A Message from the State Executive Director

It’s hard to believe we already find ourselves in the month of September, with Autumn quickly approaching. Even with less activities and functions to attend due to the pandemic, the year so far has flown by. At the Ohio FSA, we continue to be busy and ask for your ongoing patience and attention as we near the finish line on a couple of critical programs. 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.

The USDA announced on August 11, a few key items related to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). Nearly 60 additional commodities were announced, including additions to specialty crops and livestock along with the inclusion of nursery crops and cut flowers, aquaculture, and certain types of eggs. Did you know sheep over two years of age are now eligible? In addition
to these newly eligible commodities, USDA also expanded funding categories for several commodities and adjusted payment rates for others. A full list of these commodities, and their associated payment rates, can be found on our specialty crops, livestock, nursery and cut flowers, aquaculture, and eggs pages. The application period was also extended, and the new deadline is Friday, September 11, and I encourage producers to apply now, as we are just over a week away from this deadline.

The announcement also noted the second part of each applicant's CFAP payment, the remaining 20 percent, would be issued. If you have an already-approved CFAP application, no action is required on your part to receive the remaining 20 percent; as our FSA county offices started processing those payments the week of August 17th. To read more about the CFAP announcement, including a listing of all the new eligible commodities, visit the CFAP website.

FSA will begin accepting nominations for Cleveland’s urban county committee members on Sept. 8. County committees have enabled farmer input on the delivery of FSA programs since the 1930s, and these new committees are part of USDA’s efforts to better support urban agriculture. The urban and suburban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additional details are below in the newsletter.

Another item I would like to highlight is the September 30, 2020 deadline to update your Price Loss Coverage (PLC) yields for commodity crops covered under the 2018 Farm Bill. This is important as it’s a one-time opportunity to do a yield update, whether you selected the Agriculture Risk Coverage or the Price Loss Coverage option for your farm for 2020. See the article below for additional details and then contact your county FSA office if you want to learn more about this option.

The Ohio FSA is looking for dedicated and talented individuals to assist in its mission of partnering with American farmers and producers to attain an economically and environmentally sound future for American agriculture. Two vacancies are now advertised through the USAJOBS site for the County Operations Trainees (COTs) position. Additional employment details are below in the newsletter.

FSA has also announced that organic producers and handlers can apply for federal funds to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification through the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). Applications are due October 31, 2020, for eligible certification expenses paid between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020.

For FSFL Borrowers experiencing financial hardship from the pandemic and other challenges in production agriculture, FSA is offering a one-time annual installment payment deferral option. No fees or prepayment penalties apply for those who choose this FSFL loan flexibility option. Contact your FSA County office for more information.

As a reminder, all FSA visitors wishing to conduct business should call ahead to confirm their FSA County office is able to accept in-person appointments and schedule the visit and to confirm the office's status and make an appointment before visiting.
Visitors will be pre-screened based on health concerns or recent travel and must adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Visitors may also be required to wear a face covering during their appointment.

Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office and work with our producers in person, by phone, by email, or by using other online tools.

County-level information on FSA Service Center status will be updated regularly and you can learn the status of your FSA County office at: https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status. Note: Please use the latest versions of Chrome, Edge, or Safari for the best experience. The Farmers.gov website is not recommended for the Internet Explorer browser.

Respectfully,

Leonard Hubert

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**Coronavirus Food Assistance Program for Ohio Producers – Deadline to Apply is September 11**

Ohio is home to over 77,000 agricultural operations. At USDA, we know that these farms, and our farmers, have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. We’re here to provide support through a range of programs and services, including the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, or CFAP.

CFAP provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. Whether you raise non-specialty crops, wool, livestock, dairy, nursery crops and cut flowers, aquaculture, eggs or specialty crops, that provide for our state and nation, you may be eligible for CFAP. And, whether you’ve worked with FSA for years or you’re a new customer, we’re here to make sure the application process is as simple for you as possible.

Getting started is easy. First, visit the pages below to check eligibility for the commodities you grow or raise. Next, visit [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap) for multiple options to apply by the September 11 deadline.

- CFAP for Non-Specialty Crop Producers
- CFAP for Livestock Producers
- CFAP for Specialty Crop Producers
- CFAP for Dairy Producers
- CFAP for Wool Producers
- CFAP for Aquaculture Producers
- CFAP for Egg Producers
- CFAP for Nursery Crop Producers

We offer a call center at 877-508-8364 for producers interested in one-on-one assistance with the application, and your local USDA Service Center staff are always available to help as well.

Farmers support our nation, and we are here to support our farmers. Visit [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap) to learn more about this program, and don’t forget to submit your application by September 11.
USDA Announces New FSA County Committees for Urban Agriculture, Requests Nominations

The USDA recently announced new FSA county committees focused exclusively on urban agriculture, including one in Cleveland, Ohio. County committees have enabled farmer input on the delivery of FSA programs since the 1930s, and these new committees are part of USDA’s efforts to better support urban agriculture.

This County Committee in Cleveland, Ohio is one of five nationwide. The other four include:

- Albuquerque, N.M.
- Portland, Ore.
- Richmond, Va.

