts County  
Lead Program Technician  
[Leasha.Hobbs@tx.usda.gov](mailto:Leasha.Hobbs@tx.usda.gov)



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Gray/Roberts FSA  
PO Box 1621  
Pampa, Texas  
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806-665-6561  
844-325-7528 fax

To: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

Date: March 10, 2017

From: Leasha R. Hobbs, Program Technician

Subject: CRP Contract Revision

Diann,

I have enclosed the forms necessary to update the CRP contract on (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) in Gray County. There will be two steps to this revision because the deceased participants died in two different payment years.

1. The 2016 contract will be revised from August 12, 2016 (date of (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) death) until September 30, 2016.
2. The 2017 contract will be revised from October 1, 2016 until November 10, 2016 (date of (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) death.)

Please read the following instructions and return forms as soon as possible.

**When signing for the estate, you will enter *executor* in the representative capacity box or beside your name if a representative box is not provided.**

CRP-1: This is the updated CRP Contract. Please sign where indicated. There are two versions (b) (3) for 2016 and (b) (3) for 2017.

CCC-902: This form addresses your basic farming operation and establishes eligibility for the USDA programs. Read over the form and sign where indicated.

CCC-931C: There are two forms one for 2016 and 2017. Each member will sign their own CCC-931C **power of attorney signatures are not accepted.**

This form certifies that adjusted gross income for the participant does not exceed the allowed limits. Please answer questions 5-8, sign and date where indicated.

AD 1026: As a producer this form certifies that you will adhere to any conservation plan that is in effect.

FSA-570: Read, sign and date where indicated.

Conservation Plan: Please read and sign where indicated. Enclosed one for 2016 revision and one for 2017 revision.

I have also included an appendix that includes basic information about the CRP program.

If you have any questions let me know.

Leasha R. Hobbs  
Gray/Roberts County  
Lead Program Technician



United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural Services

Hemphill County Farm Service Agency  
814 S 2<sup>nd</sup> Suite A  
Canadian, TX 79014  
Phone: 806-323-8371/ Fax 844 325 7552

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear (b) (3) (B), (b) (6):

You made the request on March 20<sup>th</sup> to use your CRP to (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) due to the wildfires on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The contract number (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) is the contract you requested. Your request is approved and you may start using this land as of March 30, 2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelsey Lee".

Kelsey Lee  
Acting County Executive Director  
Wheeler County Farm Service Agency

**USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER**



United States Department of Agriculture

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Farm Service Agency

April 25, 2017

Hemphill County FSA  
814 S 2<sup>nd</sup> Suite A  
Canadian, TX 79014  
806-323-6752

Dear (b) (3)  
(B), (b)

You made the request on April 24 to use your CRP to (b) (3) due to the wildfires that impacted Hemphill County on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The contract number (b) (3) is the contract you requested to use. Your request is approved and you may start using this land as of April 26, 2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelsey Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelsey Lee  
PTIC  
Wheeler/Hemphill County



United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural Services

Hemphill County Farm Service Agency  
814 S 2<sup>nd</sup> Suite A  
Canadian, TX 79014  
Phone 806-323-8371 ext 2  
Fax 844 325 7552

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017

Dear : (b) (3) :  
(R) (h) :

You made the request on March 27<sup>th</sup> to use your CRP to (b) (3) due to the wildfires on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The contract number (b) (3) is the contract you requested to use. Your request is approved and you may start using this land as of March 31, 2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelsey Lee".

Kelsey Lee  
Acting County Executive Director  
Wheeler County Farm Service Agency

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United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural Services

Hemphill County Farm Service Agency  
814 S 2<sup>nd</sup> Suite A  
Canadian, TX 79014  
Phone: 806-323-8371/ Fax 844 325 7552

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear (b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

You made the request on March 16<sup>th</sup> to use your CRP to (b) (3) (R), (b) (3) (H) due to the wildfires on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The contract number (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) is the contract you requested. Your request is approved and you may start using this land as of March 30, 2017.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Lee  
Acting County Executive Director  
Wheeler County Farm Service Agency

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United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural Services

Wheeler/Hemphill County Farm Service  
Agency  
1410 S. Alan L Bean Blvd - PO Box 545  
Wheeler, TX 79096

April 6, 2017

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

RE: CRP Contract # (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) for

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

Dear (b) (3) (B),  
(b) (6)

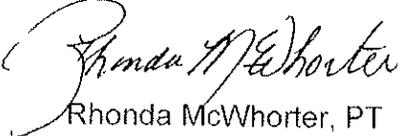
Our deepest sympathy to you in the loss of (b) (6)

Due to their deaths, we need additional paperwork regarding the distribution of property. Please provide a copy of the recorded probated will, letters of executor/administrator or any other recorded court document that would show how all the property was distributed. I know we talked on the phone several months ago regarding the situation on (b) (6) heir but as of this date we still have not received the necessary documents. When land owned by a participant has CRP on that land and they pass away it is very important that the CRP revision be made as soon as possible. (b) (6) passed away going on 9 months ago so we really need to get those revisions made ASAP. (b) (6) passed away 2 months ago so those contracts are really needing to be changed ASAP.

You have 60 days from the date of this letter to respond. In the event this is not taken care of in that amount of time, all CRP contracts will become null and void.

Your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

  
Rhonda McWhorter, PT



United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural Services

Wheeler/Hemphill County Farm Service  
Agency  
1410 S. Alan L. Bean Blvd - PO Box 545  
Wheeler, TX 79096

April 6, 2017

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

RE: CRP Contract # (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) for (b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

Dear (b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

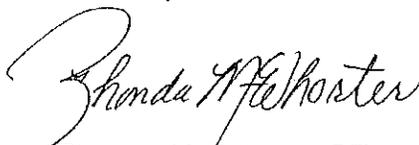
Our deepest sympathy to you in the loss of (b) (6)

Due to his death, we need additional paperwork regarding the distribution of property. Please provide a copy of the recorded probated will, letters of executor/administrator or any other recorded court document that would show how all the property was distributed.

