Indiana State FSA Newsletter

Indiana FSA Updates

Spring weather has finally arrived with the smells of fresh cut grass and freshly turned soil. Many of you are prepping ground or have begun your spring planting.

We want to remind you to timely complete your crop acreage reports. Timely acreage reports are required to maintain program eligibility and benefits for current and future programs. Maps, for acreage reporting purposes, are available from your local FSA office.

Once you have completed your planting, we encourage you to promptly contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment. FSA can work with producers to file timely acreage reports by phone, email, virtual meetings, and online tools such as Box and OneSpan. Box and OneSpan offer secure solutions for efficiently signing and sharing USDA documents. In-person appointments may also be available however are dependent upon the service center operating status at that time.

Indiana Acreage Reporting Dates:

- July 15 - All Other Crops, Perennial Forage
- December 15 – Fall Mint, Fall-Seeded Small Grains and Canola
- January 2 - Honey (beehive colonies)
- January 15 - Apples

Cucumbers Reporting Dates:

Knox County:
- June 15 - cucumbers planted May 1 through May 31
- September 15 – cucumbers planted June 1 through August 15

Fulton, LaPorte, Porter and St. Joseph Counties:
- July 15 – cucumbers planted May 10 through June 15
August 15 – cucumbers planted June 16 through August 5

All Other Indiana Counties:

July 15 – cucumbers planted May 10 through June 15

May you all have a safe and successful planting season.

Respectfully,
Your Indiana FSA Staff

Secure Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Services are free, secure, and available for multiple programs.

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.

OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer’s personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Both are optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

Visit farmers.gov/mydocs to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

FSA Accepting CFAP 2 Applications - Funding Available to Organizations to Assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers under Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces the availability of $2 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The funding was made possible by USDA’s new Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, an effort to distribute resources more broadly and to put greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers impacted by the pandemic.

FSA’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) signup will reopen on April 5, 2021, as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Farmers and ranchers will have at least 60 days to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.
Cooperative Agreements

The cooperative agreements will support participation in programs offered by FSA, including those that are part of USDA’s Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Interested organizations must submit proposals by May 5, 2021.

Outreach and technical assistance cooperative agreements support projects that:

- Increase access and participation of socially disadvantaged applicants in FSA programs and services.
- Improve technical assistance for socially disadvantaged applicants related to county committees focused on urban agriculture as well as FSA programs, including loan, disaster assistance, conservation and safety-net programs.

FSA will prioritize review of proposals that support outreach on CFAP 2. To ensure effective outreach during the signup period for CFAP 2, these applications will be reviewed immediately following the submission deadline for prioritized approval and project initiation.

This funding opportunity is available to non-profits having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (other than institutions of higher education), Federally recognized Native American tribal governments, Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments), and public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, including 1890 land grant institutions and 1994 tribal land-grant colleges and universities.

Awards will range from $20,000 to $99,999 for a duration between six months and one year. Applications focusing primarily on CFAP 2 will be expedited. For other proposals, FSA anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by June 20, 2021 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 1, 2021.

For more information, view the cooperative agreement opportunity on grants.gov (No. USDA-FSA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001104) or visit fsa.usda.gov/cooperativeagreements.

Reopening of CFAP 2

CFAP 2 provides financial assistance that gives producers the ability to absorb increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible commodities include specialty crops, livestock, dairy, row crops, aquaculture, floriculture and nursery crops. The initial CFAP 2 signup ended on Dec. 11, 2020, but USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning today. Visit farmers.gov/cfap for details on all eligible commodities, producer eligibility, payment limitations and structure and additional program resources.

Producers have multiple options to apply for CFAP 2, including through an online application portal and by working directly with the FSA office at their local USDA Service Center. Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages with the team at the FSA county office.

Additional CFAP Actions

USDA will also finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula.

