May 13, 2020

Ohio FSA State Newsletter

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A Message from the State Executive Director

It is another difficult year for our farmers, agricultural businesses and our communities. I am encouraged to see planters in action and I know there are still plenty of fields and low spots not in shape yet to plant, but it is good that some progress is being made across our state. Please keep safety in mind as you rush to work around the weather.

I am also asking for your help, so our staff can provide better service to you. The necessity to conduct FSA business by means other than face to face is very important right now. If you have changed your home phone number, cell phone number or email address be sure to provide your FSA County office with the
updated contact information. This will allow our staff an opportunity to keep producers informed of program announcement and deadlines, reporting requirements and other important updates. Our staff has the ability to send short SMS messages and emails to producers, to keep you updated on programs. To subscribe, visit fsa.usda.gov/subscribe to sign-up and receive emails and text messages. Producers can also ask our staff for assistance to subscribe for these services.

Ohio FSA continues to be open for business by phone appointment only. Our staff is continuing to provide the best customer service we can while also prioritizing the health of our employees and the health of our customers. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into to the office, they will be working with our customers by phone, email, and using other online tools whenever possible. All customers wishing to conduct business with their FSA County office are required to contact their USDA Service Center to schedule a phone appointment.

We have a great deal of activity going on in our county offices, please take a moment to consider whether you have business that needs to be addressed with your FSA County office. Additional program details and more in-depth information is provided in our newsletter.

I want to share some additional information and resources with you. In case you haven’t heard, Secretary Perdue announced on April 17, 2020, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). The CFAP program will provide direct support based on actual losses for producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted and will assist producers with additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

Our National FSA office is working as swiftly as possible to deliver the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. They are in the rulemaking process now and further details regarding eligibility, rates, and other implementation program details should be available soon.

We know you’re anxious for more information about the CFAP program. Once the rule making process is complete and when more details are available, they will be shared through press announcements, updates to www.farmers.gov/cfap website, and stakeholder organizations. As part of applying for the program, you’ll need to contact your FSA county office to schedule an appointment. Below, I have outlined some additional steps you can take now to prepare for when the CFAP application period starts.

Additionally, on May 4th, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced that agricultural businesses are now eligible for SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and EIDL Advance programs. SBA’s EIDL portal reopened on May 4th as a result of funding authorized by Congress through the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act. The legislation provides additional funding for agricultural businesses affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For more information, please visit: www.sba.gov/Disaster.
I also encourage you to visit [www.farmers.gov/coronavirus](http://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus) to keep up-to-date on temporary USDA program flexibilities available as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the [USDA Rural Development Agency](http://www.usda.gov/rural) has taken a number of immediate actions to help rural residents, businesses, and communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Please bookmark these pages and check back regularly as circumstances are continuously being updated as more actions are taken to better serve rural America. Despite the current challenges and daily uncertainty, we continue to be here for you, please do not hesitate to [contact us](http://www.usda.gov/). Stay safe and healthy!

Respectfully,

Leonard Hubert

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**Take Steps Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Assistance**

**Details and Signup for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Announced Soon**

In April, USDA announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). CFAP will provide direct support based on losses for agriculture producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted and will assist eligible producers facing additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

CFAP will provide assistance to most farms that have experienced at least a five percent loss and will be available to farms regardless of size. We are still working on the final details of the actual payment rates and those details will be determined and included as part of the rulemaking process. Once the rule making process is complete, the application period will be open and subject to the eligibility and payment limit criteria described in the rule.

As part of applying for the program, you’ll need to contact your [FSA County office](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/) to schedule an appointment. Your local FSA staff will work with you to apply for the program, and through forms asking for this type of information:

- Contact
- Personal, including your Tax Identification Number
- Farming operating structure
- Adjusted Gross Income to ensure eligibility
- Direct deposit to enable payment

Please do not send any personal information to USDA without first initiating contact through a phone call. We take your privacy and security of your information very seriously.

If you are an existing customer, this information is likely on file at your [FSA County office](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/).

**What Can You Do Now?**

While the application process has not started, you can start gathering/understanding your farm’s recent sales and inventory.
FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

**How Will USDA Accept Applications?**

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only. Once the application period opens, please call your [FSA County office](#) to schedule an appointment.

