

July 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Indiana State FSA Newsletter

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### Indiana State Farm Service Agency

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**State Committee Members:**  
Ken Rulon, Chairperson  
Allen Buchanan, Member

### From the SED

Hello from the State Directors Desk. What a spring and start of summer it has been on the FSA home front. We have just completed ARC/PLC signup and will complete acreage certifications by the middle of the month.

Moving forward there is still more work to be done. At the time of this article CFAP has generated 459,830 applications with 5.7 billion dollars being issued nationwide. On the Indiana front, we have received 14,500 applications, with 150 million dollars being issued. Producers have until August 28, 2020 to file an application for CFAP. WHIP + is the other major workload in front of us. Earlier in the year excessive rain was added to help producers qualify for crop losses in 2019. Indiana had 88

Bill Gelfius, Member  
Clint Orr, Member

counties designated for disaster due to excessive rain, contact your local office for more information.

**Administrative Officer:**  
Pauletta Dusterberg  
[pauletta.dusterberg@usda.gov](mailto:pauletta.dusterberg@usda.gov)

Due to COVID-19 our offices have been open with no face to face contact with our customers. We have started a 3-phase process to get back to normal. Currently most of the Indiana Offices are at Phase 2, which allows producers to visit offices by appointment only. Contact your local office to see which phase they are in and to schedule your in-person or phone appointment. Due to recent increases in COVID-19 positive tests, we are currently on hold for submitting any requests to move forward into Phase 3.

**Production Adjustment Chief:** Acting - Stephanie Alexander  
[stephanie.alexander@usda.gov](mailto:stephanie.alexander@usda.gov)

During this difficult time our customers and employees have been remarkable in completing all the required tasks to deliver FSA programs. Thanks to all of you and BE SAFE.

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Steve

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

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## Additional Commodities Eligible for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced an initial list of additional commodities that have been added to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), and that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made other adjustments to the program based on comments received from agricultural producers and organizations and review of market data. Producers will be able to submit applications that include these commodities on Monday, July 13, 2020. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting through Aug. 28, 2020, applications for CFAP, which helps offset price declines and additional marketing costs because of the coronavirus pandemic. USDA expects additional eligible commodities to be announced in the coming weeks.

USDA collected comments and supporting data for consideration of additional commodities through June 22, 2020.

### Changes to CFAP include:

- Adding the following commodities: alfalfa sprouts, anise, arugula, basil, bean sprouts, beets, blackberries, Brussels sprouts, celeriac (celery root), chives, cilantro, coconuts, collard greens, dandelion greens, greens (others not listed separately), guava, kale greens, lettuce – including Boston, green leaf, Lolla Rossa, oak leaf green, oak leaf red and red leaf – marjoram, mint, mustard, okra, oregano, parsnips, passion fruit, peas (green), pineapple, pistachios, radicchio, rosemary, sage, savory, sorrel, fresh sugarcane, Swiss chard, thyme and turnip top greens.

- Expanding for seven currently eligible commodities – apples, blueberries, garlic, potatoes, raspberries, tangerines and taro – CARES Act funding for sales losses because USDA found these commodities had a 5 percent or greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally, these commodities were only eligible for marketing adjustments.
- Determining that peaches and rhubarb no longer qualify for payment under the CARES Act sales loss category.
- Correcting payment rates for apples, artichokes, asparagus, blueberries, cantaloupes, cucumbers, garlic, kiwifruit, mushrooms, papaya, peaches, potatoes, raspberries, rhubarb, tangerines and taro.

Additional details can be found in the Federal Register in the [Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#) and [Final Rule Correction](#) and at [www.farmers.gov/cfap](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap).

Producers have several options for applying to the CFAP program:

1. Using an online portal, accessible at [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap), allows producers with secure USDA login credentials—known as eAuthentication—to certify eligible commodities online, digitally sign applications and submit directly to the local USDA Service Center. Producers who do not have an eAuthentication account can learn more and begin the enrollment process at [farmers.gov/sign-in](http://farmers.gov/sign-in). Currently, the digital application is only available to sole proprietors or single-member business entities. New commodities will be available in the system on July 13, 2020.
2. Completing the application form using our CFAP Application Generator and Payment Calculator found at [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap). This Excel workbook allows customers to input information specific to their operation to determine estimated payments and populate the application form, which can be printed, then signed and submitted to their local USDA Service Center. An updated version with the new commodities will be available on the website on July 13, 2020.
3. Downloading the AD-3114 application form from [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap) and manually completing the form to submit to the local USDA Service Center by mail, electronically or by hand delivery to an office drop box. In some limited cases, the office may be open for in-person business by appointment. Visit [farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status](http://farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status) to check the status of your local office.