More Information to Come on Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Relief through the American Rescue Plan

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act.
USDA recognizes that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have faced systemic discrimination with cumulative effects that have, among other consequences, led to a substantial loss in the number of socially disadvantaged producers, reduced the amount of farmland they control, and contributed to a cycle of debt that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To address these systemic barriers, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides historic debt relief to socially disadvantaged producers including Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander. Gender is not a criteria in and of itself.

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans.

As information becomes available, it will be provided directly to socially disadvantaged borrowers and stakeholder groups representing socially disadvantaged producers, posted on farmers.gov and FSA websites and social media channels, and shared through email newsletters and the media.

Producers who have worked with USDA’s Farm Service Agency previously may have their ethnicity and race on file. A borrower, including those with guaranteed loans, can contact their local USDA Service Center to verify, update or submit a new ethnicity and race designation using the AD-2047.

Find your nearest service center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

To learn more about USDA’s work to implement the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, visit www.usda.gov/arp.

---

**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. If you’re a new farmer, you can also reach out to your state Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinator.

---

**USDA Announces Updates for Honeybee Producers**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced updates to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) specific to honeybee producers.

For honeybees, ELAP covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses (the physical structure) and honeybee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.
Updates include:

- Starting in 2020, you have 15 days from when the loss is first apparent, instead of 30 days, to file a honeybee notice of loss, which provides consistency between ELAP and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which also has a 15-day notice of loss period for honey.
- ELAP will now run according to the calendar year. Since you are still required to apply for payment within 30 calendar days of the end of the program year, the new signup deadline for calendar year 2021 losses is January 30, 2022.
- If you were paid for the loss of a honeybee colony or hive in either or both of the previous two years, you will be required to provide additional documentation to substantiate how your current year inventory was acquired.
- If the honeybee colony loss was caused by Colony Collapse Disorder, you must provide a producer certification that the loss was a direct result of at least three of the five symptoms of Colony Collapse Disorder, which include:
  - the loss of live queen and/or drone bee populations inside the hives;
  - rapid decline of adult worker bee population outside the hives, leaving brood poorly or completely unattended;
  - absence of dead adult bees inside the hive and outside the entrance of the hive;
  - absence of robbing collapsed colonies; and
  - at the time of collapse, varroa mite and Nosema populations are not at levels known to cause economic injury or population decline.

For more information contact your local USDA Service Center visit farmers.gov/recover.

---

**Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses**

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

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

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

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

For more information on NAP, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

---

**Obtaining Payments due to Deceased Producers**

In order to claim a Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment on behalf of a deceased producer, all program conditions for the payment must have been met before the applicable producer’s date of death.

If a producer earned a FSA payment prior to his or her death, the following is the order of precedence for the representatives of the producer:

- administrator or executor of the estate
- the surviving spouse
- surviving sons and daughters, including adopted children
The legal representative of the deceased producer must file a form FSA-325 to claim the payment for themselves or an estate. The county office will verify that the application, contract, loan agreement, or other similar form requesting payment issuance, was signed by the applicable deadline by the deceased or a person legally authorized to act on their behalf at that time of application.

If the application, contract or loan agreement form was signed by someone other than the deceased participant, FSA will determine whether the person submitting the form has the legal authority to submit the form.

Payments will be issued to the respective representative’s name using the deceased program participant’s tax identification number. Payments made to representatives are subject to offset regulations for debts owed by the deceased.

FSA is not responsible for advising persons in obtaining legal advice on how to obtain program benefits that may be due to a participant who has died, disappeared or who has been declared incompetent.

Applying for FSA 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. Direct loans are processed, approved and serviced by FSA loan officers.

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.

Field Borders Allow Farms to Filter, Clean Water & Provide Homes for Wildlife

Sometimes in a quest for bigger harvests, producers put every inch of land to work. But more land for crops or pastures doesn’t always lead to bigger yields. It’s best to use land for its greatest purpose, enabling more than a traditional yield. One common way producers do this through conservation is field borders. Field borders are managed strips of grass or legumes, sometimes mixed with shrubs, on the edge of cropland fields that reduce erosion, promote wildlife and improve environmental quality.

