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### ARC/PLC Decision Date

It might seem far away, but the March 15th deadline for making annual elections of either Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) is just around the corner. Now is a great time to review past elections to help make elections for the coming program cycle.

There are some important points to remember. First, the 2023 election applies to 2023 harvested crops. Second, remember ARC and PLC both have components based upon marketing year average prices. The marketing year for fall crops starts September 1 of the cropping year and runs through August 31 of the year *after* harvest (the wheat marketing year is June 1 of the harvest year to May 31 of the following year). In short, your decision is going to be made using prices that may/may not be similar to today.

This may be old hat for many, but it's still good to think through how these programs can help mitigate risk. For example, if commodity prices remain above reference prices and county yields are average or above (a great scenario), no PLC or ARC payments would be made. If commodity prices remain high but yields are *below* average (county level yields), no PLC payments will be made, but ARC County payments *might*. If yields stay average or above, but prices drop below the reference price: PLC payments will be made, but ARC-CO payment aren't likely – unless prices are very low. If yields are below average at the county level and prices fall below references prices as well, PLC will pay and ARC-CO payments will be made as well (though they may not be as large as PLC).

While yields and prices change, the same selection principals remain: if you want protection primarily against falling prices, PLC is a good option. If protection against revenue losses (price and county level yield factors together) is the goal, ARC-CO might be a better fit. For more information on ARC and PLC, visit: <https://www.agmanager.info/crop-insurance/risk-management-strategies/arc-or-plc-question> . If price projections are what you're after, visit: <https://www.agmanager.info/crop-insurance/risk-management-strategies/projections-and-sources-mya-prices-arc-and-plc-commodity> . These references are also available in printed format from any District Office.

### Truth or Myth - Adding Sand to Clay Soils

You might hear lots of remedies for issues in the garden/landscape, but unfortunately, not all of them are true. Such is the case for the *myth* of adding sand to clay soils to help drainage.

Clay soils *do* drain slower than clay and it would seem a good idea to 'fix' the issue by adding sand. Unfortunately, the issue of soil particle size (texture) comes in to play. When you add sand to a clay soil, instead of the sand grains touching and providing pore space, the very small clay particles fill up virtually all of the open space, effectively cementing them together. Instead of better drainage, you have instead created a brick like mass.

A better amendment option is regular incorporation of organic matter (compost, leaf mold, well-rotted manure, or a green manure crop) Normally, we consider about 80 percent sand to be sufficient. In most cases this makes the use of sand impractical.