New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

USDA Reminds New Jersey Farmers of the July 15 Acreage Reporting Deadline

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in New Jersey are currently open to phone and virtual appointments only but can still work with producers on time-sensitive crop acreage reports. FSA staff can provide assistance over the phone, by email and through virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams. The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in New Jersey:

- July 15 - Corn, Soybeans, Spring Feed Grains, Forage, CRP, & Most Other Crops
- August 15 - Processing beans and Hemp

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline. FSA staff are able to assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps.

Deadlines: Visit our state website and click on Program Deadlines or download the latest version of our program calendar here.

FSA county offices in New Jersey will be happy to provide maps to producers through mail, email or local pick-up instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete, producers should submit completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet as directed by their local office.

FSA offices are using Microsoft Teams software to virtually meet with producers to review maps and documents for certification. Producers who want to schedule a virtual appointment can download the Microsoft Teams app on their smart phones and call the FSA office for an appointment. You can also use Microsoft Teams from your personal computer without downloading software.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and provide producers the completed Report of Acreage form (FSA-ST2) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office by the reporting deadline above.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires an owned or rented acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA’s Risk Management Agency.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions, please contact your local FSA office. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone, and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/conservation.

Farmers Can Now Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)

Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available $16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.
Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 2, 2020. Read more to learn information about FSA county committee elections are available at year. To be considered, a producer must sign an election. Check with your local USDA service center to see if your LAA is up for election this month. Members serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, and underserved producers. USDA has also established a process for the public to identify additional commodities for potential inclusion in CFAP. Specifically, USDA is looking for data on agricultural commodities, that are not currently eligible for CFAP. Additional commodities may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others, and organizations, including those representing beginning, women and minority farmers and ranchers.” Fordyce said. “There’s an increasing need for diverse representation, including underserved producers, which includes beginning, ranchers and forest stewards to nominate candidates to lead, serve and represent their community on their county committee,” FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce said. “There’s a strong need for diverse representation, including underserved producers, which includes beginning, women and minority farmers and ranchers.”

Farm Storage Facility Loan Rates as Low as 0.25%
FSA’s Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest finance to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

- 3 year loan – 0.250%
- 5 year loan – 0.375%
- 7 year loan – 0.500%
- 10 year loan – 0.625%
- 12 year loan – 0.750%

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (fencelli, chickpeas and dry peas), honey, hay, renewable biomass, fuels, and charcoal for utilizes facilities, maple sap, nuts, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

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Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print off a pre-filled CFAP application, sign, and submit to your local FSA office either in person or via hard delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/dlap.

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/dlap or call 877-508-8364.

Want Additional Crops to be Included in CFAP? Comments Due June 22
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Farm Service Agency County Committee Nominations Open June 15
 USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin accepting nominations for county committee elections on Monday, June 15, 2020. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (fencelli, chickpeas and dry peas), honey, hay, renewable biomass, fuels, and charcoal for utilizes facilities, maple sap, nuts, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to $50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement. Loans exceeding $100,000 require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operators supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport, or contact your local county office to locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/contact or local FSA office.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy, lease, or improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over $373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, buildings, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements, and expedite small real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to $50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit farmers.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office.

FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup

Farmers, Ranchers and Private Forest Landowners Use Conservation to Protect Pollinator Habitat, Boost Crop Production

The next time you snack on almonds, add blueberries to your smoothie or eat pumpkin pie, thank a pollinator. As you enjoy these treats, remember that the Production Risk Protection (PRP) program under the Farm Bill and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), through USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), offers financial incentives to agricultural producers and private forest landowners who enhance the landscape by voluntarily implementing conservation practices such as cover crops, wildlife and native plantings in buffers and areas not in production.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) also can be used to enhance habitat to protect pollinators.

Farms and bee colonies are under increasing stress from excessive or improper pesticide use. Nearly 200 species of pollinators are considered threatened or extinct. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works closely with farmers, forest landowners who enhance pollinator habitat by voluntarily implementing conservation practices such as cover crops, wildlife and native plantings.

Administered by USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), CRP is a land conservation program in which landowners who enhance pollinator habitat by voluntarily implementing conservation practices such as cover crops, wildlife and native plantings in buffers and areas not in production.

The program involves a 15-year contract to plant and maintain these lands in ecologically compatible cover crops, trees and shrubs and other land management activities. CRP benefits pollinators by providing:

1. Fertilizer, allowing the plants to reproduce.
2. A single flower by wind or insects and animals. Successful pollination results in healthy fruit and
3. Pollination occurs when pollen grains are moved between two flowers of the same species, or within
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enrolled landowners remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality.

As owners and stewards of the land, many farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners manage their natural resources to work to achieve their production goals, they are protecting the rich and diverse ecology on or near their operations.

When we protect pollinators, we protect our ability to grow food. We thank our farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners for who offer a safe haven for pollinators and grow the products we enjoy.

Whether you are a large commodity producer, a small and diverse organic producer or even a suburban homeowner, you can have an important role in saving pollinators in New Jersey.

Do your part to help protect pollinators. By taking action to diversify and beautify your operation or property, you could ensure that many fruits and vegetables are available and plentiful for future generations for many years to come.

For more information about pollinators and what you can do in New Jersey, please 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) 377-8442 (Relay voice users).