You have 60 days from the date of this letter to respond. In the event this is not taken care of in that amount of time, all CRP contracts will become null and void.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

  
Rhonda McWhorter, PT

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER AND LENDER

# Texas FSA Stands with You

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers disaster assistance programs to assist farmers and ranchers impacted by wildfires.

## Disaster Assistance Programs

### Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP):

Provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters (includes native grass for grazing).

- Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops
- Notice of Loss must be filed within 15 calendar days of when loss is apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date

### Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

Pays eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event.

- Notice of Loss must be filed within 30 calendar days of when livestock loss is apparent

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

Provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions not adequately addressed by other FSA disaster programs. ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed, purchased or mechanically harvested forage, or feedstuffs intended as feed for eligible livestock.

- Harvested forage must be baled to be eligible; forage that is only cut, raked, or windrowed is not eligible
- Covers up to 150 lost grazing days if producer was forced to remove livestock from grazing pasture due to wildfire
- Covers beekeepers' beehive losses (physical structure) if hive was destroyed by natural disaster; flooding, high winds, tornadoes
- Notice of Loss must be filed within 30 calendar days of when loss is apparent

**Emergency Loan (EM) Program:** Available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under primary or contiguous disaster designation. These low-interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses.

**Tree Assistance Program (TAP):** Assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub, and vine losses due to natural disasters.

### Emergency Conservation Program (ECP):

Funding to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.

### Emergency Use of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Acres:

Check with local FSA office for authorization/eligibility.

**HayNet:** Internet-based Hay and Grazing Ad Service allowing producers to share 'Need or Have Hay' and 'Need or Have' grazing land announcements.

## Documenting Livestock, Feed & Grazing Loss

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock losses due to eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including:

- **Documentation of number, kind, type, and weight** range of dead livestock, supplement by photographs or video records of ownership and losses, if possible
- **Render truck receipts** by kind, type, and weight; important to document prior to disposal
- **Beginning inventory** supported by birth records or purchase receipts
- **Other source documentation** from Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Natural Resources, or other sources to substantiate death due to eligible loss condition
- Documentation that **livestock were removed from grazing pastures** due to eligible adverse weather or loss condition
- **Costs of transporting** livestock feed to eligible livestock, such as receipts for equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal
- **Feed purchase receipts** if feed supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- **Gallons of water** transported to livestock due to water shortages.



Texas Farm Service Agency  
2405 Texas Ave. South  
College Station, Texas 77840

Official Business

## Important Wildfire Recovery Assistance Information

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### Adjusted Gross Income/Payment Limitations

#### Adjusted Gross Income (AGI):

- AGI limitation of \$900,000 to be eligible for disaster assistance\*\*\*

\*\*\*Does not apply to *Emergency Conservation Program*

#### Payment Limitations:

- \$125,000 Payment Limit per program year for LIP, LFP, and ELAP **combined**
- \$125,000 Payment Limit per program year for NAP
- \$125,000 Payment Limit per program year for TAP
- \$200,000 Payment Limit per person or legal entity per designation

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### Make an Appointment

To ensure maximum use of your time and our full attention for your important business needs, please call your local office to set an appointment before you visit us.

When you call, we can set an appointment time that works best for you, as well as discuss any records or documentation that you may need to bring with you to your appointment.

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### Helpful Online Resources

**FSA Service Center Locator** - <http://offices.usda.gov>

**USDA** - [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

**Texas FSA** - [www.fsa.usda.gov/tx](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tx)

**FSA Disaster Assistance** - [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster)

**HayNet** - [www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet)

May 2017



## Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# BULLETIN

May 2017

### *GovDelivery*

- [Sonny Perdue Sworn in as 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture](#)
- [USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Gray/Roberts County Producers](#)
- [Maintaining Good Credit History](#)

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## Gray/Roberts FSA Updates

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**Gray/Roberts FSA Office**  
12125 Frederic  
P.O. Box 1621  
Pampa, Texas 79066

Phone: 806-665-6561  
Fax: 1-844-325-7528

**County Executive Director:**  
Eddie L. Winegeart

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Mike Heck

**Program Technicians:**  
Leasha Hobbs  
Janae Albus

**County Committee:**  
Tyler Rankin  
Lynn Burger  
James Shaw  
Frederick Gordon III  
J.T. Rogers

## Sonny Perdue Sworn in as 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Sonny Perdue was sworn in as the 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by fellow Georgian and Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Clarence Thomas in a brief ceremony on April 25 at the Supreme Court building. Perdue grew up on a dairy and diversified row crop farm in Bonaire, Georgia. Being uniquely qualified as a former farmer, agribusinessman, veterinarian, state legislator and governor of Georgia, he has experienced the agriculture industry from every possible perspective throughout his life. As secretary, Perdue says he will champion the concerns of farmers, ranchers, foresters and producers, and will work tirelessly to solve the issues facing our farm families. Perdue's policies as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture will be guided by four principles which will inform his decisions. First, he will maximize the ability of the men and women of America's agriculture and agribusiness sector to create jobs, to produce and sell the foods and fiber that feed and clothe the world, and to reap the earned reward of their labor. Second, he will prioritize customer service every day for American taxpayers and consumers. Third, as Americans expect a safe and secure food supply, USDA will continue to serve in the critical role of ensuring the food we put on the table to feed our families meets the strict safety standards we've established. And fourth, Perdue will always remember that America's agricultural bounty comes directly from the land. For more information about Secretary Perdue, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

## USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Gray/Roberts County Producers

Gray/Roberts County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director Eddie Winegeart announced that farmers and ranchers in Texas now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone. Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates. Producers can text [TXGray](#) to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from Gray/Roberts County. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time. Please contact your local FSA office at 806-665-6561 if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the new text message option.