Our staff is working with our agricultural producers by phone and using email, fax, mail, and online tools like Box to accept applications.

Information on CFAP can be found at [farmers.gov/CFAP](#).

**USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Ends May 15**

Farmers and landowners may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands as signup continues through May 15.

Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds.

Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is either 10 or 15 years. FSA will rank applications using a number of factors including existence of expiring CRP land, threat of conversion or development, existing grassland, and predominance of native species cover, and cost.

The 2018 Farm Bill set aside 2 million acres for CRP Grassland enrollment. CRP is one of the largest conservation programs at USDA. CRP marks its 35-year anniversary in 2020 with 22 million acres currently enrolled.

For more information view the [CRP Grasslands factsheet](#) or contact your [County FSA office](#).

**USDA Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports**

The FSA is currently open to phone and virtual appointments only but can still work with producers on timely filing 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 for:

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline. FSA staff is still able to assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps. FSA County offices will provide maps to producers through mail or email with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete, producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet by mail or email by the applicable date listed above.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and mail or email producers the completed Report of Acreage form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail or email by the applicable date listed 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 additional 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.

If you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary documentation to FSA immediately upon receipt from the certifying agent.

For questions, please contact your FSA County office.

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**Join USDA in Following the #Plant2020 Progress**

Spring planting is underway and we’re following the progress as farmers complete field prep and plant their spring crops. We invite you to follow along or get involved by sharing your #Plant2020 photos and videos. To view the #Plant2020 progress, visit [https://arcg.is/1SmEUk](https://arcg.is/1SmEUk). **NOTE:** Open this link in Google Chrome, Safari, as it is not supported in Internet Explorer.

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**USDA Reports Record Enrollment in Key Farm Safety-Net Programs**

Producers signed a record 1.77 million contracts for the USDA’s Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2019 crop year, which is more than 107 percent of
the total contracts signed compared with a 5-year average. USDA also reminds producers that June 30 is the deadline to enroll in ARC and PLC for the 2020 crop year.

Producers interested in enrolling for 2020 should contact their FSA county office. **Producers must enroll by June 30 and make their one-time update to PLC payment yields by September 30.**

FSA attributes the significant participation in the 2019 crop year ARC and PLC programs to increased producer interest in the programs under the 2018 Farm Bill and to an increase in eligible farms because of the selling and buying of farms and new opportunities for beginning farmers and military veterans with farms having 10 or fewer base acres. Enrollment for 2019 ended March 16.

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

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**FSA Adds Farm Loan Flexibilities**

Farm loans are critical for annual operating and family living expenses, emergency needs and cash flow, especially in tough times. FSA is providing additional flexibilities to provide producers with credit options. We encourage direct loan applicants and borrowers to contact their county office to discuss these programs and any current, and future, temporary changes to farm loan deadlines and the loan servicing options available. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. For a full list of flexibilities, visit [farmers.gov/coronavirus](http://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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**When Weather Prevents or Damages Crops**

When bad weather prevents planting or damages crops, FSA would like to remind producers to report the acreage to the FSA office within 15 days of the final planting date of the crop. This applies to all crops, whether covered by crop insurance, not covered by insurance, or covered by FSA's Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP). Final planting dates vary among counties and crop types.

Producers who have their crops insured through a private crop insurance company should contact the insurance agent immediately and advise them of the damaged crops. Additionally, a CCC-576, Notice of Loss Application, must be completed in person at the FSA office, and the prevented and/or failed acres reported.

For those crops covered under FSA’s NAP, producers should immediately contact the FSA office to report the acres and file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss Application. Producers with NAP coverage should report their losses within 15 calendar days of crop damage from natural disaster. Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent, so the loss can be appraised, and production counted before the crop is put into another use, abandoned or destroyed.

Crops not covered with a private insurance or NAP policy should still be reported to the local FSA office. This will provide FSA with a historical record of your crop should disaster assistance become available.
For more information about reporting prevented planting or failed acres, contact or stop in the FSA office.

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**USDA RMA Allows Flexibilities for Organic Certification Amid Coronavirus Pandemic**

Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) may allow organic producers to report acreage as certified organic, or transitioning to organic, for the 2020 crop year if they can show they have requested a written certification from a certifying agent by their policy’s acreage reporting date. USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) made available this flexibility to help those impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Many state and local governments have issued “stay-at-home” orders and have shut down non-essential businesses, resulting in market disruptions and preventing in-person crop insurance transactions.