Field borders – typically 15 to 30 feet wide – make operating easy for farm equipment, providing a sod-based area at the edge of the field to turn machinery during field operations. They also help protect combines and other equipment from overhanging tree limbs. Field borders protect water quality by trapping sediment and nutrients, much like a filter. These planted areas, depending on their location, reduce erosion, and trap sediment and nutrients that can have negative effects downstream. They also slow water down as it runs off fields.

Properly managed field borders also increase plant diversity and the availability of food sources such as seeds and insects for bobwhite quail, cottontail rabbits, wild turkeys, gray fox and many other wildlife species. Many of these
species like bobwhite quail have increased in population as field borders have been implemented. Not only can field borders serve as a wildlife-friendly practice, but they can be attractive features on farms.

For more information, contact your local USDA Service Center at USDA Service Center Locator.

RMA Announces Implementation of Improvements to Prevented Planting Coverage and the Beginning and Veteran Farmer and Rancher Program

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) improvements to prevented planting coverage and to the beginning and veteran farmer and rancher program took effect on November 30 for crop year 2021. These improvements, among others, were made to the Common Crop Insurance Policy Basic Provisions.

Improvements to prevented planting coverage include:

- Expanding the “1 in 4” requirement nationwide, requiring producers to plant, insure and harvest acreage in at least one of the four most recent crop years.
- Making modifications to ensure that producers' prevented planting payments adequately reflect the crops the producer intended to plant.
- For more information, see the previous announcement and these Frequently Asked Questions.

The improvement to the beginning and veteran farmer and rancher program will allow participants with farming experience to use the Actual Production History (APH) of the previous producer, with permission, on newly acquired land. Previously, the APH could only be used if the beginning or veteran farmer or rancher was involved on the specific acreage acquired.

RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Dates to Remember

April 1 – Nesting Season began for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Acreage
April 5 – Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) 2 re-opened. Deadline TBD at a later date.
April 9 - Final Date to Apply 2018 & 2019 Losses under the Quality Loss Adjustment Program
May 3 – Non-insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Sales Closing Date for Nursery (Ornamental Nursery & Non-ornamental Propagation Nursery) for Crop Year June 1 -1 May 31
May 31 - Memorial Day Observance - Offices Closed
June 1 - Final date to obtain Commodity Loans or Loan Deficiency Payments on 2020 Corn and Soybeans
June 15 – Nominations open for the 2021 County Committee (COC) Election
June 15 - Final Acreage Reporting Date for Cucumbers Planted May 1 through May 31 in Knox County
July 15 - Final Acreage Reporting Date for Perennial Forage, All other crops not listed within the 'Dates to Remember' section of this newsletter and Cucumbers planted May 10- June 15
August 15 - Final Acreage Reporting Date for Cucumbers Planted June 16 - August 5 in Fulton, LaPorte, Porter and St. Joseph Counties
September 15 - Final Acreage Reporting Date for Cucumbers Planted June 1 - August 15 in Knox County
December 15 - Final Acreage Reporting Date for Fall Mint, Fall-Seeded Small Grains and Canola
January 2 - Final Reporting Date for Honey/Beehive Colonies
January 15 - Final Acreage Reporting Date for Apples
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/)
Continuous - File Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) Notice of Loss (NOL) (Honeybee NOL Must be Filed within 15 Days of When the Loss is First Apparent; Livestock Assistance & Farm-Raised Fish NOL Must be Filed within 30 Days of When the Loss is First Apparent)

Continuous - File Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Notice of Loss within 30 Calendar Days of When the Livestock Loss is First Apparent.

Continuous - File Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance 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) along with Supporting Documentation within 90 Calendar Days of the Disaster Event or the Date when the Loss is Apparent to the Producer.

---

**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 -- 0.750%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year -- 1.250%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year -- 1.500%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year -- 1.750%

*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 -- 1.500%
- Farm Ownership Loan, Direct -- 2.875%
- Farm Ownership Loan, Joint-Financing -- 2.500%
- Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment -- 1.500%
- Limited Resource Loans -- 5.000%
- Emergency Loans -- 2.500%

---

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).