USDA Service Centers can also work with producers to complete and securely transmit digitally signed applications through two commercially available tools: Box and OneSpan. Producers who are interested in digitally signing their applications should notify their local service centers when calling to discuss the CFAP application process. You can learn more about these solutions at [farmers.gov/mydocs](http://farmers.gov/mydocs).

### 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.

All other eligibility forms, such as those related to adjusted gross income and payment information, can be downloaded from [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap). For existing FSA customers, these documents are likely already on file.

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## May Margin Triggers Dairy Margin Coverage Program Payment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced that the May 2020 income over feed cost margin was \$5.37 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the third payment of 2020 for dairy producers who purchased the appropriate level of coverage under the [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program.

To date, FSA has issued more than \$176 million in program benefits to dairy producers who purchased DMC coverage for 2020.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. Over 13,000 operations enrolled in the program for the 2020 calendar year.

Although DMC enrollment for 2020 coverage has closed, signup for 2021 coverage will begin October 13 and will run through December 11, 2020.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors may also be required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone, and using online tools. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

For more information, visit [farmers.gov DMC webpage](https://farmers.gov/dmc-webpage) or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

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## Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program, Conservation Reserve Program, and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

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## Actively Engaged Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities

Many Farm Service Agency programs require all program participants, either individuals or legal entities, to be “actively engaged in farming.” This means participants provide a significant contribution to the farming operation, whether it is capital, land, equipment, active personal labor and/or management. For entities, each partner, stockholder or member with an ownership interest, must contribute active personal labor and/or management to the operation on a regular basis that is identifiable and documentable as well as separate and distinct from contributions of any other member. Members of joint operations must have a share of the profits or losses from the farming operation commensurate with the member’s contributions to the operation and must make contributions to the farming operation that are at risk for a loss, with the level of risk being commensurate with the member’s claimed share on the farming operation.

Joint operations comprised of non-family members or partners, stockholders or persons with an ownership in the farming operation must meet additional payment eligibility provisions. Joint operations comprised of family members are exempt from these additional requirements. For 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations can have one member that may use a significant contribution of active personal management exclusively to meet the requirements to be determined “actively engaged in farming.” The person or member will be defined as the farm manager for the purposes of administering these management provisions.

Non-family joint operations may request to add up to two additional managers for their farming operation based on the size and/or complexity of the operation. If additional farm managers are requested and approved, all members who contribute management are required to complete form CCC-902MR, Management Activity Record. The farm manager should use the form to record management activities including capital, labor and agronomics, which includes crop selection, planting decisions, acquisition of inputs, crop management and marketing decisions. One form should be used for each month and the farm manager should enter the number of hours of time spent for each activity under the date of the month the actions were completed. The farm manager must also document if each management activity was completed on the farm or remotely.

The records and supporting business documentation must be maintained and timely made available for review by the appropriate FSA reviewing authority, if requested.

If the farm manager fails to meet these requirements, their contribution of active personal management to the farming operation for payment eligibility purposes will be disregarded and their payment eligibility status will be re-determined for the applicable program year.

In some instances, additional persons or members of a non-family member joint operation who meet the definition of farm manager may also be allowed to use such a contribution of active personal management to meet the eligibility requirements. However, under no circumstances may the number of farm managers in a non-family joint operation exceed a total of three in any given crop and program year.

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## CRP Continuous Enrollment Period

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

CRP is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”), to control soil erosion, improve the water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Continuous signup enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

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

Unlike CRP enrollments under general CRP signups or CRP Grasslands, offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods.

For more information, including a list of acceptable practices, visit [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp).

For more information, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp) or contact your local office. To find your local USDA Service Center office, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/service-locator>.

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## CLEAR30 the First USDA Program to Offer 30-year Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will open signup this summer for CLEAR30, a new pilot program that offers farmers and landowners an opportunity to enroll in a 30-year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract. This pilot is available to farmers and landowners with expiring water-quality practice CRP contracts in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay regions. The program signup period is July 6 to Aug. 21, 2020.

The pilot is available in Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Eligible producers must have expiring Clean Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers

(CLEAR) initiative contracts, including continuous CRP Cropland contracts with water-quality practices or marginal pasturelands CRP contracts devoted to riparian buffers, wildlife habitat buffers or wetland buffers.

The longer contracts will help ensure that practices remain in place for 30 years, which will help reduce sediment and nutrient runoff and help prevent algal blooms. Traditional CRP contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

Annual rental payment for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus an inflationary adjustment of 27.5 percent, since CLEAR30 contracts will be for 30 years – much longer than the 10 to 15-year contracts for Continuous CRP offers.