The urban and suburban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the new county committees may address areas such as food access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost, and food waste reduction.

Committees will make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Their input is vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment, and other agricultural issues.

Nominations for Urban County Committees Begin September 8

FSA will begin accepting nominations for urban county committee members on Sept. 8. Urban farmers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program in the county selected may either be nominated or may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Organizations, including those representing beginning, women, and minority producers, also may nominate candidates.

To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections or farmers.gov/urban. All nomination forms for the urban and suburban county committees must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Oct. 2.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Oct. 23. For more information about FSA's Cleveland Urban County Committee, contact the Medina/Cuyahoga FSA office at (330) 722-2628.

Scioto River Watershed CREP Sign-Up Available

Conservation in agriculture is vital to maintain the productivity and sustainability of America’s working and non-working lands. USDA FSA wants to help you improve and preserve your natural resources which can in turn positively impact the profitability of your operation. Producers and landowners have an opportunity to be part of the Scioto River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP is a part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) the country’s largest private-land conservation program. The opportunity to enroll in the Scioto River Watershed CREP is limited, so don’t let this program pass you by.

To be eligible for the Scioto River Watershed CREP, the offered land must be owned or leased for at least one year prior to enrollment to be eligible and must be physically and legally capable of being cropped in a normal manner. Land must also meet cropping history and other eligibility requirements. Marginal pastureland may also be eligible for enrollment. Land currently enrolled in
CRP may be re-offered for enrollment into CREP if the land enrolled in CRP is in the last year of the CRP-1 contract.

Farmers have sixteen different CREP practices to choose from including grass filter strips, wetlands, controlled drainage, and riparian buffers to name a few.

Producers will receive annual rental payments for the length of the contract, and cost-share assistance of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to establish the conservation practice. Additional incentive payments may also be available. Scioto River Watershed CREP contracts require a 14 to 15-year commitment to keep lands out of agricultural production and in conservation cover.

Currently, the Scioto River Watershed CREP is available in all or portions of the following counties: Adams, Allen, Auglaize, Champaign, Clark, Clinton, Crawford, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Hardin, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Union, Vinton, and Wyandot.

Offers for enrollment may be made at your FSA County office. Offers may be accepted if the land and applicant meet the eligibility requirements detailed above. CREP offers are not subject to competitive bidding; however, the Scioto River Watershed CREP is limited to enrollment on a first come, first served basis until the 70,000-acreage allocation is reached.

For more information about the Ohio's Scioto River Watershed CREP project visit your FSA County office.

One-Time PLC Yield Updates – Deadline September 30

Farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC yields of covered commodities on the farm, regardless of Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program election. The deadline to request a PLC yield update is September 30, 2020.

The updated yield will be equal to 90 percent of the average yield per planted acre in crop years 2013-2017 (excluding any year where the applicable covered commodity was not planted), subject to the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for the covered commodity. If the reported yield in any year is less than 75 percent of the 2013-2017 average county yield, then the yield will be substituted with 75 percent of the county average yield.

The chart below provides the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for each covered commodity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covered Commodity</th>
<th>National Yield Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>0.9437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola</td>
<td>0.9643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas, Large</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas, Small</td>
<td>0.9760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>0.9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crambe</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaxseed</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain Sorghum</td>
<td>0.9077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard Seed</td>
<td>0.9460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodity</td>
<td>YLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>0.9524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts</td>
<td>0.9273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas, Dry</td>
<td>0.9988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapeseed</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice, Long</td>
<td>0.9330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice, Medium</td>
<td>0.9887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice, Temp Japonica</td>
<td>0.9591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safflower</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed Cotton</td>
<td>0.9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame Seed</td>
<td>0.9673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>0.9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower Seed</td>
<td>0.9396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>0.9545</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is the owner's choice whether to update or keep exiting PLC yields. If a yield update is not made, then no action is required to maintain the existing PLC yield. An existing or updated PLC yield will be maintained and effective for crop years 2020 through 2023 (life of the 2018 Farm Bill).

PLC yields may be updated on a covered commodity-by-covered commodity basis using FSA form CCC-867.

For more information, reference resources and decision tools, visit farmers.gov/arc-plc or contact your County FSA office for additional assistance.

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**FSA Reminds Producers of Approaching NAP Deadlines for 2021 Crops**

FSA reminds producers who are interested in the 2021 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), of the need to apply for coverage by the following crop deadline dates.

- **September 30, 2020** is the deadline for 2021 NAP coverage on winter wheat, rye, barley and speltz.
- **November 20, 2020** is the deadline for 2021 NAP coverage on apples, asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, chestnuts, forage for hay and pasture, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, honey, maple sap and hops.
- **March 15, 2021** is the deadline for 2021 NAP coverage on forage sorghum, oats, potatoes, Soybeans, Sunflowers and all spring planted specialty crops grown for food.

**NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option**

NAP offers 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. Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

**NAP Service Fees**
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.

**NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans**

Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.”

To help producers learn more about the NAP program and how it can help them, USDA, offers an online Web tool at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap). The webtool allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage and gives producers an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

For more information on NAP coverage or obtain coverage, please contact your [FSA County office](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap).

