



2014 Farm Bill: New risk management decisions for Wyoming producers

By James Sedman and John Hewlett

Passage of the 2014 Farm Bill created significant program changes.

Gone are direct payments, counter/cyclical payments, and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) programs. These have been replaced with a system similar to crop insurance from a risk management perspective.

Producers can now choose between several different programs that protect against declines in price and yield. Producers can also update their base acres or yield information to more accurately reflect their current operations.

Program Outline

Producers can choose between Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC).

PLC makes payments to producers when the effective price of a covered commodity is lower than the reference price (determined by the Farm Service Agency). The effective price is the higher of the market year average price or the national average loan rate.

The payment is equal to 85 percent of the pro-

ducer's base acres of the covered commodity multiplied by the difference between the reference price and the effective price, multiplied by the PLC payment yield.

When PLC is selected for a farm, a Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) gives a producer the possibility of covering a portion or all of their crop insurance deductible and is based on county average yields and prices.

ARC can be selected for either county (ARC-CO) or individual (ARC-IC) coverage.

Under ARC-CO, payments are issued when the actual crop revenue of a covered commodity is lower than the ARC-CO guarantee for the covered commodity. The payment is equal to 85 percent of the base acres of the crop multiplied by the difference between the county guarantee and the actual county crop revenue for the crop.

ARC-IC is similar except it uses a producer's individual crop data; payments equal 65 percent of the sum of the base acres of all covered commodities on the farm, times the difference between the

Important Sign-up Dates and Information

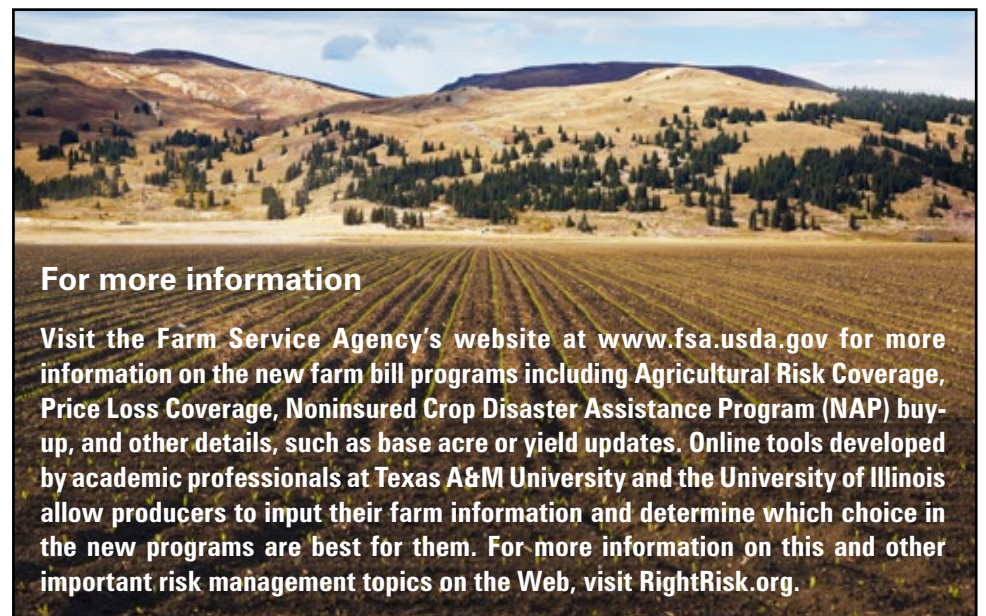
MPP-Dairy Program
- December 15, 2014

Base Acre/Yield Updates
- February 27, 2015

ARC/PLC Election
- March 31, 2015

PLC/SCO Election
- March 31, 2015

Crop Insurance Sign Up
(Most Spring-planted Crops)
- March 15, 2015



For more information

Visit the Farm Service Agency's website at www.fsa.usda.gov for more information on the new farm bill programs including Agricultural Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) buy-up, and other details, such as base acre or yield updates. Online tools developed by academic professionals at Texas A&M University and the University of Illinois allow producers to input their farm information and determine which choice in the new programs are best for them. For more information on this and other important risk management topics on the Web, visit RightRisk.org.

individual revenue guarantee and the actual individual crop revenue for all covered commodities planted on the farm.