In addition, policyholders who have requested but not received an organic certificate, organic plan, or other written documentation must notify their insurance agent within 30 days after the certifying agent informs them of their organic plan or certificate status. The policyholder notification may be made by phone, email, text, or other electronic communication method, and the AIPs must document the policyholder’s notification. Policyholders will be required to either sign digitally at the time of submission or must follow up with properly signed forms no later than July 15, 2020.

**More Information**

RMA announced other flexibilities on March 27, April 3, and April 10, including enabling producers to send notifications and reports electronically, extending the date for production reports, providing additional time and deferring interest on premium and other payments, allowing the use of self-certification replant inspections for certain crops, waiving the witness signature requirement for approval of Assignment of Indemnity, addressing milk dumping, and extending other deadlines. See all RMA Managers Bulletins for more detailed information.

RMA staff are working with AIPs and other customers by phone, mail and electronically to continue supporting crop insurance coverage for producers. Farmers with crop insurance questions or needs should continue to contact their insurance agents about conducting business remotely (by telephone or email).

For the most current updates on available services, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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**USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction**

The USDA recently announced the availability of $900,000 for local governments to host a Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot project for fiscal year (FY) 2020. The cooperative agreements will support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans. The agreements are offered through USDA’s Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.
USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until midnight June 26, 2020. Projects should span two years with a start date of October 1, 2020 and completion date of September 29, 2022.

Cooperative agreements support projects led by local governments that: 1) generate compost; 2) increase access to compost for agricultural producers; 3) reduce reliance on, and limit the use of, fertilizer; 4) improve soil quality; 5) encourage waste management and permaculture business development; 6) increase rainwater absorption; 7) reduce municipal food waste; and 8) divert food waste from landfills. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide assistance for conservation related activities.

Priority will be given to projects that anticipate or demonstrate economic benefits; incorporate plans to make compost easily accessible to farmers, including community gardeners; integrate other food waste strategies, including food recovery efforts; and collaborate with multiple partners.

A webinar, which will be held on June 4, 2020, from 2 to 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, will provide an overview of the cooperative agreements' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application. Information on how to register and participate in the webinar, or listen to the recording, will be posted at farmers.gov/urban.

More Information

Comments can be sent to UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov within 90 days, with the subject line “Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction Project.”

Questions about this cooperative agreement opportunity can be sent to UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov.

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It includes representatives from many USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Agricultural Marketing Service, and is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. More information is available at farmers.gov/urban.

USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

The USDA has announced the availability of $3 million for grants through its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until midnight July 6, 2020.

Planning Projects

$1 million is available for Planning Projects that initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access; education; business and start-up costs for new farmers; and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

Implementation Projects
$2 million is available for Implementation Projects that accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor, and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers. Projects will improve local food access and collaborate with partner organizations and may support infrastructure needs; emerging technologies; educational endeavors; and urban farming policy development.

Webinar

A webinar will be held on **June 3, 2020 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.** The webinar will provide an overview of the grants’ purpose, project types, eligibility, and basic requirements for the submission of an application. Information on how participate in the webinar, or listen to the recording, will be posted on the farmers.gov/urban webpage.

More Information

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It includes representatives from many USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Agricultural Marketing Service, and is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. More information is available at [farmers.gov/urban](http://farmers.gov/urban).

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### May 2020 Loan and Interest Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Operating Loans, Direct</td>
<td>1.750%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Direct</td>
<td>2.625%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Resource Loans</td>
<td>5.000%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment</td>
<td>1.500%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Loans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year</td>
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<td>Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commodity Loans</td>
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</tbody>
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### Dates to Remember

**May 15** --- CRP Grasslands Signup Ends.

**May 25** --- Memorial Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

**May 31** --- **Deadline** to apply for 2019 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.

**June 15** -- County Committee Nomination Period begins.

**June 30** -- **Deadline** for enrollment in 2020 ARCPLC.

**July 3** ----- Independence Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
**July 15** --- Final certification date to report burley tobacco; cabbage planted through May 31; corn, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, spring oats, potatoes, popcorn, sugar beets, tomatoes and other crops. Report perennial forage crops.

**Aug. 1** ---- Last day to file County Committee Nomination forms.

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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).