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## Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow. Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business. Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts.

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report. For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Eddie Winegeart](#) at 806-665-6561 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).

April 2017



Farm Service Agency

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**BULLETIN**

- [USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Gray/Roberts County Producers](#)
- [Enrollment Period for 2017 Safety Net Coverage Continues Through Aug. 1](#)
- [ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance](#)

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## Gray/Roberts County FSA Updates

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**Gray/Roberts FSA Office**  
12125 Frederic  
P.O. Box 1621  
Pampa, Texas 79066

Phone: 806-665-6561  
Fax: 1-844-325-7528

**County Executive Director:**  
Eddie L. Winegeart

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Mike Heck

**Program Technicians:**  
Leasha Hobbs  
Janae Albus

**County Committee:**  
Tyler Rankin  
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James Shaw  
Frederick Gordon III  
J.T. Rogers

### USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Gray/Roberts County Producers

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates. Gray/Roberts County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director, Eddie Winegeart announced that farmers and ranchers in Texas now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone. Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor, or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events, or other time-sensitive updates. Producers can subscribe by texting **TXGray** to FSPANOW (372-669) to receive local text message alerts from Gray/Roberts County. Standard wireless carrier text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for your particular data plan details. Participants may unsubscribe at any time. Please contact your local FSA office at 806-665-6561 if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the new text message option.

## Enrollment Period for 2017 Safety Net Coverage Continues Through Aug. 1

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit their local FSA office to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017. Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period. The ARC and PLC 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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## ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

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

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Eddie Winegeart](#) at 806-665-6561 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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March 2017



Farm Service Agency

**GovDelivery** Electronic  
News Service



**BULLETIN**

- [How to Document Wildfire Losses](#)
- [USDA Offers Wildfire Recovery Assistance](#)

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## Gray/Roberts County FSA Updates

### Gray/Roberts County

#### FSA Office

12125 E. Frederic Ave.  
Pampa, TX 79066

Phone: 806-537-3533  
Fax: 1-844-325-7528

#### County Executive Director:

Eddie L. Winegeart

#### Farm Loan Manager:

Mike Heck  
806-435-6597

#### Program Technicians:

Leasha Hobbs  
Janae Albus

#### County Committee:

Tyler Rankin  
Lynn Burger  
James Shaw  
Frederick Gordon III  
J.T. Rogers

#### Next County Committee

Meeting: March 15th @ 9:30

### How to Document Wildfire Losses

Producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to recent wildfires may be eligible for disaster assistance programs through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs.

To participate in LIP, producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. To participate in ELAP, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock losses due to the eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Rendering truck receipts by kind, type and weight - important to document prior to disposal;
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Documentation from Animal Plant Health Inspection Service,

Department of Natural Resources, or other sources to substantiate eligible death losses due to an eligible loss condition;

- Documentation that livestock were removed from grazing pastures due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition;
- Costs of transporting livestock feed to eligible livestock, such as receipts for equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal;
- Feed purchase receipts if feed supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Number of gallons of water transported to livestock due to water shortages.

For more information on these programs and documentation requirements, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster) or contact your local FSA office.

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## USDA Offers Wildfire Recovery Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts following wildfires or other qualifying natural disasters.

Available programs and loans include:

- **Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including excessive wind and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops. A notice of loss must be filed within 15 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by wildfires, hurricanes, floods, blizzards, tropical storms, tornados, lightning, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disasters including excessive wind and qualifying drought.
- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** - provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed that was purchased or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for the producer's eligible livestock. In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled; forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to wildfire and for beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds and tornadoes. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- **Emergency Loan Program** – available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Presidential or Secretarial disaster designation. These low interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses.
- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.
- **HayNet** - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for

land to graze. [www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet).

For more information on these programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster) or contact your local FSA office.

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Leasha Hobbs at 806-537-3533 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).

May 2017



Farm Service Agency

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**BULLETIN**

[[VIEW\_THIS]]

- [Wheeler County Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates](#)
- [USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Wheeler/Hemphill County Producers](#)
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#)

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## Wheeler/Hemphill County FSA Updates

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**Wheeler County FSA Office**  
1410 S Alan Bean Blvd  
Wheeler, TX 79096

**Phone: 806-826-5578**

**Fax: 844-325-7552**

**Acting County Executive Director:**  
Kelsey Lee

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Mike Heck

**Program Technician:**  
Rhonda McWhorter

**County Committee:**  
Marcus Hardcastle  
Ike Finsterwald  
Sidney Mills

**Next County Committee Meeting:** 5/9/2017 @ 1:00

**Hemphill County FSA Office**  
814 S 2nd Street  
Canadian, TX 79014

### Wheeler County Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates

The USDA Wheeler County Farm Service Agency (FSA) office will be closed on May 29 in observance of Memorial Day.

If you were affected by the fires on March 23, 2017 in Wheeler County and would like to apply for wildfire recovery assistance for replacing or repairing fence, then please contact the Wheeler County FSA office to make an appointment. **May 31, 2017** is the deadline to apply for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) in Wheeler County.

**Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.

At this time we are still waiting on a declaration of disaster for the Roberts County fire on that date. As soon as that declaration is made, a bulletin will be sent out with the deadlines to sign up for recovery assistance programs.

