

June 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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- [June 30 Last Day to Complete Enrollment for 2020 Agriculture Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage Programs](#)
- [ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance](#)
- [USDA Announces Details of Direct Assistance to Farmers through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#)
- [FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [Nominations Open for the 2020 County Committee Elections](#)
- [Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\) Losses](#)
- [FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [Farmers, Ranchers and Private Forest Landowners Use Conservation to Protect Pollinator Habitat, Boost Crop Production](#)
- [Journal of Soil and Water Conservation Provide Evidence that USDA Conservation Practices Work](#)
- [USDA Adds Flexibilities for Crop Insurance](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [June 2020 Interest Rates](#)

Indiana State FSA Newsletter

Indiana State Farm Service Agency

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June 30 Last Day to Complete Enrollment for 2020 Agriculture Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage Programs

Agricultural producers who have not yet enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2020 must do so by June 30. Although program elections for the 2020 crop year remain the same as elections made for 2019, all producers need to contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to sign a 2020 enrollment contract.

To date, more than 1.4 million ARC and PLC contracts have been signed for the 2020 crop year. This represents 89 percent of expected enrollment. FSA will send reminder postcards to producers who, according to agency records, have not yet submitted signed contracts for ARC or PLC for the 2020 crop year.

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For local FSA Service Center contact information [click here](#)

Producers who do not complete enrollment by close of business local time on Tuesday, June 30 will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2020 crop year and will be ineligible to receive a payment should one trigger for an eligible crop.

ARC and PLC contracts can be mailed or emailed to producers for signature depending on producer preference. Signed contracts can be mailed or emailed back to FSA or, arrangements can be made in advance with FSA to drop off signed contracts at the FSA county office – call ahead for local drop off and other options available for submitting signed contracts electronically.

Producers are eligible to enroll on farms with base acres for the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium- and short-grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC including web-based decision tools, visit farmers.gov/arc-plc.

USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Visit offices.usda.gov to find location and contact information for the nearest FSA county office.

ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

USDA Announces Details of Direct Assistance to Farmers through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) began taking applications May 26 for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). In the first six days of the application period, FSA approved more than \$545 million in payments to producers and made payments to more than 35,000 producers. USDA released data on the application progress and program payments and will release further updates each Monday at 2:00pm ET. The report can be viewed at farmers.gov/cfap.

FSA will accept applications through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion in financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Getting Help from FSA

New customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap. Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help producers identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments. Producers self-certify their records when applying for CFAP and that documentation is not submitted with the application. However, producers may be asked for their documentation to support the certification of eligible commodities, so producers should retain the information used to complete their application.

Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print a pre-filled CFAP application, sign it, and submit it to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery through an office drop box. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred delivery method for your local office. Team members at FSA county offices will be able to answer detailed questions and help producers apply quickly and efficiently through phone and online tools. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/cfap.

Policy Clarifications

FSA has been working with stakeholder groups to provide further clarification to producers on the CFAP program. For example, the agency has published a matrix of common marketing contracts that impact eligibility for non-specialty crops and has provided a table that crosswalks common livestock terms to CFAP cattle categories. Updated information can be found in the frequently asked questions section of the CFAP website.

FSA is Hosting CFAP Webinars

The USDA Farm Service Agency will or has hosted a series of webinars to discuss what producers should know to sign up for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). In addition to hearing from CFAP National Program Specialists, webinar participants will also learn more about the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process for submitting additional commodities for consideration to USDA for CFAP eligibility.

Specialty Crop Producers (View the recording & slide presentation at farmers.gov/cfap)

Dairy and Non-Specialty Crop Producers (View the recording & slide presentation at farmers.gov/cfap)

Tuesday, June 16, 3 p.m. EDT Non-Specialty Crop and Livestock Producers ([Register](#))

Thursday, June 18, 3 p.m. EDT FSA Programs in the Times of Coronavirus In addition to CFAP, this webinar will discuss FSA programs with producer flexibilities during COVID-19 and also a review of targeted funding for beginning and other underserved farmers and ranchers in other programs. ([Register](#))

More Information

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/CFAP or call 877-508-8364.

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

Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers

The Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, allows 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 should have recently received 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.

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 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.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Nominations Open for the 2020 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers and FSA program participants to take part in their local County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by Aug. 1, 2020 (or next business day). For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member* available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur 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.

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2020 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops 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 FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$600,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit offices.usda.gov.

Farmers, Ranchers and Private Forest Landowners Use Conservation to Protect Pollinator Habitat, Boost Crop Production

The next time you snack on almonds, add blueberries to your smoothie or eat pumpkin pie, thank a pollinator and thank farmers, ranchers and private forestland owners who work hard to create and maintain their habitat.

Pollinators, such as honeybees, bumblebees, butterflies, birds, bats, flies and many others, play a critical role in crop production. Without pollinators, we wouldn't have many crops.

During the week of June 22-28, the nation will celebrate these iconic and crucial pollinators during National Pollinator Week. This year's theme is "Pollinators, Plants, People and Planet." Thirteen years ago, the U.S. Senate unanimously designated the third week in June as National Pollinator Week to increase awareness about the importance of pollinators and the challenges many of them face, including serious population declines and habitat losses, often due to land use changes and excessive or improper pesticide use. Nearly 200 species of pollinators are considered threatened or extinct.

