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Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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Iowa FSA Newsletter

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March 15 Deadline to Complete Election & Enrollment for 2021 Agriculture Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage Programs

Agricultural producers who have not yet elected and enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2021 have until March 15. Producers who have not signed a contract or who want to make an election change should contact their local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center to make an appointment. Right now, about 1.4 million farms have enrolled, about 81% of expected participation.

"In times like these, from winter storms to a pandemic, we're reminded of the importance of managing risk," said Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). "The Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs provide critical support to farmers to protect them from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues. If you have not enrolled or made elections, please do so by the March 15 deadline."

Producers who enrolled for the 2019 crop year received more than \$5 billion in payments last fall. If an ARC or PLC payment triggers for a particular crop for the 2021 crop year and there is no signed 2021 contract on file, then the producer is ineligible for that program payment.

Producers are eligible to enroll farms with base acres for the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium- and short-grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Decision Tools

To help producers make elections, FSA makes [program data available](#) to help producers make ARC and PLC decisions.

Additionally, USDA partnered with universities to offer web-based decision tools:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), the University of Illinois tool that offers farmers the ability to run payment estimates modeling for their farms and counties for ARC-County and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), the Texas A&M tool that allows producers to analyze payment yield updates and expected payments for 2019 and 2020.

Crop Insurance Considerations

Producers are reminded that enrolling in ARC or PLC programs can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products offered by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). Producers who elect and enroll in PLC also have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider, but producers of covered commodities who elect ARC are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres.

Unlike SCO, RMA's Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by participating in ARC for the same crop, on the same acres. You may elect ECO regardless of your farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan, or STAX, on their planted cotton acres.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, visit farmers.gov/arc-plc.

While USDA offices are 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.

USDA Extends Application Deadline for the Quality Loss Adjustment Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending the deadline from March 5 to April 9 for agricultural producers to apply for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program because of recent winter storms and some clarifications to program rules. This program assists producers who suffered crop quality losses due to qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disasters.

The QLA program assists producers whose eligible crops suffered quality losses due to qualifying drought, excessive moisture, flooding, hurricanes, snowstorms, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, or wildfires.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available, except for grazed crops and value loss crops, such as honey, maple sap, aquaculture, floriculture, mushrooms, ginseng root, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, and turfgrass sod. Additionally, crops that were sold or fed to livestock or that are in storage may be eligible.

Assistance is available in counties that received a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or Secretarial Disaster Designation, or for drought, a county rated by the U.S. Drought monitor as having a D3 (extreme drought) or higher. Producers in counties that did not receive a qualifying declaration or designation may still apply but must also provide supporting documentation.

FSA will issue payments once the application period ends. If the total amount of calculated QLA payments exceeds available program funding, payments will be prorated.

More Information

FSA began accepting applications on January 6 and has received more than 8,100 applications so far.

To apply, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Additional information is also available at farmers.gov/quality-loss. Producers can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364.

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.

USDA Updates Form Requirement for Conservation Program Eligibility Determination

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is informing producers and landowners that they must have form CCC-902, the Farm Operating Plan form on file with USDA and receive a determination of eligibility if they are participating or applying to participate in certain NRCS conservation programs.

NRCS and FSA have joint responsibility to administer program payment eligibility and payment limitation requirements. To facilitate meeting these requirements, FSA is contacting producers or landowners who are currently participating in NRCS programs and do not have a CCC-902 form on file.

Historically, to participate, legal entities could file either the CCC-901 (Member Information form) or the CCC-902, while individuals were not specifically required to file the CCC-902 with FSA. Now, to ensure FSA and NRCS are using consistent information about a producer or landowner's operation, all participants, including legal entities and individuals, must file the CCC-902 and receive a determination of eligibility to maintain eligibility for certain NRCS conservation programs.

These changes do not affect applicants or participants that already have a Form CCC-902 and received a determination of eligibility from FSA.

Participants with an existing contract or agreement that do not have a CCC-902 on file with FSA will be mailed a letter in the coming weeks, providing information on how to file the form. The letter provides options for electronic or in-person submission and requests that the form be completed within 30 days of receipt of the letter.

Fiscal year 2021 is considered a transition year to ensure all NRCS program participants can meet this updated filing requirement. Beginning in fiscal year 2022, eligibility to continue to receive payments may be affected if the required form is not on file.

Additional information is available in [NRCS National Bulletin 300-21-7](#) and [FSA Notice PL-293](#).

NRCS and FSA staff are available at [USDA Service Centers](#) nationwide to provide applicants and participants with information and assistance to meet this filing requirement.

Disaster Assistance Available for Iowa Farmers and Livestock Producers Impacted by Recent Winter Storms

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides technical and financial assistance to help Iowa farmers and livestock producers recover from damages brought on by winter storms Uri and Viola. Agricultural producers are encouraged to contact their local USDA Service Center to learn about the programs available to help them recover from crop, land, infrastructure, and livestock losses.

Disaster Assistance

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to contact the FSA county office at the local [USDA Service Center](#) to apply for eligible programs and to learn which documents, such as farm records, herd inventory, receipts and pictures of damages or losses should be provided to help expedite assistance.

Producers who experience livestock deaths due to the winter storms may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#). Meanwhile, the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed and grazing losses. For LIP and ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss for livestock and grazing or feed losses within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days.

Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost during the winter storms. This complements [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days.

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed loans, including operating and emergency loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](#) to help them recover from production and physical losses. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs.

Risk Management

Producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or FSA's NAP should report crop damage to their crop insurance agent or FSA office. If they have crop insurance, producers should report crop damage to their agent within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days. For NAP covered crops, a [Notice of Loss](#) (CCC-576) must be filed within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

Conservation

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore damaged farmland or forests.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also offers programs to help in the recovery process. The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) can help producers plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters. Practices include [List Here](#).

Assistance for Communities

Additional NRCS programs include the [Emergency Watershed Protection](#) (EWP) program, which provides assistance to local government sponsors with the cost of addressing watershed impairments or hazards such as debris removal and streambank stabilization. Sponsors must submit a formal request (via mail or email) to the state conservationist for assistance within 60 days of the natural disaster occurrence or 60 days from the date when access to the sites is possible. For more information, please contact Name, Title, at email address.

More Information

On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](#) and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](#) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

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

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](#).

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