**May 15, 2017:** Final date to report oats

**July 15, 2017:** Final date to report spring planted crops

**August 1, 2017:** Final date to sign up for ARCPLC

Contact or visit the Wheeler/Hemphill County FSA office for a full customer calendar with program deadlines, NAP crop closure dates, observed holidays and more. The Wheeler/Hemphill County office can be reached at 806-826-5578 or 806-323-8371.

Phone: 806-323-8371

**Program Technician:**  
Morgan Bourquin

**County Committee:**  
Kirk Flowers  
Dale Jenkins

**Next County Committee Meeting:** TBA

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## USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Wheeler/Hemphill County Producers

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates

Wheeler/Hemphill County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Acting County Executive Director, Kelsey Lee, announced that farmers and ranchers in Texas now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor, or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events, or other time-sensitive updates.

Producers can subscribe by texting TxWheeler or TxHemphill to FSANOW (372-669) to receive local text message alerts from Wheeler/Hemphill County. Standard wireless carrier text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for your particular data plan details. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Please contact your local FSA office at 806-826-5578 or 806-323-8371 if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the new text message option.

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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 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 will 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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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Kelsey Lee at 806-826-5578 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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APRIL 2017



Farm Service Agency

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**BULLETIN**

[[VIEW\_THIS]]

- [Upcoming Disaster Assistance Program Deadlines](#)
- [USDA Offers Wildfire Recovery Assistance](#)
- [How to Document Wildfire Losses](#)

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## Wheeler/Hemphill County FSA Updates

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**Wheeler County FSA Office**  
1410 S Alan Bean Blvd  
Wheeler, TX 79096

Phone: 806-826-5578  
Fax: 844-325-7552

**Acting County Executive Director:**  
Kelsey Lee

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Mike Heck

**Program Technicians:**  
Rhonda McWhorter

**County Committee:**  
Marcus Hardcastle  
Ike Finsterwald  
Sidney Mills

**Next County Committee Meeting:**  
April 11, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m.

**Hemphill County FSA Office**  
814 S2nd Street  
Canadian, TX 79014

### Upcoming Disaster Assistance Program Deadlines

**Wheeler County Disaster Program deadlines:**

**April 6, 2017:** Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

**April 6, 2017:** Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

**April 20, 2017:** Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

**Hemphill County Disaster Program deadlines:**

**April 10, 2017:** Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

**April 10, 2017:** Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

**April 20, 2017:** Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

Phone: 806-323-8371

**Program Technician:**  
Morgan Bourquin

**County Committee:**  
Kirk Flowers  
Dale Jenkins  
Sherry Hensley (Advisor)

**Next County Committee Meeting:**  
April 13, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m.

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## USDA Offers Wildfire Recovery Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts following wildfires or other qualifying natural disasters.

Available programs and loans include:

- **Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including excessive wind and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops. A notice of loss must be filed within 15 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.
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- **HayNet** - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze. [www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet).

For more information on these programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster) or contact your local FSA office.

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## How to Document Wildfire Losses

Producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to recent wildfires may be eligible for disaster assistance programs through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs.

To participate in LIP, producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. To participate in ELAP, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock losses due to the eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Rendering truck receipts by kind, type and weight - important to document prior to disposal;
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Documentation from Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Natural Resources, or other sources to substantiate eligible death losses due to an eligible loss condition;
- Documentation that livestock were removed from grazing pastures due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition;
- Costs of transporting livestock feed to eligible livestock, such as receipts for equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal;
- Feed purchase receipts if feed supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Number of gallons of water transported to livestock due to water shortages.

For more information on these programs and documentation requirements, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster) or contact your local FSA office.

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Kelsey Lee](#) at 806-826-5578 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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March 2017



Farm Service Agency

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**BULLETIN**

[[VIEW\_THIS]]

- [Payment Limitations by Program](#)
- [Wheeler/Hemphill County is Eligible for Emergency Loans](#)
- [Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations](#)

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## Wheeler/Hemphill County FSA Updates

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### Wheeler County FSA Office

1410 S Alan Bean Blvd  
Wheeler, TX 79096

Phone: 806-826-5578

Fax: 844-325-7552

### County Executive Director:

Kelsey Lee - Acting CED

### Farm Loan Manager:

Mike Heck

### Program Technicians:

Rhonda McWhorter

### County Committee:

Marcus Hardcastle  
Sidney Mills  
Ike Finsterwald

### Next County Committee

Meeting: March 14, 2017 @ 1:00

### Hemphill County FSA Office

814 S 2nd Street  
Canadian, TX 79014

## Payment Limitations by Program

The 2014 Farm Bill established a maximum dollar amount for each program that can be received annually, directly or indirectly, by each person or legal entity. Payment limitations vary by program for 2014 through 2018.

Below is an overview of payment limitations by program.

### Commodity and Price Support Programs

The annual limitation for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Loan Gains is \$125,000 each.

### Conservation Programs

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payment and incentive payment is limited to \$50,000. CRP contracts approved before Oct. 1, 2008, may exceed the limitation, subject to payment limitation rules in effect on the date of contract approval.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) has an annual limit of \$200,000 per disaster event. The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) has an annual limit of \$500,000 per disaster event.

### Disaster Assistance Programs

The annual limitation of \$125,000 applies to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Tree Assistance Program (TAP). The total payments received under ELAP, LFP and LIP may

Phone: 806-323-8371

not exceed \$125,000. A separate limitation applies to TAP payments.

**Program Technician:**  
Morgan Bourquin

Payment limitations also apply to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. Contact your local NRCS office more information.