Pollination occurs when pollen grains are moved between two flowers of the same species, or within a single flower by wind or insects and animals. Successful pollination results in healthy fruit and fertile seeds, allowing the plants to reproduce.

The extensive and critical world of crop pollinators is a \$20 billion a year industry. About 75 percent of crop plants are pollinated by billions of animals and insects every year.

Many federal, state and local government agencies, non-government organizations and universities have launched extensive efforts to protect pollinators, especially honeybees and the Monarch butterfly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works closely with farmers, forest landowners and other private landowners to increase pollinator habitat in targeted areas nationwide.

The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), through USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS), offers financial incentives to agricultural producers and private forest landowners who enhance pollinator habitat by voluntarily implementing conservation practices such as cover crops, wildflower and native plantings in buffers and areas not in production.

[Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) also can be used to enhance habitat to protect pollinators. Administered by USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA), CRP is a land conservation program in which enrolled landowners remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality.

As owners and stewards of the land, many farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners manage their natural resources to work to achieve their production goals, they are protecting the rich and diverse ecology on or near their operations.

When we protect pollinators, we protect our ability to grow food. We thank our farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners for who offer a safe haven for pollinators and grow the products we enjoy.

Whether you are a large commodity producer, a small and diverse organic producer or even a suburban homeowner, you can have an important role in saving pollinators in Indiana.

Do your part to help protect pollinators. By taking action to diversify and beautify your operation or property, you could ensure that many fruits and vegetables are available and plentiful for future generations for many years to come.

For more information about pollinators and what you can do in Indiana, please contact your local [USDA service center](#).

Journal of Soil and Water Conservation Provide Evidence that USDA Conservation Practices Work

Conservation practices are working to reduce runoff, improve soil quality, and mitigate contaminants in small watersheds across the country, according to USDA's scientific findings published in the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Agricultural Research Service (ARS) collaborated with universities and other agencies and organizations to complete the water-quality studies featured in the journal through USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP).

Practices were assessed at plot, field, edge-of-field and watershed scales and included drainage management, conservation tillage, cover crops, buffers, irrigation, nutrient management, water management and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practices.

Two papers that hit home in Indiana are the Mississippi River Basin and Western Lake Erie Basin studies. In the Central Mississippi River Basin, combining no-till and cover crop practices reduced sediment losses by 87% and nitrate losses by 57% on a monitored field due to changes in soil moisture, timing of nitrogen applications and use of cover crops. In the Western Lake Erie Basin, edge-of-field monitoring revealed that subsurface placement of fertilizer in tile-drained fields reduced dissolved phosphorus losses by 66%. In addition, an innovative conservation practice was developed to treat contaminant losses from drainage water – replacing tile risers with blind inlets. This new practice reduced sediment losses by about 78% (Smith and Livingston 2013), total phosphorous losses by 66% and dissolved phosphorus losses by 50%.

The USDA spends about \$6 billion per year on agricultural conservation programs to help producers and landowners implement suitable conservation practices and systems on their land. For more information on the special issue, visit <https://www.jswconline.org/content/75/3>

USDA Adds Flexibilities for Crop Insurance

You can continue to work with your Approved Insurance Providers on policies, claims, and agreements. If you have crop insurance questions or other needs, you should continue to contact your insurance agents about conducting business by telephone or email.

USDA's Risk Management Agency is working with those insurance providers to provide additional flexibilities in response to COVID-19, including:

- Enabling producers to send notifications and reports electronically
- Extending the date for production reports
- Providing additional time and deferring interest on premium and other payments
- Extending the correction time period for acreage reports and other forms
- Modifying the sales period for Dairy Revenue Protection
- Authorizing replant self-certification
- Waiving the witness signature requirement for approval of Assignments of Indemnity
- Allowing dumped milk to be counted as milk marketings for the Dairy Revenue Protection or actual marketings for the Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy programs
- Allowing phone and electronic transactions for 2021 crop year sales and reporting dates, including options and endorsements
- Extending the deadline for some perennial crop Pre-Acceptance Inspection Reports
- Waiving the 2021 crop year inspection requirements for the Nursery and Nursery Value Select programs in certain cases
- Authorizing AIPs to allow organic producers to report acreage as certified organic, or transitioning to organic, for the 2020 crop year if they can show they have requested a written certification from a certifying agent by their policy's acreage reporting date.

For more in-depth information on these flexibilities, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Dates to Remember

June 15 - County Committee Nomination Period Begins

June 30 - Final Date for Signatures for 2020 ARCPLC Program

July 3 - Independence Day Observed - FSA Offices Closed

July 15 - Final Date to Report Planted Acreage

August 1 - Final Date to File County Committee Nomination Forms

August 28 - Final Date to File an Application for CFAP

Ongoing - Signup for Continuous CRP

Ongoing - Signup for Whip+ Disaster Assistance

Ongoing - Primary Nesting Season - Do Not Disturb CRP Acreage Until August 1st.

Continuous - Signup for Local County Office FSA Text Alerts

June 2020 Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans (Direct)	1.375%
Farm Ownership Loans (Direct)	2.25%
Farm Ownership Loans (Direct, Joint Financing)	2.5%
Farm Ownership Loans (Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher)	1.5%
Emergency Loans	2.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 Years)	0.25%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 Years)	0.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 Years)	0.50%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 Years)	0.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 Years)	0.75%
Commodity Loans	1.125%

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

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