In Indiana, we are committed to delivering USDA programs and services to our farmers while taking safety measures in response to COVID-19. USDA has developed a detailed, data-driven COVID workplace safety plan that prioritizes the health and safety of our employees as well as their families and the farming community we serve.

As part of this strategy, USDA is currently closing all facilities to visitors, including Service Centers. While our Service Centers are closed to visitors, staff members from FSA and NRCS are continuing to work with producers by phone, email, and digital tools such as Microsoft Teams, Box, and OneSpan.

You can learn more about how to leverage these digital offerings by visiting https://www.farmers.gov/mydocs.

Please call your Service Center to schedule a phone or Microsoft Teams appointment. You can find contact information at farmers.gov/service-locator.

We would also like to remind you; the 2014 Farm Bill requires a customer receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA and NRCS.

Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity. Receipts should be issued for any information, program, or loan assistance provided whether through an office visit, email, fax, or letter.
We value the in-person work that we do with our customers and look forward to when we can resume in-person appointments. In the meantime, we will use phone, email, and online tools to ensure we are meeting your needs.

Yesterday morning we sent a bulletin concerning the March 15th deadline to complete your Election and Enrollment for the 2021 ARCPLC program. Also included in the bulletin was an article on the Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) Webinar. We were informed after the bulletin was sent that the original webinar link we had been provided was incorrect. Below is the correct link.

Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) Webinar

**Wednesday, March 10, 2021 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM EST**

Please register via the link below. If you have questions, contact Michael Rutherford, Business Programs Director, 614-255-2420, michael.rutherford@usda.gov.

https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4205752236203148811

Respectfully,

Your Indiana FSA Staff

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**Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans**

The Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to $50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between $50,000 and $100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding $100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

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

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**USDA Encourages Completion of Cash Rents and Leases Survey**

You may have received a *Cash Rents and Leases* survey from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). This survey provides the basis for estimates of the current year’s cash rents
paid for irrigated cropland, non-irrigated cropland, and permanent pasture. Please complete your Cash Rents and Leases survey by June 21. This survey can be completed and returned by mail, over the phone, or at agcounts.usda.gov.

Information from this survey is used in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as an alternative soil rental rate prior to finalizing new rates each year. Survey responses from as many localities as possible help calculate more accurate rental rates. Completion of the survey ensures cash rental rates accurately represent your locality. Survey results will also give you a useful tool in negotiating your rental agreements, and financial planning for your agricultural operation.

In accordance with federal law, survey responses are kept confidential. Survey results will be available in aggregate form only to ensure that no individual producer or operation can be identified. NASS will publish the survey results on August 27 at quickstats.nass.usda.gov.

If you have any questions about this survey, please call 888-424-7828, or visit: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Cash_Rents_by_County/index.php.

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**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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**Making Farm Reconstitutions**

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

To be effective for the current Fiscal Year (FY), farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the FY** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. A
reconstitution is considered to be requested when all of the required signatures are on FSA-155 and all other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

- **Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate
- **Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding
- **DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract
- **Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

For questions on your farm reconstitution, contact your local USDA Service Center.

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**Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting**

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of “idle” and “fallow.”

**Reporting Cover Crops:**

Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- **Cereals and other grasses**
- **Legumes**
- **Brassicas and other broadleaves**
- **Mixtures**

If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

**Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:**

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee’s satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

**Acreage Reports:**

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, you must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage
report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

**Reporting Grazing Allotments:**

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. You will use form “FSA-578” to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the “Reporting Unit” field. Your local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

**Definitions of Terms**

FSA defines “idle” as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season.

For more information, contact your local FSA office or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

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**Know Your Final Planting Dates**

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on the final planting date for specific crops. The final planting dates vary by crop, planting period and county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific planting deadlines. The timely planting of a crop, by the final planting date, may prevent loss of program benefits.

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**Conservation Reserve Program Signup**

The USDA is extending the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup period, which had previously been announced as ending on Feb. 12, 2021. USDA will continue to accept offers as it takes this opportunity for the incoming Administration to evaluate ways to increase enrollment. Under the previous Administration, incentives and rental payment rates were reduced resulting in an enrollment shortfall of over 4 million acres. The program, administered by USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides annual rental payments for 10 to 15 years for land devoted to conservation purposes, as well as other types of payments. Before the General CRP Signup period ends, producers will have the opportunity to adjust or resubmit their offers to take advantage of planned improvements to the program.

This signup for CRP gives producers an opportunity to enroll land for the first time or re-enroll land under existing contracts that will be expiring Sept. 30, 2021.

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.

FSA is increasing **incentive payments** for practices installed on land enrolled in the **Continuous Conservation Reserve Program**. FSA is upping the Practice Incentive Payment for installing practices, from 5 percent to 20 percent. Additionally, producers will receive a 10 percent incentive payment for water quality practices on land enrolled in CRP's continuous signup.

All interested producers, including those on Indian reservations and with trust lands, are encouraged to contact their local [USDA Service Center](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp) for more information or visit [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp).

