

# Crop Acreage Reporting

## What You Need to Know



## Overview

As a farmer or rancher, you should file acreage reports with USDA. It is an important part of determining your eligibility for key programs, including price support, disaster relief, and conservation programs.

A crop acreage report documents all crops and their intended uses and is an important part of record-keeping for your farm or ranch. This report is needed to access many USDA assistance programs.

You can file acreage reports by filling out the FSA-578 form. Your local USDA service center staff can help you file by providing you with maps and deadlines to simplify the reporting process. Producers can also use FSA's self-service portal, FSAFarm+ to securely view or print maps. To enroll in the online service, contact your local FSA office.

## How it Works

To file an acreage report, you need:

- An FSA map of your farm or ranch, and your tract and field numbers
- Information on the crops you intend to plant
- The intended use of your crops
- The number of acres of crops you are reporting
- Approximate crop boundaries, planting patterns and dates, irrigation practices, and producer shares

Reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Ask your local USDA service center staff for details.

## Find your Local Office

To find your local office, go to:

- [offices.usda.gov](https://offices.usda.gov)
- [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator)

## Crop Acreage Reporting Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: Can I report cover crops?

Crops that are used for erosion control, soil health, or water quality can be reported as cover crops. However, if a cover crop is harvested for anything other than forage or grazing, it's no longer a cover crop and the report must be revised.

### Q: When should I report prevented planting and failed acres?

Many programs require that prevented planting and failed acres be reported within 15 days of the disaster.

### Q: What if my crops are organic?

Crops aren't required to be reported as organic, but if you choose to do so you should bring your current organic plan and documentation verifying the certified organic status of your crops.

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## **Q: Why should I file my acreage report late and pay the fee if there is no payment for which I'm eligible?**

Acreage reporting establishes your eligibility for many programs including disaster programs. Even if there is no program payment that might be at issue when an acreage report could be filed or filed late with a fee, it is always better to file an acreage report and remit the late-file fee than to choose not to report the acreage.

Sometimes program or payment eligibility decisions or application deadlines extend beyond the final date when a late-filed acreage report can be filed. So electing not to file and pay a fee could be final with regard to the potential eligibility of those acres and producers sharing in the acres. Having an acreage report on file helps ensure eligibility for payments and disaster assistance, especially unforeseen future disasters or program payment eligibility.

## **Q: Do I really need to come in every time and certify my acreage report?**

Yes. Some crops have multiple plantings and each planting must be reported. Some crops are eligible for continuous certification. This means after a crop is reported once, the certification remains in effect until a change is made or the Conservation Reserve Program contract has expired. To see if your crops are eligible for continuous certification check with your local office.

## **Q: I'm a beginning farmer or it is my first year farming on a tract of land. Do I need to file additional paperwork to file an acreage report?**

Make sure you have a farm number, that your tract information is current and that you are in FSA's system.

To get a farm number, bring proof of identity, a copy of your deed or leasing documents, and any entity documentation for your business (limited partnership, estate or trust documents).

## **Q: How do I find my local office?**

You can go online to [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov) or [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov) to locate your USDA service center.

## **Q: Do I need an appointment?**

No. But they are strongly encouraged.

## **Q: Should I still report my acreage if I am a very small farmer?**

Yes. FSA works with farms and ranches of all sizes. In the event of a disaster you may be eligible for assistance, so it is important to report your crops.

## **Q: If I already reported my acres to my crop insurance agency, do I still need to submit a report to FSA?**

Yes. FSA and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location. However, producers must still sign reports for both FSA and the insurance provider.

