



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Georgia State USDA Newsletter - September 2021

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## USDA Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers to complete [crop acreage reports](#) by the final acreage reporting date.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Georgia:

September 15, 2021	Sweet Corn (planted 7/15-8/25)
October 15, 2021	Cabbage (planted 7/16-9/30)
November 15, 2021	Onions (planted 9/20-10/20)

To complete your acreage report, please call your local County FSA office to schedule an appointment. FSA can work with producers to file timely acreage reports by phone, email, online tools and virtual meetings as well as by appointment in person.

The following exception applies to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- **Fruit and Vegetable Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is 15 days after the designated final planting date for the specific zone.**
- **Perennial Forage Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for perennial forage is 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop being reported.**

For questions, please call your local County FSA office.

## **USDA Updates Pandemic Assistance for Livestock, Poultry Contract Producers and Specialty Crop Growers**

*USDA Sets October 12 Deadline for CFAP 2*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) for contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry and producers of specialty crops and other sales-based commodities. CFAP 2, which assists producers who faced market disruptions in 2020 due to COVID-19, is part of USDA's broader Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has set an Oct. 12 deadline for all eligible producers to apply for or modify applications for CFAP 2.

### **Assistance for Contract Producers**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provides up to \$1 billion for payments to contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry for revenue losses from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 27, 2020. Contract producers of broilers, pullets, layers, chicken eggs, turkeys, hogs and pigs, ducks, geese, pheasants and quail may be eligible for assistance. This update includes eligible breeding stock and eggs of all eligible poultry types produced under contract.

Payments for contract producers were to be based on a comparison of eligible revenue for the periods of Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 27, 2019, and Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 27, 2020. Today's changes mean contract producers can now elect to use eligible revenue from the period of Jan. 1, 2018, through Dec. 27, 2018, instead of that date range in 2019 if it is more representative. This change is intended to provide flexibility and make the program more equitable for contract producers who had reduced revenue in 2019

compared to a normal production year. The difference in revenue is then multiplied by 80% to determine a final payment. Payments to contract producers may be factored if total calculated payments exceed the available funding and will be made after the application period closes.

Additional flexibilities have been added to account for increases to operation size in 2020 and situations where a contract producer did not have a full period of revenue from Jan. 1 to Dec. 27 for either 2018 or 2019. Assistance is also available to new contract producers who began their farming operation in 2020.

### **Updates for Sales-Based Commodities**

USDA is amending the CFAP 2 payment calculation for sales-based commodities, which are primarily comprised of specialty crops, to allow producers to substitute 2018 sales for 2019 sales. Previously, payments for producers of sales-based commodities were based only on 2019 sales, with 2019 used as an approximation of the amount the producer would have expected to market in 2020. Giving producers the option to substitute 2018 sales for this approximation, including 2018 crop insurance indemnities and 2018 crop year Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) payments, provides additional flexibility to producers of sales-based commodities who had reduced sales in 2019.

Grass seed has also been added as an eligible sales commodity for CFAP 2. A complete list of all eligible sales-based commodities can be found at [farmers.gov/cfap2/commodities](https://farmers.gov/cfap2/commodities). Producers of sales-based commodities can modify existing applications.

### **Applying for Assistance**

Newly eligible producers who need to submit a CFAP 2 application or producers who need to modify an existing one can do so by contacting their local FSA office. Producers can find their local FSA office by visiting [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). Producers can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364. All new and modified CFAP 2 applications are due by the Oct. 12 deadline.

### **Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Under WHIP+ and/or QLA**

If you received a payment under the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLA) for crop production and/or quality losses occurring in 2018, 2019, or 2020 crop years, you are required to meet linkage requirements by obtaining federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level, or higher, for both the 2022 and 2023 crop years.

When applying for WHIP+ or QLA, form FSA-895 (Crop Insurance and/or NAP Coverage Agreement) was submitted acknowledging the requirement to obtain federal crop insurance, if available, or NAP coverage if federal crop insurance is not available. The coverage requirement is applicable to the physical location county of the crop that received WHIP+ and/or QLA benefits.

Producers should not delay contacting their federal crop insurance agent or local county FSA Office to inquire about coverage options, as **failure to obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will result in the required refund of WHIP+ benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest.** You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by [visiting the RMA website](#).

For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

### **USDA Announces Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to \$200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

#### **Program Details**

To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business where 50% or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant's gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80%. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or \$2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.

The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is \$125,000.

#### **Applying for Assistance**

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH beginning on July 22 by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying to their gross revenue for 2019 and 2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit [farmers.gov/pathh](https://farmers.gov/pathh) for more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery, or via electronic means. To find a local FSA office, loggers and truckers can visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). They can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

## **FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19**

### *Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers*

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

## **Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation**

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### **How the Tool Works**

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](https://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

### **About Farmers.gov**

In 2018, USDA unveiled [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov), a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](https://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

## Reminders for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations
- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

## USDA Supports Military Veteran's Transition to Farming

Are you a military veteran interested in farming? USDA offers resources to help you:

- **Fund Your Operation:** USDA's Farm Service Agency offers a variety of [funding opportunities](#) to help agricultural producers finance their businesses. Certain funds are targeted for veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- **Conserve Natural Resources:** USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers [conservation programs and expert one-on-one technical assistance](#) to strengthen agricultural operations now and into the future. Veterans may be eligible for a cost share of up to 90 percent and advance payments of up to 50 percent to cover certain conservation practices.
- **Manage Risks:** USDA is here to help you prepare for and recover from the unexpected. Veterans who are beginning farmers may be eligible for reduced premiums, application fee waivers, increased insurance coverage, and other incentives for multiple [USDA programs that support risk management](#).