**USDA and SCORE Joining Forces to Find Mentors**

If you are a farmer or rancher, or have agricultural or business experience, join us in supporting the next generation and in investing in your local community. Your experiences and knowledge as a business owner, agricultural professional, or farmer can provide vital support to your community.

USDA is collaborating with [SCORE – score.org](https://score.org) - the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors in an effort to expand the field of available agricultural mentors and provide free business mentoring to farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural and rural business owners. SCORE is currently looking for volunteers with experience in an agriculture-related field who would like to become part of an extended field of volunteers. The organization’s Orientation and Mentoring Certification program provides volunteers with everything needed to be a successful volunteer. Training includes background about SCORE’s mission and services, as well as guidance on how to be a business mentor, including enhancement of listening, interviewing and problem-solving skills.

Current mentors have backgrounds in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, business and financial planning. The mentors provide local expertise and free one-on-one business mentoring to new and existing farmers and business owners. Together they work through the process of starting or maintaining agricultural and rural businesses. No matter what stage a business is in, SCORE volunteer mentors can help in developing business plans, navigating financing and legal issues, identifying new markets, and other topics, in order to help their clients succeed. FSA invites you to learn more and sign up to become a mentor today at [newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship](https://newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship).

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

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.

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.

**Applying for FSA Guaranteed Loans**

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to $1,776,000. 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.

For more information on guaranteed loans, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

**Dates to Remember**

- **March 15** – 2021 ARC-PLC Election and Enrollment Deadline
- **March 15** – NAP Sales Closing Date for annual spring/summer planted crops not limited to: beans, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, canola, cantaloupes, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, greens, herbs, honeydew, lettuce, oats, okra, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, sorghum, squash, tomatillos, tomatoes, and watermelon
- **March 15** - Crop Insurance Sales Closing Date for Spring Planted/Seeded Crops
- **March 31** – Final date to obtain Commodity Loans or Loan Deficiency Payments on 2020 harvested small grains
- **April 9** - Final Date to Apply 2018 & 2019 Losses under the Quality Loss Adjustment Program
- **May 31** - Memorial Day Observance - Offices Closed
- **June 1** - Final date to obtain Commodity Loans or Loan Deficiency Payments on 2020 Corn and Soybeans
- Delayed until Further Notice - CRP Grasslands Signup (originally scheduled to begin March 15th)
- **Deadline TBD** - Submit an offer for General CRP/SAFE Acreage
- **Deadline TBD** - CFAP 1 ‘Top-up’ Payments for Swine & CFAP2 Payment Calculations & Expanded Eligibility
Options

**Ongoing** - Signup for [Continuous CRP](#)

**Ongoing** – Submit an Application for a [Farm Storage Facility Loan](#)

**Continuous** - Signup for Local County Office FSA Text Alerts

**Continuous** – Sign up for GovDelivery Newsletters, Bulletins and Indiana Press Releases ([https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFSA/subscriber/new/](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFSA/subscriber/new/))

**Continuous** - File the [Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP)](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster/estatic/9205.htm) Notice of Loss (NOL) ([Honeybee NOL Must be Filed within 15 Days of When the Loss is First Apparent; Livestock Feed, Grazing & Farm-Raised Fish NOL Must be Filed within 30 Days of When the Loss is First Apparent])

**Continuous** - File the [Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Disaster/2019LivestockIndemnityProgram) Notice of Loss within 30 Calendar Days of When the Livestock Loss is First Apparent.

**Continuous** - File the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Disaster/Non-Insured-Program) NOL Within 15 Calendar Days of the Earlier of a Natural Disaster Occurrence, the Final Planting Date if Planting is Prevented by a Natural Disaster, the Date the Damage to the Crop or Loss of Production Becomes Apparent; or the Normal Harvest Date. **Note:** A producer’s signature is required on form CCC-576 when a Notice of Loss is submitted.

**Continuous** - Submit Application for the [Tree Assistance Program (TAP)](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/TreeAssistance) along with Supporting Documentation within 90 Calendar Days of the Disaster Event or the Date when the Loss is Apparent to the Producer.

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**Current Interest Rates**

**Price Support Loans**

**Commodity Loans** – 1.125%

**Farm Storage Facility Loans**

- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year -- 0.250%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year -- 0.500%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year -- 0.875%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year -- 1.125%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year -- 1.375%

*FSFL Microloans are also available for the 3, 5, and 7 year terms at the 3, 5, and 7 year term rates for a maximum aggregated loan amount of $50,000 and at a reduced down payment of 5% (regular FSFL loans require 15% down and have a maximum loan amount of $500,000).*

**Farm Loans**

- Farm Operating Loan, Direct -- 1.375%
- Farm Ownership Loan, Direct -- 2.750%
- Farm Ownership Loan, Direct, Joint-Financing -- 2.500%
- Limited Resource Loans -- 5.000%
- Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment -- 1.500%
- Emergency Loans -- 2.375%

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).