Another unique program feature is that FSA will help producers maintain CLEAR30 contract acreage.

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. Anyone wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency is required to call to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for direct farm ownership loans is \$600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is \$400,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

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## Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
  - Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
  - Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
  - Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).
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# New Farmers.gov Feature Enables USDA Customers to Manage Conservation Activities Online

You can now manage your conservation activities and request assistance from USDA through a new feature on farmers.gov. These conservation features join several others already available through the farmers.gov portal, including the ability to view farm loan information.

Using a desktop, tablet, or phone, the “Conservation” feature enables you to:

- View, download and e-sign documents;
- Request conservation assistance;
- Reference technical terms and submit questions;
- Access information on current and past conservation practices; and
- View detailed information on all previous and ongoing contracts, including the amount of planned and received cost-share assistance.

Currently, access is only available for customers doing business as individuals. Entities – such as an LLC or Trust – can’t access the portal at this time, but access is being planned.

The new feature includes the most popular aspects from the NRCS Conservation Client Gateway (CCG), while providing enhanced functionality and an improved user experience. CCG is an NRCS portal for producers, but now these functionalities are being moved to farmers.gov to create one place to do business with NRCS, Farm Service Agency, and other USDA agencies. CCG will be actively maintained and supported until all its core features and functionalities have been migrated to farmers.gov later this year.

## How to Access

1. To access your conservation information, visit farmers.gov and sign in to the site’s authenticated portal, available on the menu at the top right of the site. To access, you will need a Level 2 USDA eAuthentication account.
2. How to Create an eAuth Login to Access Your Farmers.gov Account
3. Contact your local service center to confirm you have a USDA customer record with a primary email address. Use our Service Center Locator to find your local office.
4. Go to the eAuth Account Registration page.
5. Select "Customer" on the registration page.
6. Enter your primary email address, which should match what USDA has on your customer record. You will receive an email from eAuthentication asking you to confirm your email address. Click the “Continue Registration” link in this email to continue the registration process. \* Note: When you log in, your User ID will be your email address.
7. Next, enter your name and set a password.
8. Finally, you will need to verify your identity to access your farmers.gov account. You will be taken to a page where you will need to provide information such as your date of birth and residential address, and then you can either verify your identity online or in person at a Local Registration Authority (LRA).
9. You’re ready to log in!

\* Current CCG users can use their existing login and password to access the Conservation features on farmers.gov.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. Future self-service features available through the farmers.gov portal include:

- Authority for FSA and NRCS customers to work in the portal and act on behalf of their active power-of-attorney entitlements and their current authorities for business entities,
- Updated e-sign capabilities to enhance the single and multi-signer functionalities and
- A document management system that enables customers to download, upload and interact with their important conservation practice and contract documents.

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

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## USDA Announces Improvements to the Livestock Risk Protection Insurance Program This Summer

USDA's Risk Management Agency announced changes to the Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) insurance program for feeder cattle, fed cattle and swine starting this summer with the 2021 crop year. Changes include moving premium due dates to the end of the endorsement period and increasing premium subsidies to assist producers.

Specifically, the changes:

- Allow premiums to be paid at the end of the endorsement period, putting it in line with other policies.
- Increase the premium subsidy for coverage levels above 80 percent. Those with an 80 percent or higher coverage level will get a 5-percentage point subsidy increase.

You may buy LRP insurance throughout the year from Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs), with coverage prices ranging from 70 to 100 percent of the expected ending value of their animals. At the end of the insurance period, if the actual ending value is below the coverage price, you will be paid an indemnity for the difference. Premium rates, coverage prices and actual ending values are [posted online daily](#).

Livestock insurance is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. A list of insurance agents is available online using the RMA [Agent Locator](#). Learn more about livestock insurance and the modern farm safety net at [rma.usda.gov](http://rma.usda.gov).

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## Dates to Remember

**July 15** - Final Date to Report Planted Acreage

**July 15** - Final Date to Submit Production/Yields for 2019 ARC-IC Program on Form FSA-863.

**August 3** - Final Date to File County Committee Nomination Forms

**August 3** - Final Date to Request a 2020 Farm Reconstitution or Transfer

**August 21** – Final Date to Submit Offer for CRP CLEAR30 & CRP Re-enrollments

**August 28** – Final Date to File an Application for CFAP

**September 7** – Offices Closed – Labor Day Holiday

**September 30** - Final Date to Update PLC Yields

**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

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## July 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)	0.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 Years)	0.875%
Commodity Loans	1.125%

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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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