

Update on 2018 Farm Bill implementation

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April 16, 2019

In December of 2018, the President signed the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 into law. Though it is commonly referred to as the 2018 Farm Bill, this comprehensive piece of legislation effects a much broader range of policies, impacting federal programs and services that affect farmers and ranchers as well as many Americans who have no involvement in agricultural production.

The process of implementing all of the changes specified in the new Farm Bill is extensive, and USDA agencies immediately set to work applying renewed and changed provisions into practice. On April 12, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue sent out a press release detailing Farm Bill implementation progress so far.

Here are a few highlights of early efforts that may be of particular interest to new and beginning farmers. Some of the USDA's first efforts were in dairy commodity programs.

- Dairy Forward Pricing Program;
- Class I skim milk pricing;
- Farmers who participated in the 2018 Livestock Gross Margin-Dairy can now retroactively participate in the MPP-Dairy for 2018;
- Revised monthly price survey reports to include prices for high-quality alfalfa hay in the top five milk producing states to be utilized in the new Dairy Margin Coverage feed calculation;
- Working to develop a Dairy Margin Coverage decision tool that will be available to producers by May 1;
- Sign-up will open for the new Dairy Margin Coverage Program beginning June 17, providing coverage retroactive to January 1, 2019, with applicable payments following soon after enrollment;
- The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) will have a number of changes, including increasing the payment limit from \$200,000.00 per person or legal entity per natural event to \$500,000.00; socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers are not eligible for up to 90% ECP cost share of their total allowable cost;
- Noninsurance Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Producers now have a one-time opportunity until May 24, 2019, to obtain buy-up coverage for 2019 or 2020 eligible crops for which the NAP application closing date has passed;
- Hemp. The 2018 Farm Bill extended the 2014 Farm Bill provisions for hemp production by 12 months to allow USDA to complete the required rulemaking process, and USDA intends to issue regulations in the fall of 2019 in order to accommodate the 2020 planting season;
- WFRP for new and beginning farmers. RMA extends the time for new beginning farmer eligibility from 5 years to 10 years.

For information on all the titles (sections) of the 2018 Farm Bill as well as the USDA Press Release detailing Farm Bill implementation progress, go to the UVM Agricultural Risk Management and Crop Insurance Education web site. <http://go.uvm.edu/ag-risk> Check out “News and Events” and “Other Resources”.

USDA and the University of Vermont are equal opportunity providers and employers. This material is funded in partnership by USDA, Risk Management Agency, under award number RM18RMETS524C022.

