
Here Comes the Sun



Agriculture's sun is *harvest* ... and it's coming sooner rather than later. You can almost watch the corn stalks and bean pods change color overnight. Those early summer mornings of scouting fields, long days of fertilizing and tilling, and beautiful evenings of watching the crop mature make us all ready for the bounty that awaits us this fall. As the leaves begin to shed from trees and turn to shades of yellow and orange, we are anxiously awaiting the sound of the combines and grain carts that will dot the Indiana landscape.

As you prepare to do the work you all do best, I know these next few weeks will be filled with coffee shop predictions of yields and prices. Following the growing season of watching the weather, fretting over storms, observing and dealing with pests, weeds and disease, your decision to deem the crop ready for harvest is one made with much thought and consideration. Whenever harvest begins for you, Indiana is an exciting place to be as rural communities across the state hold their autumn festivals, farm implements take over gravel roads and a sense of optimism and harvest smells saturate the Hoosier air. This is the Indiana farmer 'Superbowl' season, and on behalf of our entire Indiana FSA staff, I want to say thank you for the long hours you spend to reap the crop, which ultimately becomes food on our dining room tables.

As always, the Indiana FSA staff stands ready to assist you with your farming operation by offering voluntary programs that may fit your needs. Make a call and visit with your local staff to learn more about the various programs available to you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia".

State Executive Director

What Can You Do with a Farmers.gov Account?

Did you know that farmers.gov has an authenticated site where you can manage your USDA business? A farmers.gov account gives you one place to do business with the USDA's Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, including the ability to e-sign documents, request assistance and apply for programs.

[Learn more about farmers.gov.](https://farmers.gov)

USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers



Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022.

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can now apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program](#) (OTECP) and [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses.

OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).
- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per category of certification costs in 2022.

This cost share for certification is available for each of these categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and State organic program fees.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. Producers have until October 31, 2022 to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center. As part of completing the OCCSP applications, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses. Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating State agencies.

Additional details can be found on the [OTECP](#) and [OCCSP](#) webpages.

New Guide Available for Underserved Farmers



Get Started!

A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers:

A new multi-agency guide for USDA assistance for underserved farmers and ranchers is now available. If you are a farmer and are a minority, woman, veteran, beginning, or limited resource producer, you can use this booklet to learn about assistance and targeted opportunities available to you. This includes programs offered through the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency. The guide is also available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese on farmers.gov/translations.

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](#).

2022 Census of Agriculture



Applying for Beginning Farmer Loans

The Farm Service Agency (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.

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

USDA Fruit, Vegetable and Wild Rice Planting Rules

Fruit, vegetable and wild rice producers follow rules for certain Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs.

If you participate in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, you are subject to an acre-for-acre payment reduction when fruits and nuts, vegetables or wild rice are planted on payment acres of a farm. Payment reductions do not apply to mung beans, dry peas, lentils or chickpeas. Planting fruits, vegetables or wild rice on acres not considered payment acres will not result in a payment reduction. Farms that are eligible to participate in ARC/PLC but are not enrolled for a particular year may plant unlimited fruits, vegetables and wild rice for that year but will not receive ARC/PLC payments. Eligibility for succeeding years is not affected.

Planting and harvesting fruits, vegetables and wild rice on ARC/PLC acreage is subject to the acre-for-acre payment reduction when those crops are planted on more than 15 percent of the base acres of an ARC enrolled farm using the county coverage or PLC, or more than 35 percent of the base acres of an ARC enrolled farm using the individual coverage.

Fruits, vegetables and wild rice that are planted in a double-cropping practice will not cause a payment reduction if the farm is in a double-cropping region as designated by the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Avian Influenza in Indiana - What You Need to Know About Biosecurity and Reporting



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

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been leading farm news headlines across the nation for most of 2022. To date, more than 400 test-positive sites in 39 states have yielded a loss of nearly 44 million birds this year.

