



Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [USDA Safety Net Program Enrollment for 2019 Ends March 16, 2020](#)
- [USDA Reminds Farmers of Feb. 28 Deadline for Conservation Reserve Prog. General Signup](#)
- [Producers Urged to Consider NAP or Crop Insurance for Crops before March 16th Deadline](#)
- [The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys](#)
- [USDA Reminds Farmers Who Received 'Top-up Payments' about Premium Payment Deadlines](#)
- [Did You Know that the 2018 Farm Bill Set Higher Limits on USDA Farm Loans](#)

New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

New Jersey Farm Service Agency

300 Clocktower Drive
Suite 202
Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

Phone: 609-587-0104

State Committee:

Linda A. DuBois, Chair
Kurt W. Alstede
Samuel G. Conard
Marty J. Bullock
Sean Gertner

State Executive Director:

[Barry Calogero](#)

Farm Loan Chief:

[Kevin Murphy](#)

Visit our website at

www.fsa.usda.gov/nj

Deadlines

Feb 28 -CRP General Sign up
Mar 16 - ARC PLC Election and NAP Coverage.

Click [here](#) to view and print our program calendar.

Until March 16, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested. Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our [program fact sheet](#) or our [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#). Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at fsa.usda.gov/arc/plc. To enroll, contact your [FSA county office](#) for an appointment.

USDA Reminds Farmers of Feb. 28 Deadline for Conservation Reserve Prog. General Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds agricultural producers interested in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2020 general signup to enroll by February 28, 2020. This signup is available to farmers and private landowners who are either enrolling for the first time or re-enrolling for another 10- to 15-year term.

Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive yearly rental payments for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers"), which can control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

CRP has 22 million acres enrolled, but the 2018 Farm Bill lifted the cap to 27 million acres.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the U.S. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. Marking its 35th anniversary in 2020, CRP has had many successes, including:

- Preventing more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;
- Reducing nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively;
- Sequestering an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road;
- Creating more than 3 million acres of restored wetlands while protecting more than 175,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, enough to go around the world 7 times; and
- Benefiting bees and other pollinators and increased populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, grasshopper sparrows and many other birds.

The CRP continuous signup is ongoing, which enables producers to enroll for [certain practices](#). FSA plans to open the Soil Health and Income Protection Program, a CRP pilot program, in early 2020, and the 2020 CRP Grasslands signup runs from March 16, 2020 to May 15, 2020.

To enroll in CRP, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Producers Urged to Consider NAP or Crop Insurance for Crops before March 16th Deadline

Basic NAP coverage is free and buy-up coverage is 50% off for beginning, limited resource, minority and women farmers. This includes entities whose

membership is at least 50% beginning, limited resource, minority and women farmers.

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx>.

Remaining Deadlines for 2020 NAP Coverage:

03/16/2020 – Beans, Brussel-Sprouts, Cantaloupes, Celery, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Honeydew, Oats, Okra, Peppers, Pumpkins, Sorghum, Soybeans, Squash, Sunflowers, Sweet Potatoes & Yams, Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Watermelons.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstated higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA’s online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

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

Producers who receive survey questionnaires should 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 www.nass.usda.gov/Publications and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be>. Watch a video on how to use quick Stats at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-9CAmhMRi0>

USDA to Measure Fruit and Berry Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct its end of season surveys for the 2019 fruit and berry production beginning in January 2020. The surveys will collect information about acres, production and prices from more than 2,500 growers in the Northeastern region of the United States.

“The information from these surveys directly impacts our regions’ fruit and berry growers in many positive ways,” said King Whetstone, director of NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office. “Growers can use the survey results when making business plans and marketing decisions. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) relies on the average yields and prices to administer farm programs. Cooperative Extension uses the data to provide needed outreach and education, and State Departments and agencies of agriculture use the information to aid growers,” stated Whetstone.

In these surveys, NASS asks participants to answer a variety of questions about apples, blueberries, cherries (tart), cranberries, peaches, and pears; depending on state and version of the questionnaire. For their convenience, survey participants have the option to respond online. As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses and publishes only State and National level data, ensuring that no individual producer or operation can be identified.

NASS will compile, analyze, and publish survey results in the May 5, 2020 *Noncitrus Fruit and Nuts* Report. All previous *Noncitrus Fruit and Nuts* publications are available online at <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications>. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office at 1-800-498-1518.

USDA Reminds Farmers Who Received ‘Top-up Payments’ about Premium Payment Deadlines

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) is reminding producers who received a prevented planting “top-up” payment last fall that they are required to purchase Federal crop insurance for the next two crop years. The upcoming deadlines (Sales Closing Dates) to purchase these crop insurance policies are February 15, February 28, and March 15, 2020, depending on a producer’s policy.

Producers who have trouble making their premium payment should contact their crop insurance agent to set up a written payment agreement to avoid being made ineligible to purchase Federal crop insurance and having to pay back the “top-up” payment.

Producers who had a payable prevented planting indemnity related to flooding, excess moisture or causes other than drought in 2019 automatically received a “top-up” payment from their Approved Insurance Providers in fall 2019. As of January 20, RMA has paid roughly \$4.29 billion in claims related to prevented planting for the 2019 crop year, and \$4 billion of those total prevented planting claims were associated with flood and excess moisture causes of loss.

The deadline to pay crop insurance premiums was January 31. To help farmers and ranchers affected by extreme weather last year, USDA deferred accrual of interest for 2019 crop year insurance premiums from September 30, 2019, to January 31, 2020. For producers who failed to meet the deadline, interest – calculated from the date of the first premium billing notice – attached on Feb. 1.

For more information on the two-year Crop Insurance Purchasing Requirement, see RMA’s [Prevented Planting Disaster Payments FAQs](#).

Did You Know that the 2018 Farm Bill Set Higher Limits on USDA Farm Loans

Higher limits are now available for borrowers interested in USDA's farm loans, which help agricultural producers purchase farms or cover operating expenses. The 2018 Farm Bill increased the amount that producers can borrow through direct and guaranteed loans available through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and made changes to other loans, such as microloans and emergency loans.

Key changes include:

- The Direct Operating Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000, and the Guaranteed Operating Loan limit increased from \$ 1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Operating loans help producers pay for normal operating expenses, including machinery and equipment, seed, livestock feed, and more.
- The Direct Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$600,000, and the Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Farm ownership loans help producers become owner-operators of family farms as well as improve and expand current operations.
- Producers can now receive both a \$50,000 Farm Ownership Microloan and a \$50,000 Operating Microloan. Previously, microloans were limited to a combined \$50,000. Microloans provide flexible access to credit for small, beginning, niche, and non-traditional farm operations.
- Producers who previously received debt forgiveness as part of an approved FSA restructuring plan are now eligible to apply for emergency loans. Previously, these producers were ineligible.
- Beginning and socially disadvantaged producers can now receive up to a 95 percent guarantee against the loss of principal and interest on a loan, up from 90 percent.

About Farm Loans

Direct farm loans, which include microloans and emergency loans, are financed and serviced by FSA, while guaranteed farm loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. For guaranteed loans, FSA provides a guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest.

For more information on FSA farm loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your [local USDA service center](#).

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).