**County Committee:**  
Kirk Flowers  
Dale Jenkins  
Sherry Hensley (Advisor)

For more information on FSA payment limitations by program, visit [https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2015/payment\\_eligibility\\_payment\\_limitations.pdf](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2015/payment_eligibility_payment_limitations.pdf)

**Next COC Meeting: TBA**

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## Wheeler/Hemphill County is Eligible for Emergency Loans

Wheeler/ Hemphill County was declared a contiguous disaster due to drought and heat using the streamlined Secretarial Disaster Designation process. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

The streamlined disaster designation process issues a drought disaster declaration when a county has experienced a drought intensity value of at least a D2 (severe drought) level for eight consecutive weeks based on the U.S. Drought Monitor during the crop year.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county. Agricultural producers can play a vital role in this process.

If you have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster you may submit a request to your local FSA county office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the county office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster).

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April 2017



Farm Service Agency

# GovDelivery Electronic News Service

## NEWSLETTER



- [USDA Offers Targeted Funding for Underserved Groups, Beginning Farmers](#)
- [Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers](#)
- [Maintaining Good Credit History](#)
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#)
- [Baled Hay and the Imported Fire Ant](#)
- ['Actively Engaged' Requirement for Non-Family Joint Operations, Entities](#)
- [FSA Encourages Reporting Prevented Planting, Failed Acres](#)
- [MAL, LDP Policy Changes for 2014-2018 Crop Years](#)
- [Tree Assistance Program Application Deadline](#)
- [CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover](#)
- [USDA Makes it Easier to Transfer Land to Next Generation of Farmers, Ranchers](#)
- [USDA Expands Grasslands Conservation Program to Small-Scale Livestock Producers](#)

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## FSA News - Lone Star State Edition

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### Farm Service Agency Texas State Office

2405 Texas Ave. South  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Phone: 979-680-5151

**State Executive Director:**  
Erasmio (Eddie) Trevino,  
Acting

**State Committee:**  
Debra Barrett  
Armando Mandujano  
Wesley Ratcliff  
Glen A. Rod

**Executive Officer:**  
Erasmio (Eddie) Trevino

### USDA Offers Targeted Funding for Underserved Groups, Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for

**Division Chiefs:**

Ronda Arnett  
Gaye De Leon, Acting  
Chris Morris  
Darren Owens  
David Sullivan

**FSA County Committees:**

[Complete Texas FSA COC  
Online Meeting List](#)

To find contact information for  
your local office go to  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/tx](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tx)

FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans).

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To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs, targeted underserved, and beginning farmer guidelines, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans).

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## Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution. PAD may be useful for borrowers who use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines>. Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a "filter" on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three month period, the preauthorized debt agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date. For more information about PAD, contact your local FSA office.

---

## Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score:

- Timely payment of bills; Use automatic payments, automated reminders
- Pay down existing debt
- Keep your credit card balances low
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report. For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.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 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 will 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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## Baled Hay and the Imported Fire Ant

If you buy, sell, or produce baled hay, check out USDA's new factsheet titled "Questions and Answers: Moving Baled Hay From Areas Under Quarantine for Imported Fire Ant." This publication contains useful information for farmers, ranchers, hay growers, and suppliers as they respond to recent wildfires in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Its goal is to help support commerce and the movement of hay, while guarding against the further spread of the imported fire ant. Click [here](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/baled-hay) to open the factsheet. The Web address is <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/baled-hay>.

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## 'Actively Engaged' Requirement for Non-Family Joint Operations, Entities

Many Farm Service Agency programs require all program participants, either individuals or legal entities, to be "actively engaged in farming." This means participants provide a significant contribution to the farming operation, whether it is capital, land, equipment, active personal labor and/or management. For entities, each partner, stockholder or member with an ownership interest, must contribute active personal labor and/or management to the operation on a regular basis.

The 2014 Farm Bill established additional payment eligibility provisions relating to the farm management component of meeting "actively engaged in farming." These new provisions apply to joint operations comprised of non-family members or partners, stockholders or persons with an ownership in the farming operation. Effective for 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations are afforded to one member that may use a significant contribution of active personal management exclusively to meet the requirements to be determined "actively engaged in farming". The person or member will be defined as the Farm Manager for the purposes of administering these new management provisions.

In some instances, additional persons or members of a non-family member joint operation who meet the definition of Farm Manager may also be allowed to use such a contribution of active personal management to meet the eligibility requirements. However, under no circumstances may the number of Farm Managers in a non-family joint operation exceed a total of three in any given crop and program year.

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## FSA Encourages Reporting Prevented Planting, Failed Acres

*Reporting is Eligibility Requirement for Some FSA Programs*

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA). Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres. Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

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## **MAL, LDP Policy Changes for 2014-2018 Crop Years**

The Agricultural Act of 2014 authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), with a few minor policy changes.

Among the changes, farm-stored MAL collateral transferred to warehouse storage will retain the original loan rate, be allowed to transfer only the outstanding farm-stored quantity with no additional quantity allowed and will no longer require producers to have a paid for measurement service when moving or commingling loan collateral.

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 2016 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. May 31 is the final loan availability date for Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, Sunflower Seed, and Cotton.

Before MAL repayments with a market loan gain or LDP disbursements can be made, producers must meet the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash rent tenant, and member contribution.

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 the actively engaged in farming, cash-rent tenant, Adjusted Gross Income provisions or the payment limitation.

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.

The 2014 Farm Bill also establishes payment limitations per individual or entity not to exceed \$125,000 annually on certain commodities for the following program benefits: Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) payments, marketing loan gains (MLGs), and LDPs. These payment limitations do not apply to MAL loan disbursements or redemptions using commodity certificate exchange.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions were also modified by the 2014 Farm Bill. 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 [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## **Tree Assistance Program Application Deadline**

The FSA Tree Assistance Program (TAP) provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2017 must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent. TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. Eligible tree types include trees, bushes, or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Eligible Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut, and Christmas trees produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush, or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes, or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes, and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

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## **CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreage Enrolled in CRP, Farm Programs**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking, and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which is March 1 through July 1 in Texas. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover. Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control or for cosmetic purposes is prohibited at all times.