Animal health officials are concerned that cases of HPAI will continue to crop up through the fall as seasonal wild bird migration resumes. Indiana's most recent case—a hobby flock in Elkhart County diagnosed September 1—was identified after the state regained HPAI-free status with no new cases for three months. In total, Indiana has had 14 cases in commercial and hobby flocks in five counties.

Anyone who owns poultry—whether the flock is large or small—should take steps to prevent the disease and be aware of signs of HPAI. Early reporting and diagnosis can help contain spread of the disease.

The clinical signs of birds affected with 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

Wild birds can also be infected and show no signs of illness. They 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 confirmed case in Indiana, 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 into clean clothes, and clean and disinfect footwear before entering poultry housing areas.
- 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.
- Restrict visitors from interacting with your birds.

As part of the existing USDA avian influenza response plans, [Indiana State Board of Animal Health](#) (BOAH) and Federal partners are responding quickly and decisively to these outbreaks by following these five basic steps: Quarantine, Eradicate, Monitor, Disinfect and Test.

Sick or deceased **domestic** birds should be reported to your local veterinarian or by calling the Healthy Birds Hotline at **1-866-536-7593**.

Sick or dead **wild** birds, please report them to Indiana Department of Natural Resources at **317-233-3293** or online at in.gov/sickwildlife.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), this strain of avian influenza is low risk to the public. While the transmission rate from animals to humans is low, the virus is zoonotic, meaning it can pass 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 [BOAH: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza](#) webpage contains hotline numbers, situation updates, guidelines, resources and FAQs. You can also subscribe for email or text updates on Indiana's HPAI status. BOAH can be contacted directly by calling 877-747-3038 or via email to animalhealth@boah.in.gov.

Implementing Fire Management on CRP Acres

FSA encourages you to be proactive in preventing the spread of wildfire. If you participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), you are responsible for fire management on your CRP acreage. The goal is to suppress the amount of fuel in the event of a wildfire while still promoting the diversity of the conservation cover.

One fire management practice includes installing firebreaks, which should be included in the contract support document and installed according to NRCS firebreak standards. Barren