USDA wants to ensure that veterans transitioning to agriculture have the resources needed to succeed. While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local USDA

Service Center. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus). If you're a new farmer, you can also reach out to your [state Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinator](#).

## FSA is Accepting CRP Continuous Enrollment Offers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#).

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

For more information contact your local county USDA Service Center or visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov).

## Getting Acreage Reporting Right

You have a lot at stake in making sure your crop insurance acreage reporting is accurate and on time. If you fail to report on time, you may not be protected. If you report too much acreage, you may pay too much premium. If you report too little acreage, you may recover less when you file a claim.

Crop insurance agents often say that mistakes in acreage reporting are the easiest way for producers to have an unsatisfactory experience with crop insurance. Don't depend on your agent to do this important job for you. Your signature on the bottom of the acreage reporting form makes it, legally, your responsibility. Double-check it for yourself.

Remember - acreage reporting is your responsibility. Doing it right will save you money. Always get a copy of your report immediately after signing and filing it with your agent and keep it with your records. Remember, it is your responsibility to report crop damage to your agent within 72 hours of discovery. Never put damaged acreage to another use without prior written consent of the insurance adjuster. You don't want to destroy any evidence of a possible claim. [Learn more by visiting RMA's website](#).



# USDA to Invest \$50 Million in New Cooperative Agreements for Racial Justice and Equity

USDA is investing up to \$50 million in cooperative agreements to support historically underserved farmers and ranchers with climate-smart agriculture and forestry. The Racial Justice and Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements are available to entities and individuals for two year projects that expand the delivery of conservation assistance to farmers who are beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers.

The projects should help historically underserved farmers and ranchers in implementing natural resources conservation practices that:

- Improve soil health;
- Improve water quality;
- Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern;
- Improve the environmental and economic performance of working agricultural land; and
- Build and strengthen local food projects that provide healthy food and economic opportunities.

Projects should remove barriers to access and reach historically underserved groups through a combination of program outreach and technical assistance in managing natural resources that address one or more of the following four NRCS priority areas:

- Addressing local natural resource issues;
- Using climate-smart agriculture practices and principles;
- Encouraging existing and new partnerships; and
- Developing state and community-led conservation leadership for historically underserved agricultural producers, including educating and training students for careers in natural resources management.

Entities and individuals who provide outreach assistance to historically underserved groups are eligible, including:

- Native American tribal governments and organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Private and public institutions of higher education
- Individuals

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on October 25, 2021. See the [grants.gov announcement](#) for details and application instructions.

A USDA Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) project is trying to reimagine how carbon markets can work with and for small landholders. The Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP), led by the American Forest Foundation (AFF) and The Nature Conservancy, bases carbon payments on specific forest management practices that have been

scientifically shown to increase the amount of carbon that gets removed from the atmosphere and stored in the trees and soil. The project's goal is to facilitate the participation of nearly 300 million acres of family-owned American forests in carbon markets.

While the FFCP is still in its early stages, it has been successfully piloted in the Central Appalachian Region. The program has about 50 contracts with landowners, representing over 6,000 acres of forested land. This led to more funding, with the tech giant Amazon gifting about \$7.5 million to the project in April 2020. According to the AFF, if 20% of U.S. family forest acres adopted practices that optimized carbon sequestration, about 3.5 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent would be sequestered by the end of the century.

CIG is a competitive program that supports the development of new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands. Through creative problem solving and innovation, CIG partners work to address our nation's water quality, air quality, soil health and wildlife habitat challenges, all while improving agricultural operations.

For more details on how USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is working with landholders to promote natural climate solutions, view the [Can Family-Owned Forests Help the U.S. Achieve a Low-Carbon Future page](#).

## Be on the Lookout: New Form Required for Some NRCS Customers

If you are a producer or landowner who participates in USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) may be reaching out by mail with information about a form you'll need to fill out.

Starting this year, all producers and landowners participating or applying to participate in certain NRCS conservation programs must complete form CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan. Historically, to participate in these programs, legal entities could file either the CCC-901, Member Information or the CCC-902, while individuals were not specifically required to file the CCC-902 with FSA. Now, to ensure FSA and NRCS are properly determining payment eligibility and maximum payment limitations, all customers must have a CCC-902 on file to establish eligibility.

These changes will not affect participants who already have a Form CCC-902 with a "determined" status recorded with FSA. Customers that do not have a CCC-902 on file with FSA will be sent a letter in the mail in the coming weeks with detailed information on what is needed and how to file the form. The letter requests that the form be completed within 30 days of receiving the letter.

For added convenience, USDA is offering options for remote or in-person submission of the CCC-902. Fiscal year 2021 is considered a transition year to ensure all NRCS program participants can meet this updated filing requirement. Beginning in FY 2022, if form CCC-902 is not on file your payments may be impacted.

We can help: NRCS and FSA staff are available at [USDA Service Centers](#) nationwide to provide information and assistance to walk you through meeting this filing requirement. For more information, see the [NRCS National Bulletin 300-21-7](#) or [FSA Notice PL-293](#).



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