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## **USDA Makes it Easier to Transfer Land to Next Generation**

### ***Allows Transfer of Certain Conservation Reserve Program Land to New Farmers, Priority Enrollment in Working Lands Conservation Programs***

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering an early termination opportunity for certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, making it easier to transfer property to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, including family members. The land that is eligible for the early termination is among the least environmentally sensitive land enrolled in CRP.

Normally if a landowner terminates a CRP contract early, they are required to repay all previous payments plus interest. The new policy waives this repayment if the land is transferred to a beginning farmer or rancher through a sale or lease with an option to buy. With CRP enrollment close to the Congressionally-mandated cap of 24 million acres, the early termination will also allow

USDA to enroll other land with higher conservation value elsewhere.

Acres terminated early from CRP under these land tenure provisions will be eligible for priority enrollment consideration into the CRP Grasslands, if eligible; or the Conservation Stewardship Program or Environmental Quality Incentives Program, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

According to the Tenure, Ownership and Transition of Agricultural Land survey conducted by USDA in 2014, U.S. farmland owners expect to transfer 93 million acres to new ownership during 2015-2019. This represents 10 percent of all farmland across the nation. Details on the early termination opportunity are available at local USDA service centers. For more information about CRP and to find out if your acreage is eligible for early contract termination, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or go online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

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## **USDA Expands Grasslands Conservation Program to Small-Scale Livestock Producers**

### ***Helps Dairy, Beef, Other Producers Protect Working Grasslands in 43 States***

USDA will accept over 300,000 acres in 43 states that were offered by producers during the recent ranking period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands enrollment with emphasis placed on small-scale livestock operations. Through the voluntary CRP Grasslands program, grasslands threatened by development or conversion to row crops are maintained as livestock grazing areas, while providing important conservation benefits. Approximately 200,000 of the accepted acres were offered by small-scale livestock operations.

The most recent ranking period closed Dec. 16, 2016, and included for the first time a CRP Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations to encourage broader participation. Under this ranking period and for future periods, small-scale livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm. Larger operations may still make offers through the normal process. USDA met its goal of 200,000 acres under this small-scale initiative. The new practice for small-scale livestock grazing operations encourages greater diversity geographically and in all types of livestock operations. Visit <http://go.usa.gov/x9PFS> to view the complete list of acres accepted by state.

Participants in CRP Grasslands establish or maintain long-term, resource-conserving grasses and other plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. CRP Grasslands participants can use the land for livestock production (e.g. grazing or producing hay), while following their conservation and grazing plans to maintain the cover.

Small livestock operations or other farming and ranching operations interested in participating in CRP Grasslands should contact their local FSA office. To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).

May 2017



Farm Service Agency

# GovDelivery Electronic News Service

## NEWSLETTER



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## FSA News - Lone Star State Edition

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### Farm Service Agency Texas State Office

2405 Texas Ave. South  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Phone: 979-680-5151

**State Executive Director:**  
Erasmo (Eddie) Trevino,  
Acting

**State Committee:**  
Debra Barrett  
Armando Mandujano  
Wesley Ratcliff  
Glen A. Rod

**Executive Officer:**  
Erasmo (Eddie) Trevino

### Sonny Perdue Sworn in as 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Sonny Perdue was sworn in as the 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by fellow Georgian and Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Clarence Thomas in a brief ceremony on April 25 at the Supreme Court building.

Perdue grew up on a dairy and diversified row crop farm in Bonaire, Georgia. Being uniquely qualified as a former farmer, agribusinessman, veterinarian, state legislator and governor of Georgia, he has experienced the agriculture industry from every possible perspective throughout his life.

As secretary, Perdue says he will champion the concerns of farmers, ranchers, foresters and producers, and will work tirelessly to solve the issues facing our farm families.

Perdue's policies as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture will be guided by four principles which will inform his decisions. First, he will maximize the ability of the men and women of America's agriculture

**Division Chiefs:**

Ronda Arnett  
Gaye De Leon, Acting  
Chris Morris  
Darren Owens  
David Sullivan

**FSA County Committees:**

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and agribusiness sector to create jobs, to produce and sell the foods and fiber that feed and clothe the world, and to reap the earned reward of their labor. Second, he will prioritize customer service every day for American taxpayers and consumers. Third, as Americans expect a safe and secure food supply, USDA will continue to serve in the critical role of ensuring the food we put on the table to feed our families meets the strict safety standards we've established. And fourth, Perdue will always remember that America's agricultural bounty comes directly from the land.

For more information about Secretary Perdue, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

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## CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreage Enrolled in CRP, Farm Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking, and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which is March 1 through July 1 in Texas. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control or cosmetic purposes is prohibited at all times.

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## Fire Management on CRP Acres

Landowners who participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are responsible for fire management on their CRP acreage. Fireguard technical practices should be outlined in the Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO).

Landowners must complete the necessary management activities outside of the Primary Nesting Season. In Texas, the Primary Nesting Season is March 1 through June 1 for grazing benefits and March 1 through July 1 for all other activities. The goal is to suppress the amount of fuel in the event of a wildfire while still promoting the diversity of the conservation cover.

FSA encourages producers to be proactive in preventing the spread of wildfire. Fire management includes installing firebreaks, which should be included in the contract support document and installed according to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) firebreak standards.

