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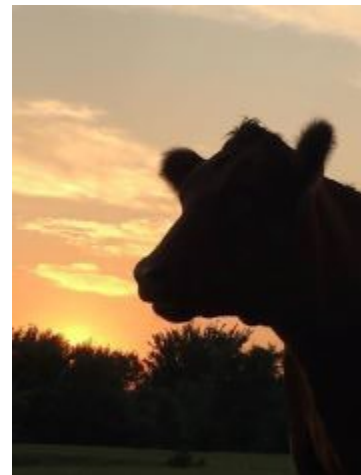
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Planting & Grilling Time Is Here

Ladies and gentlemen of the Indiana agricultural landscape, start your tractors and move those implements to the starting lineup in farm fields for the greatest spectacle in planting!

Thank you Mother Nature for your cooperative spirit this week as we embark – full speed ahead – on the 2022 planting season. All across the State of Indiana, farmers are working their land and planting the next crop which will provide the food, feed, fuel and fiber for our country and world. We know this is a big week to drop the seed and await germination. As you experience early mornings and late nights, please be safe and take care of yourselves.

As a livestock producer in the great state of Indiana, it also is important to lift up our animal protein producers. May is Beef Month across the country. Beef cattle have existed in the Hoosier state since the 1700s, and today, Indiana is home to more than 810,000 cattle. As spring awakes farm machinery, it also is the time of year that kicks-off the grilling season. Indiana is proud of its Indiana beef producers and industry partners who work together to provide the safest and highest quality beef products to all consumers. So as farm families and others are thinking about ‘what’s for dinner’ (or breakfast or lunch), beef recipes, cooking tips, meat cuts, nutritional information and how to raise beef information are available on the "[Beef. It's What's for Dinner.](#)" website. Check it out today and particularly this month as we celebrate



beef in May, but bookmark it for future meal planning and learning opportunities about the beef industry.

Thanks for all you do for American agriculture. It is an honor to work in agriculture to assist in telling the USDA FSA story!

Have a great month – and happy and safe planting.

Proudly Serving American Agriculture,



State Executive Director

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.

Maps for Acreage Reporting are Available

Acreage reporting maps are available in most [Indiana FSA county offices](#). If you have not already received or picked up your maps, please contact your county office to have them mailed, emailed or prepared for pick up.

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

Producers are encouraged to file their acreage reports as soon as planting is completed.

USDA Offers Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers working with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 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. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS 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.

Box and OneSpan are both 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.

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you're interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

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

2022 Avian Influenza in Indiana - What you need to know!



***Commercial producers
and
backyard enthusiasts
are asked to practice
good biosecurity
and
report sick or dead birds.***

To date, USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories has confirmed the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in commercial and backyard flocks in several states including Indiana. Avian influenza viruses are classified as either "low pathogenic (LPAI)" or "highly pathogenic (HPAI)" based on their genetic features and the severity of the disease they cause in poultry. Caused by an influenza type A virus, HPAI can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and wild birds (especially waterfowl).

The clinical signs of birds affected with all forms of Avian Influenza may show one or more of the following:

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Decreased water consumption up to 72 hours before other clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Soft-shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, and legs

- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Lack of coordination
- Diarrhea

In addition to the disease infecting domestic birds, it is important to know that wild birds can also be infected and show no signs of illness. They can carry the disease to new areas when migrating, potentially exposing domestic poultry to the virus. The [APHIS' wild bird surveillance program](#) provides an early warning system for the introduction and distribution of avian influenza viruses of concern in the United States, allowing APHIS and the poultry industry to take timely and rapid action.

With the recent detections of avian influenza in wild birds and domestic poultry in the United States, bird owners should review their biosecurity practices and stay vigilant to protect poultry and pet birds from transmission of this disease. The following bio-safety guidelines are effective methods for safeguarding commercial operations and smaller flocks:

- Backyard flock owners should practice strict biosecurity, including preventing birds from exposure and/or co-mingling with wild birds and other types of poultry.
- Shower, change clothes, and clean and disinfect footwear before entering your poultry housing areas.
- Respiratory protection such as a medical facemask would also be important and remember to always wear clean clothes when encountering healthy domestic birds.
- Carefully follow safe entry and exit procedures into your flock's clean area.
- Reduce the attractiveness for wild birds to stop at your place by cleaning up litter and spilled feed around poultry housing areas.
- If you have free range guinea fowl and waterfowl, consider bringing them into coops or flight pens under nets to prevent interaction of domesticated poultry with wild birds and their droppings.
- It is best to restrict visitors from interacting with your birds currently.
- Do not touch sick or dead wildlife and keep them away from domestic poultry.
- Try not to handle sick or deceased domestic birds (if you must, use proper personal protective equipment to minimize direct contact and cautiously disinfect anything that comes into contact with the deceased and or sick bird).

As part of the existing USDA Avian Influenza response plans, Federal and State partners as well as industry are responding quickly and decisively to these outbreaks by following these five basic steps:

- **Quarantine** – restricting movement of poultry and poultry-moving equipment into and out of the control area;
- **Eradicate** – depopulate the affected flock(s);
- **Monitor region** – testing wild and domestic birds in a broad area around the quarantine area;
- **Disinfect** – kills the virus in the affected flock locations; and
- **Test** – confirming that the poultry farm is AI virus-free.