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**Ohio FSA is Hiring 2 County Operations Trainee (COT) Positions**

The Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) is looking for dedicated and talented individuals to assist in its mission of partnering with American farmers and producers to attain an economically and environmentally sound future for American agriculture.

Two vacancies are currently being advertised for the County Operations Trainees (COTs) position. This is a twelve-month training program that may require travel throughout the state of Ohio while candidates learn to manage FSA farm program and administrative operations.

COTs who successfully complete the twelve-month training program are considered for County Executive Director (CED) positions. The CED will manage one or more of Ohio’s 65 FSA county offices. County Operations Trainees are subject to assignment to any County Office. The candidate receives managerial and program training necessary for the advancement to a full performance County Executive Director who will be responsible for directing and managing program and administrative operations of the county FSA Service Center, as required to carry out authorized production flexibility, price support, conservation, environmental quality, risk management, emergency, disaster, and related programs. Duties include performing office and field activities, taking appropriate action to ensure County FSA Committee policies and objectives are properly communicated to and carried out by subordinate employees. Employs, trains, and supervises subordinate Service Center and Field Reporter employees.

The position vacancy announcements are posted on the [USAJOBS website](https://www.usajobs.gov) at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). You must complete this application process and submit all required documents electronically by 11:59p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on the closing date of this announcement (September 11, 2020). To apply, click on the link to submit your application:

**County Operations Trainee (COT) – Throughout Ohio – closes Friday, September 11, 2020**

Applicants interested in learning more about or applying for these positions should establish a user profile through [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). Profiles are required for most federal employment applications and offer the opportunity for interested individuals to search for positions by location and/or job titles, upload searchable resumes, and receive automated vacancy announcement updates.
FSA offers a friendly and professional working environment with a diverse workforce, flexible hours/work schedules, and other family-friendly benefits such as: paid vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, retirement and supplemental savings plan, a wide array of health, dental, vision, and life insurance plans, flexible spending accounts, and long-term care insurance.

**Questions?** Please contact the Ohio FSA State Office at (614) 255-2441.

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**USDA Stands Up New Team to Better Serve Beginning Farmers in Ohio**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is standing up a new team that will lead a department-wide effort focused on serving beginning farmers and ranchers.

To institutionalize support for beginning farmers and ranchers and to build upon prior agency work, the 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to create a national coordinator position in the agency and state-level coordinators for four of its agencies – Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), and Rural Development (RD).

Doug Deardorff was selected as the NRCS USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher state coordinator in Ohio. Doug has spent over 35 years serving farmers with land stewardship and conservation assistance. He and his brother are co-owners of a farm and working with their tenant farmer to protect soil, water and related resources is important to them. Doug is very aware of the challenges and risks that young farmers face to get started and achieve some stability in their farming careers.

Others on the team coordinating Ohio’s beginning farmers efforts include, Kurt Leber, Farm Loan Manager with FSA; Jennifer Brown, Community Program Specialist with RD; and Jacob Brockhouse, Risk Management Specialist with RMA. This is a collateral duty for all team members.

Each state coordinator will receive training and develop tailored beginning farmer outreach plans for their state. Coordinators will help field employees better reach and serve beginning farmers and ranchers and will also be available to assist beginning farmers who need help navigating the variety of resources USDA has to offer.

**More on Beginning Farmers**

Twenty-seven percent of farmers were categorized as new and beginning producers, with 10 years or less of experience in agriculture, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

USDA offers a variety of farm loan, risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs to support farmers, including beginning farmers and ranchers. Additionally, a number of these programs have provisions specifically for beginning farmers, including targeted funding for loans and conservation programs as well as waivers and exemptions.

**More Information**

Learn more about USDA’s resources for beginning farmers as well as more information on the national and state-level coordinators at [farmers.gov/newfarmers](http://farmers.gov/newfarmers). For more information on available programs in your area, contact your local [USDA Service Center](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).
September 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>1.250%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Direct</td>
<td>2.250%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Resource Loans</td>
<td>5.000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment</td>
<td>1.500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Loans</td>
<td>2.250%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year</td>
<td>0.125%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year</td>
<td>0.250%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year</td>
<td>0.500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year</td>
<td>0.625%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year</td>
<td>0.750%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year</td>
<td>0.875%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodity Loans</td>
<td>1.125%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dates to Remember

**Sept. 7 ----** Labor Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

**Sept. 11 -- Deadline** to submit application for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

**Sept. 30 -- Deadline** to Update PLC Yields.

**Sept. 30 --- Deadline** to obtain 2021 NAP coverage for Winter Wheat, Rye, Barley and Speltz.

**Oct. 12 -----** Columbus Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**


**Nov. 2 -----** County committee ballots mailed to voters.

**Nov. 11 ----** Veterans Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

**Nov. 20 ---- Last day to apply** for coverage for asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, chestnuts, forage for hay and pasture, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, honey, hops and maple syrup.

**Nov. 26 ---** Thanksgiving Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

**Dec. 7 ----- Last day** to return voted Ballots in county committee election

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).