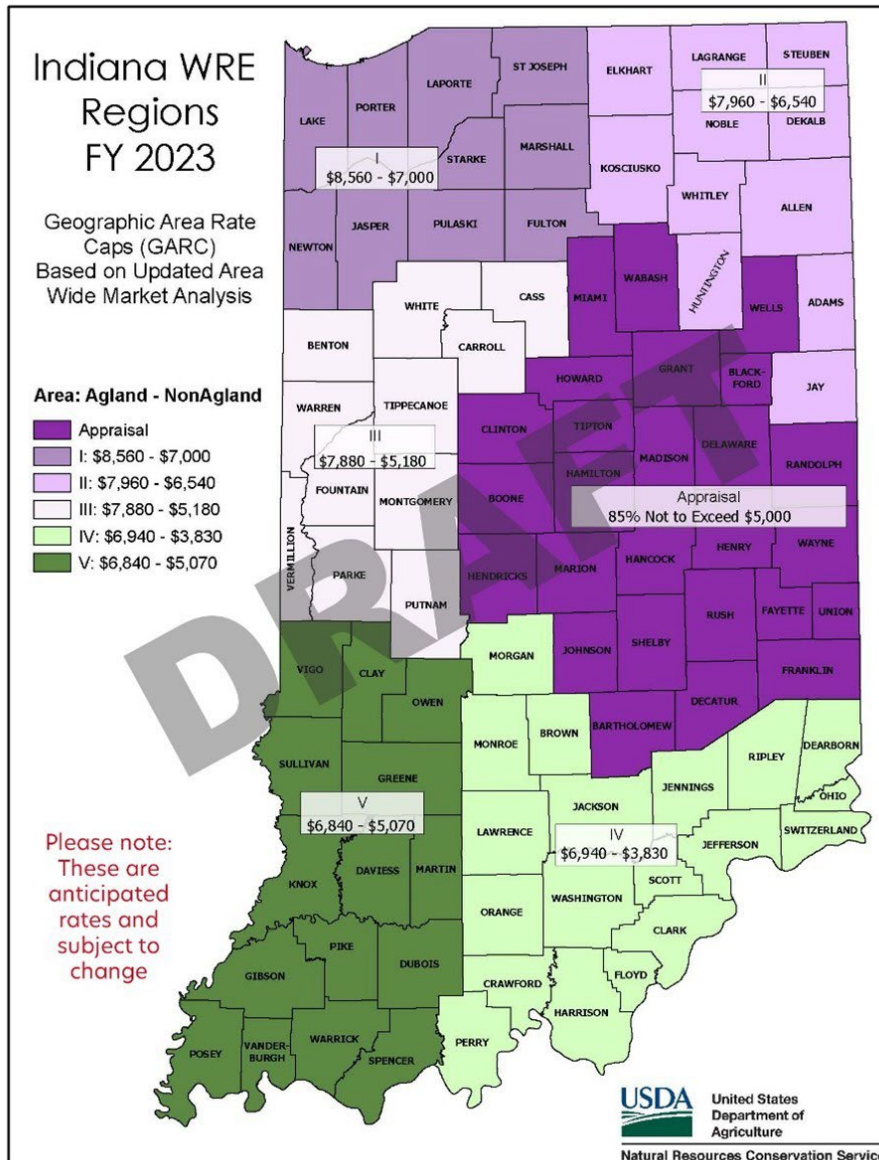


firebreaks will only be allowed in high-risk areas, such as transportation corridors, rural communities, and adjacent farmsteads. A conservationist must certify that there will not be an erosion hazard from the barren firebreak. If erosion becomes a problem, remedial action will be taken.

You must complete the necessary management activities outside of the Primary Nesting Season. In Indiana, the Primary Nesting Season is April 1 through August 1. Remember fireguard technical practices should be outlined in your Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO).

Wetland Easement Compensation Rates Anticipated to Increase

The anticipated 2023 Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARC) rates for Indiana have been released and its good news for Indiana residents considering enrolling eligible land into the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program's Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE) through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS). GARC rates are the per acre compensation ranges a landowner will receive in return for enrolling his or her land into ACEP-WRE.



The GARC rates from Indiana NRCS are anticipated to rise significantly for this year to match the rising cost of the fair market value of land. The values are based on several various factors including soil types, types of crops capable of being grown, production history, location, real estate market values, and tax rates and assessments.

Indiana NRCS expects the next ACEP-WRE sign-up cutoff to be Nov. 15. While applications are accepted continuously throughout the year, eligible landowners must work with their local district conservationists to have their applications in by Nov. 15 to be eligible for this round of funding.

For more information about ACEP-WRE please [contact your local district conservationist](#) or visit the [Indiana ACEP website](#).

Report Banking Changes to FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to receive timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for any reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2021 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2022. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

September 2022 Lending Rates

USDA announced loan interest rates for September 2022, which are effective September 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): 4.000%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct): 4.250%
- [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 Farm Storage Facility Loans

- [Commodity Loans](#) (less than one year disbursed): 4.125%
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#)
 - 3 year loan: 3.125%
 - 5, 7, or 12 year loans: 2.875%
 - 10 year loans: 2.750%

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

September 15 – Final Acreage Reporting Date for Cucumbers (Planted 6/1-8/15) Knox County

September 30 – Final Acreage Reporting Date for Value Loss & Controlled Environment Crops for the 2023 Crop Year)

September 30 – NAP Sales Closing Date for Garlic, Wheat, Barley, Rye and Mint for the 2023 Crop Year

September 30 – Final Date to Submit Receipts for 2022 Conservation Reserve Program Mid-Contract Management

October 10 – Offices Closed in Observance of Columbus Day

October 31 – Signup Deadline for [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) and the [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program](#)

Ongoing - Signup for [Continuous CRP](#)

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

Continuous - Submit an Application for a [FSA Farm 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](#))

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