Barren firebreaks will only be allowed in high risk areas, such as transportation corridors, rural communities, and adjacent farmsteads. A conservationist must certify that there will not be an erosion hazard from the barren firebreak. If erosion becomes a problem, remedial action will be taken.

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## USDA Makes it Easier to Transfer Land to Next Generation

### *Allows Transfer of Certain Conservation Reserve Program Land to New Farmers, Priority Enrollment in Working Lands Conservation Programs*

The USDA is offering an early termination opportunity for certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, making it easier to transfer property to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, including family members. The land that is eligible for the early termination is among the least environmentally sensitive land enrolled in CRP.

Normally if a landowner terminates a CRP contract early, they are required to repay all previous payments plus interest. The new policy waives this repayment if the land is transferred to a beginning farmer or rancher through a sale or lease with an option to buy. With CRP enrollment close to the Congressionally-mandated cap of 24 million acres, the early termination will also allow USDA to enroll other land with higher conservation value elsewhere.

Acres terminated early from CRP under these land tenure provisions will be eligible for priority enrollment consideration into the CRP Grasslands, if eligible; or the Conservation Stewardship Program or Environmental Quality Incentives Program, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

According to the Tenure, Ownership and Transition of Agricultural Land survey conducted by USDA in 2014, U.S. farmland owners expect to transfer 93 million acres to new ownership during 2015-2019. This represents 10 percent of all farmland across the nation. Details on the early termination opportunity are available at local USDA service centers.

For more information about CRP and to find out if your acreage is eligible for early contract termination, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or go online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

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## Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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# Streamlined Guaranteed Loans, Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators

## *Options Help More Beginning, Small, or Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers. The program, called EZ Guarantee Loans, uses a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to \$100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

A new category of lenders will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to \$50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to \$100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

More information about the available types of FSA farm loans can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans) or by contacting your local FSA office.

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## 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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Final Planting Dates

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details regarding county-specific final planting date for crops. Final planting dates vary by crop, planting period, and county. The timely planting of a crop by the final planting date may prevent loss of program benefits.

## Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of “idle” and “fallow.”

### Reporting Cover Crops:

FSA made changes to the types of cover crops. Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- **Cereals, other Grasses** - Any cover crop classified as a grass plant or cereal grain, including, but not limited to: cereal rye, wheat, barley, oats, black oats, triticale, annual ryegrass, pearl millet, foxtail millet (also called German, Italian or Hungarian millet), sorghum sudan grass, sorghum, and other millets and grasses
- **Legumes** - Any cover crop classified as legume, including, but not limited to: clovers, vetches, peas, sun hemp, cowpeas, lentils, and other legumes
- **Brassicas, other Broadleaves** - Any cover crop classified as non-legume broadleaf, including, but not limited to: Brassicas such as radishes, turnips, canola, rapeseed, oilseed rape, and mustards; other broadleaf plants such as phacelia, flax, sunflower, buckwheat, and safflower
- **Mixtures** - Mixes of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time; for example, oats and radishes

If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

### Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 days to change the intended use. Producer share interest changes alone will not allow for revisions to intended use after the acreage reporting date. The revision must be performed by either the acreage reporting date or within 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

### Acreage Reports:

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

### Reporting Grazing Allotments:

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. Producers will use form “FSA-578” to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the “Reporting Unit” field. The local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

### Definitions of Terms:

FSA defines “idle” as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row. For example, the balance of a field that could not be planted due to moisture or a turn area that is not planted would be reported as idle. Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season. Resting ground in this manner allows it to recover fertility and conserve moisture for crop production in the next growing season.

## Marketing Assistance Available for Some 2017 Texas Crops

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

In Texas, some crop prices are nearing a range where LDPs may be applicable, so producers should become familiar with the process to access this assistance.

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for applicable crops, as well as other commodities including 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 an MAL, 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. For more information, producers should contact their local FSA county office or view the [LDP Fact Sheet](#).

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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 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 office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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March 2017



Farm Service Agency

# GovDelivery Electronic News Service

## NEWSLETTER



- [New 'Actively Engaged' Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities](#)
- [New Organic Certification Cost Share for Producers, Handlers](#)
- [Producers Encouraged to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [USDA Makes it Easier to Transfer Land to the Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers](#)
- [USDA Expands Grasslands Conservation Program to Small-Scale Livestock Producers](#)
- [FSA, RMA Cooperate to Prevent Fraud, Waste, Abuse](#)
- [Policy Changes for Marketing Assistance Loans, Loan Deficiency Payments](#)
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#)
- [Communication is Key in Lending](#)
- [Loan Servicing](#)
- [USDA Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers](#)

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## FSA News - Lone Star State Edition

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### Farm Service Agency Texas State Office

2405 Texas Ave. South  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Phone: 979-680-5151

**State Executive Director:**  
Erasmo (Eddie) Trevino,  
Acting

**State Committee:**  
Debra Barrett  
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Wesley Ratcliff  
Glen A. Rod

**Executive Officer:**  
Erasmo (Eddie) Trevino

### New 'Actively Engaged' Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities

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Effective for 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations are afforded to one member that may use a significant contribution of active personal management exclusively to meet the requirements to be determined “actively engaged in farming.”

**Division Chiefs:**

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The person or member will be defined as the Farm Manager for the purposes of administering these new management provisions.

In some instances, additional persons or members of a non-family member joint operation who meet the definition of Farm Manager may also be allowed to use such a contribution of active personal management to meet the eligibility requirements. However, under no circumstances may the number of Farm Managers in a non-family joint operation exceed a total of three in any given crop and program year.