Online Decision Tools Available

The FSA website offers online tools (from Texas A&M University and the University of Illinois) that demonstrate how program selections will affect individual farm situations over the five-year farm bill period. These tools can be found under the ARC/PLC link at www.fsa.usda.gov.

In future installments of this series, we will examine the ARC/PLC decision for

a Big Horn County farm – Riff Brothers Farms – using the online tools. We will show the Riffs' farm data entry and the resulting payments under ARC (both county and individual), PLC, and other options.

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Trees, shrubs, may need watering to prevent severe winter desiccation

By Donna Hoffman

This fall has been unlike any for gardening in Wyoming. The trees and shrubs have been more than spectacular, and there are more vivid and diverse colors in the leaves of native habitats as well as urban landscapes this season.

Trees have been able to hold onto their leaves much, much longer than most years due to the warm weather. But that means they have continued to photosynthesize and in doing so have continued to take up and use water from the soil.

Many Wyomingites drain their sprinkler systems and store garden hoses once the first of October comes, because most years snow begins to accumulate in October and supplies the soil with the much-needed moisture to

maintain trees. Often, the first snowfall of the year can be found still on the ground after Wyoming's higher moisture and colder winters, especially in high-elevation locations.

Wyoming this year has been blessed to enjoy quick snowstorms that coat the ground or just moisten the top layers of soil and then it is gone. And it truly is gone by now. The trees have used up much of the soil moisture that had remained and must have it replenished to prevent extreme cases of winter desiccation and potentially winterkill for more sensitive species.

To Water or Not To Water

Every autumn the following is passed on not knowing what the winter will bring. "When temperatures are above 45 degrees AND the wind is not blowing get out your

garden hoses and give the entire yard a good soaking then drain the hoses and store them where they are easy to get to for the next watering."

Most years this is about once each month during Wyoming's long winter season. However, with the beautiful fall season and little significant moisture, this year may be one when residents need to be vigilant and keep watering. If the wind dries things and our temperatures stay above freezing for long periods, we may need to keep the water flowing to maintain soil moisture and prevent root tissue loss due to extreme water loss and soil drying.

Keep the water as low to the ground as possible so most of the additional moisture actually gets into the soil and stays there rather than evaporating as it sprays out into the dry air. Soaker hoses would be ideal, and the back and forth oscillating sprinklers are the most likely to waste water by having it be blown away by even a slight breeze or evaporating right into the atmosphere due to low humidity. Try to find a sprinkler to water at a low profile if soaker hoses are not realistic in the watering routines.

Determine Amount of Watering

The key to successful watering, no matter the time of year, is to find the length of time to soak the soil profile. Each home location may have differing soil conditions from front to backyards and even on the two side yards. Using a long screwdriver to poke into the soil after watering should tell if the moisture has penetrated deep enough or if more water is needed. Water enough to penetrate 6 to 8 inches for lawn areas, and any

areas with trees should have moisture available down 10 to 12 inches. If the moisture is not found deep enough, determine how long it takes to get moisture that deep and water for that length every time. Water the various yard areas less frequently in cooler months and more frequently in hotter months.

If you are more of a visual person, dig a hole to see how far the moisture has penetrated, but this could be a workout if attempting this for the first time in these colder months and when the soil is dry. Try to determine your necessary watering time before the soil freezes and then share that information with anyone who will be helping to ensure your trees come through any tough winter in great condition for the next growing season.

If each landowner and gardener across the state takes these suggestions to heart, our trees and shrubs may come out of winter unscathed, and they will be set to produce as spectacular a spring season as this fall has been.

For more information or if there are concerns about watering in your specific location or need assistance with any other gardening questions, contact your local county extension office. There is one office, and sometimes two, in each county across the state, and each has an extension educator to assist with these types of questions. Go to www.uwyo.edu/uwe for locations and contact information.

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Winter desiccation injury to a pine tree. (Photo by Linda Haugen, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)