Sick or deceased domestic birds should be reported to your local veterinarian. Positive domestic cases are handled by APHIS and its partners. States that have confirmed cases of Avian Influenza should work closely with USDA-APHIS on surveillance, reporting and control efforts. Disposal methods will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis depending on a variety

of factors, including the size of the flock, space requirements, associated costs, local conditions, and applicable laws/regulations.

The United States has the strongest Avian Influenza surveillance program in the world, where we actively look for the disease and provide fair market value compensation to affected producers to encourage reporting.

If you do not raise domestic birds or have a poultry operation but you encounter sick or dead wild birds, please use bio-safety measures, and report your findings through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, this strain of Avian Influenza is a low risk to the public. While the transmission rate from animals to humans is low, it is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be shared between species. To learn more about Avian Influenza and to remain up to date on the latest related news and information, you can visit the USDA [APHIS webpage](#).

The [Indiana State Board of Animal Health's Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza webpage](#) contains state specific information, resources and situation updates. The Indiana Department of Animal Health can be reached at 877-747-3038 or via email to animalhealth@boah.in.gov.

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 and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies, it's important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.

Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans. 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.



FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

FSA [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) can 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.

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.

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 farm loans, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Progression Lending from FSA



FSA farm loans are considered progression lending. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Our goal is to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. FSA staff will advise borrowers on developing strategies and a plan to meet your goals and graduate to commercial credit. FSA borrowers are responsible for the success of their farming operation, but FSA staff will help in an advisory role, providing the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Funding Available to Assess Impacts of Prior Invasive Species Control on Ag and Forest Land

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing availability of funds to assess the impact of prior invasive species control funded through NRCS on agriculture and forested lands. Funding is also available to help develop workplans for continued control if needed. This work will be conducted in the Indiana portion of the Great Lakes watersheds. Funding for this project is through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Conservation Technical Assistance.

Awardees will work cooperatively with NRCS to conduct site visits at locations previously funded for invasive species control, assess current conditions and create plans if needed for continued treatment and/or maintenance. Applicants must have knowledge of invasive species identification, native species identification, forest management, GIS mapping, developing treatment recommendations and good communication skills.

The estimated funding floor for this opportunity is \$50,000 with an estimated funding ceiling of \$100,000. Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for the award.

Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=Great%20Lakes%20Invasive%20Species%20Control%20Monitoring%20Project>) by 11:59PM Eastern Time on May 31.

For inquiries specific to the content of the funding requirements, contact Shynika Loften, Grants Management Specialist at Shynika.loften@usda.gov with a copy to FPAC.BC.GAD@USDA.GOV. Questions related to eligibility, or the merits of a specific proposal will not be addressed.

The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at nass.usda.gov/Publications and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be.

RMA Extends Crop Insurance Flexibilities to June Due to COVID-19

Because of the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending program flexibilities to Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) and agricultural producers until June 30, 2022 or later. Originally, these flexibilities were expiring this month.

Extended flexibilities include:

- Allowing notifications to be sent electronically, including policy related information over the phone or other electronic methods to select policy elections by sales closing, acreage reporting and production reporting dates, including options, endorsements and their forms. Producers may sign electronically or within 60 calendar days.
- Allowing producers to submit a request for a written agreement after the sales closing date.
- Allowing producers with inability to physically sign a written agreement because of COVID-19 to do so after the expiration date.

- Providing additional time for AIPs to accept Regional Office Determined Yield, Master Yield, and Irrigated Determined Yield requests for Category B (annual) crops.
- Allowing AIPs to request a 30-day extension to submit Determined Yield requests for Category C (perennial) crops.
- Waiving the witness signature requirement for approval of Assignments of Indemnity.

Additional details can be found in [RMA's Jan. 20, 2022 Manager's Bulletin](#), the [frequently asked questions](#) or farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

May 2022 Lending Rates

USDA announced loan interest rates for May 2022, which are effective May 1, 2022. USDA's FSA loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment and storage structures, or meet cash flow needs.

Operating and Ownership Loans

- [Farm Operating Loans](#) (Direct): 2.875%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct): 3.375%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct, Joint Financing): 2.500%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Down Payment): 1.500%
- [Emergency Loan](#) (Amount of Actual Loss): 3.750%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders.

You can find out which of these loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

Commodity and Storage Facility Loans

- [Commodity Loans](#) (less than one year disbursed): 2.750%
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#) (3,5,7,10 or 12 year loans): 2.625%

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Dates to Remember

May 13 – Final Day to Submit an Offer for the [Grassland Conservation Reserve Program](#)

May 30 – Offices Closed in Observance of Memorial Day

May 31 – [NAP](#) Sales Closing Date for Nursery (Ornamental Nursery & Non-Ornamental Propagation Nursery) for the Crop Year June 1 – May 31

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 ([Subscribe to USDA Emails for Farmers](#) | [Farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov))

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Indiana Farm Service Agency
Service Center Locator

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).