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Producers with Individual Agricultural Risk Coverage Reminded to Report Yields

Producers who elected Individual Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC-IC) are required to report yields annually to FSA. The final date to report production from the prior crop year for farms enrolled in ARC-IC is July 15. The ARC Program is an income support program that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level.

ARC-IC program payments are issued when the actual individual crop revenue for all covered commodities planted on the ARC-IC farm is less than the ARC-IC guarantee for those covered commodities. ARC-IC uses producer's certified yields, rather than county level yields. ARC-IC payments are dependent upon the planting of covered commodities on the farm. A producer's ARC-IC farm is defined as the sum of the producer's interest in all ARC-IC enrolled farms in the state. Producers with all farms enrolled in County Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage are not required to report production from the prior crop year.

For more information contact your Local USDA Service center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for County Committee Members

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) began accepting nominations for county committee members on June 15. Elections will occur in certain Local

Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 2, 2021.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in a USDA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote, and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serving on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. This may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

More Information

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election. They should check with their local USDA Service Center to see if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 1, 2021. To find your local USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Understanding the U.S. Drought Monitor

Are drought conditions affecting your agricultural operation? The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) (USDM) is a resource producers can use to help determine how to best respond and react to a drought as it develops or lingers.

The USDM is an online, weekly map showing the location, extent, and severity of drought across the United States. It categorizes the entire country as being in one of six levels of drought. The map is released on Thursdays and depicts conditions for the week.

The USDM provides producers with the latest information about drought conditions where they live, enabling producers to best respond and react to a drought as it develops or lingers. In some cases, the USDM may help a producer make specific decisions about their operation, such as reducing the stocking rate because forage is not growing. For others, it may provide a convenient big-picture snapshot of broader environmental conditions.

The USDM incorporates varying data – rain, snow, temperature, streamflow, reservoir levels, soil moisture, and more – as well as first-hand information submitted from on-the-ground sources such as photos, descriptions, and experiences. The levels of drought are connected to the frequency of occurrence across [several different drought indicators](#). What makes the USDM unique is that it is not a strictly numeric product. The mapmakers rely on their judgment and a nationwide network of 450-plus experts to interpret conditions for each region. They synthesize their discussion and analysis into a single depiction of drought for the entire country.

USDA uses the Drought Monitor to determine a producer's eligibility for certain drought assistance programs, like the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) and [Emergency Haying or Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres](#).

Additionally, the Farm Service Agency uses the Drought Monitor to trigger and “fast track” Secretarial Disaster Designations which then provides producers impacted by drought access to emergency loans that can assist with credit needs.

[Learn more about the U.S. Drought Monitor.](#)

Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

NAP provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

To receive payment, you had to purchase NAP coverage for 2021 crops and file a notice of loss the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

For hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your local USDA Service Center. Contact information can be found at farmers.gov/service-locator.

fsa.usda.gov/nap.

New to Farming Because of the Pandemic? USDA Can Help

USDA Service Centers across the country, are hearing from people who are interested in more space and working the land and we want to let you know we can help. Are you new to farming because of the pandemic? USDA can help you get started in farming – on everything from helping you register your farm to getting financial assistance and advice.

Get Started with USDA

First, you want to make sure your farm is registered. If you purchased land, it might already be established with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) with a farm number on file. If not, FSA can help you register your farm.

To obtain a farm number, you'll bring an official tax ID (Social Security number or an employer ID) and a property deed. If you do not own the land, bring a lease agreement to your FSA representative to show you have control of the property. If your operation is incorporated or an entity, you may also need to provide proof that you have signature authority and the legal ability to enter into contracts with USDA.

Access to Capital

USDA can provide access to capital through its farm loans, which is a great resource when producers aren't able to get a loan from a traditional lender. Loans can help with purchasing land or equipment or with operating costs, and FSA even offers microloans, which are especially popular among producers with smaller farms. For more information, check out our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

Conservation Practices

We can help you make conservation improvements to your farm, which are good for your bottom line and your operation. We'll help you develop a conservation plan and apply for financial assistance that'll cover the bulk of the costs for implementing. To learn more about some of the conservation practices that we help producers with, [check out our Conservation at Work Video Series](#).

If you purchase land, and you don't want to farm all of it, you can look at either a conservation easement or managing for native shrubs and grasses through either the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) or Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Easements are long-term, while a CRP contract is 10-15 years. These are good options for land that is not optimal for production or sensitive lands like wetlands and grasslands.

Additional Resources

Depending on your farm, you may want to look at crop insurance. The USDA's Risk Management Agency provides crop insurance to help you manage risks on your farm. There are [many types of insurance products available](#) for a wide variety of production practices, including organic and sustainable agriculture.

Your local communities also have great resources for farmers including conservation districts, Rural Development, cooperative extensions, and different farming groups. To get started with

USDA, contact your local USDA service center. Contact information can be found at farmers.gov/service-locator.

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