**FSA County Committees:**

[Complete Texas FSA COC Online Meeting List by County](#)

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## New Organic Certification Cost Share for Producers, Handlers

***Expanded Reimbursement Eligibility Includes Transition, State Certification Cost***

Starting March 20, 2017, organic producers and handlers will be able to visit any of the USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) 2,100 offices to apply for federal reimbursement to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic or transitional certification.

USDA reimburses organic producers up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification, but only about half of the nation's organic operations currently participate in the program. Starting March 20, USDA will provide a uniform, streamlined process for organic producers and handlers to apply for organic cost share assistance either by mail or in person.

USDA is making changes to increase participation in the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance Organic Certification Cost Share Program, and at the same time provide more opportunities for organic producers to access other USDA programs, such as disaster protection and loans for farms, facilities and marketing. Producers can also access information on nonfederal agricultural resources, and get referrals to local experts, including organic agriculture, through USDA's Bridges to Opportunity service at the local FSA office.

Historically, many state departments of agriculture have obtained grants to disburse reimbursements to those producers and handlers qualifying for cost share assistance. FSA will continue to partner with states to administer the programs. For states that want to continue to directly administer the programs, applications will be due Feb. 17, 2017.

Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic or transitional certification fees to a [USDA-accredited certifying](#) agent. Application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/ arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage are all eligible for a cost share reimbursement from USDA.

Once 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—crops, livestock, wild crops and handling. This announcement also adds transitional certification and state organic program fees as additional scopes.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/organic](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/organic) or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

## Producers Encouraged to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved, and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. 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.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser2017/CropCriteria.aspx>.

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.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

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## USDA Makes it Easier to Transfer Land to the Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers

### ***Allows for Transfer of Certain Conservation Reserve Program Land to New Farmers; Provides Priority Enrollment in Working Lands Conservation Programs***

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering an early termination opportunity for certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, making it easier to transfer property to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, including family members. The land that is eligible for the early termination is among the least environmentally sensitive land enrolled in CRP.

Normally if a landowner terminates a CRP contract early, they are required to repay all previous payments plus interest. The new policy waives this repayment if the land is transferred to a beginning farmer or rancher through a sale or lease with an option to buy. With CRP enrollment close to the Congressionally-mandated cap of 24 million acres, the early termination will also allow USDA to enroll other land with higher conservation value elsewhere.

Acres terminated early from CRP under these land tenure provisions will be eligible for priority enrollment consideration into the CRP Grasslands, if eligible; or the Conservation Stewardship Program or Environmental Quality Incentives Program, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

According to the Tenure, Ownership and Transition of Agricultural Land survey, conducted by USDA in 2014, U.S. farmland owners expect to transfer 93 million acres to new ownership during 2015-2019. This represents 10 percent of all farmland across the nation.

Details on the early termination opportunity are available at local USDA service centers. Find more information about CRP and contract termination eligibility online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

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## **USDA Expands Grasslands Conservation Program to Small-Scale Livestock Producers**

### ***Helping Dairy, Beef, Other Producers Protect Working Grasslands in 43 States***

USDA will accept over 300,000 acres in 43 states that were offered by producers during the recent ranking period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands enrollment with emphasis placed on small-scale livestock operations. Through the voluntary CRP Grasslands program, grasslands threatened by development or conversion to row crops are maintained as livestock grazing areas, while providing important conservation benefits. Approximately 200,000 of the accepted acres were offered by small-scale livestock operations.

The most recent ranking period closed on Dec. 16, 2016, and included for the first time a CRP Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations to encourage broader participation. Under this ranking period and for future periods, small-scale livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm. Larger operations may still make offers through the normal process. USDA met its goal of 200,000 acres under this small-scale initiative. The new practice for small-scale livestock grazing operations encourages greater diversity geographically and in all types of livestock operations. Visit <http://go.usa.gov/x9PFS> to view the complete list of acres accepted by state.

Participants in CRP Grasslands establish or maintain long-term, resource-conserving grasses and other plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. CRP Grasslands participants can use the land for livestock production (e.g. grazing or producing hay), while following their conservation and grazing plans in order to maintain the cover.

Small livestock operations or other farming and ranching operations interested in participating in CRP Grasslands should contact their local FSA office. To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

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## **FSA, RMA Cooperate to Prevent Fraud, Waste, Abuse**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) supports the Risk Management Agency (RMA) in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program.

FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse directly to RMA.

Producers can report suspected cases to USDA county office staff, the RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

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## Policy Changes for Marketing Assistance Loans, Loan Deficiency Payments

The Agricultural Act of 2014 authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), with a few minor policy changes.

Among the changes, farm-stored MAL collateral transferred to warehouse storage will retain the original loan rate, be allowed to transfer only the outstanding farm-stored quantity with no additional quantity allowed and will no longer require producers to have a paid for measurement service when moving or commingling loan collateral.

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 2016 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest. Requests for loans and LDP's shall be made on or before the final availability date for the respective commodities. March 31 is the final loan availability date for Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat, and Sesame Seed. May 31 is the final loan availability date for Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, Sunflower Seed, and cotton.

Before MAL repayments with a market loan gain or LDP disbursements can be made, producers must meet the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash rent tenant and member contribution.

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 the actively engaged in farming, cash-rent tenant, Adjusted Gross Income provisions or the payment limitation.

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.

The 2014 Farm Bill also establishes payment limitations per individual or entity not to exceed \$125,000 annually on certain commodities for the following program benefits: price loss coverage payments, agriculture risk coverage payments, marketing loan gains (MLGs) and LDPs. These payment limitations do not apply to MAL loan disbursements or redemptions using commodity certificate exchange.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions were modified by the 2014 Farm Bill, which states 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 [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## 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 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 some loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will no longer 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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## Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

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## USDA Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans).

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans).

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. 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).