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**A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office**

Spring has arrived, field work is in progress, and our county office staff is busy creating acreage reporting maps, while our farm loan staff continue to diligently process farm loan applications. FSA has several opportunities to enroll into varying conservation programs, as signups are open for CLEAR30, Continuous CRP and Grassland CRP. We encourage you to read the articles included in the April newsletter to determine if there are other programs that may be of interest and fit your farming operation.

Producers may apply for the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers initiative or (CLEAR30) from now through August 5, 2022. Certain water quality practices currently enrolled under continuous CRP or CREP contracts that are expiring on September 30, 2022, may be offered into CLEAR30.

FSA’s Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup opened April 4. FSA Grasslands is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers to help landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and eligible land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. The Grasslands CRP program is a working lands conservation program that helps farmers to enhance the sustainability of their operations while keeping land in production. Grassland CRP signup will run through May 13, 2022. For additional information, producers are encouraged to contact their USDA FSA County office.
The USDA has clarified the definition of a spot market sale and hog eligibility under the Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program (SMHPP), which assists producers who sold hogs through a spot market sale from April 16, 2020, through Sept. 1, 2020. Hog producers will also now be required to submit documentation to support information provided on their SMHPP application. USDA is offering the SMHPP in response to a reduction in packer production due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in fewer negotiated hogs being procured and subsequent lower market prices. Ohio FSA will accept applications through April 29, 2022, which is an extension of the April 15, 2022, deadline previously set for the program. Contact your County FSA office to learn more about this ad-hoc assistance program.

Lastly, we wanted to provide an update on the status of our USDA Service Centers across the state. The CDC now provides county-level data showing the COVID-19 Community Level for each county in the U.S. Each county is identified as low, medium, or high, which is determined by looking at the number of hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area. Based on the county Community Level, USDA Service Center masking protocols will be as follows:

**In Low and Medium Impact Level Counties** - Doors are unlocked, and visitors will not be pre-screened concerning health concerns and recent travel; and individuals will no longer be required to wear a mask.

**In High Impact Level Counties** - Doors will be locked and visitors will be required to schedule an appointment. Visitors will be pre-screened concerning health concerns and recent travel; and individuals will be required to wear a mask and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

All USDA Service Centers in Ohio are now open to in-person, walk-in traffic. Appointments are still encouraged when possible so staff can be most effective with your time. In addition, Service Center staff in all offices will continue to offer customers options for service using virtual/online meetings, email, and other digital tools, as appropriate.

Your County FSA office status could return to "by appointment only," depending on weekly COVID case information provided by the CDC, so producers are encouraged to call their FSA County office to confirm the status of office operations. To conduct business, please contact your FSA County office.

Additional program details and more in-depth information is provided in our newsletter.

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**USDA Offers Water Quality-Focused Program That Builds on CRP Contracts**

*Producers may apply for CLEAR30 through August 5, 2022*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing the signup period for its Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers initiative (CLEAR30) — a nationwide opportunity for certain landowners and agricultural producers currently implementing water quality practices through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to enroll in 30-year contracts, extending the lifespan and strengthening the benefits of important water quality practices on their land.
Producers may apply for CLEAR30, a voluntary, incentive-based conservation program, now through Aug. 5, 2022.

Cropland and certain pastureland currently enrolled in Continuous CRP or the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and dedicated to an eligible water quality practice such as riparian buffers, contour strips, grass waterways or wetland restoration may be eligible if their contracts are expiring by September 30, 2022.

CLEAR30 contracts will be effective beginning Oct. 1, 2022. These long-term contracts ensure that conservation practices remain in place for 30 years, which improves water quality through reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and helping prevent algal blooms. Conservation in riparian areas also provides important carbon sequestration benefits. Traditional CRP contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

About CLEAR30
CLEAR30 was established in the 2018 Farm Bill to better address water quality concerns. Originally, CLEAR30 was only available in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watersheds; in 2021, FSA made CLEAR30 available to agricultural producers and landowners nationwide, and participation grew nearly seven-fold from 2020 to 2021.

Annual rental payments for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus a 20 percent water quality incentive payment and an annual rental rate adjustment of 27.5 percent.

How to Sign Up
To sign up for CLEAR30, landowners and producers should contact their County FSA office by Aug. 5, 2022.

More Information
CLEAR30 is an option available through CRP, which is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. CRP was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and stabilize commodity prices by taking environmentally sensitive lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing numerous conservation and economic benefits. In addition to CLEAR30, signups are also open for Continuous CRP and Grassland CRP.

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**USDA Encourages Producers to Enroll in Grasslands CRP**

*Producers Must Apply by May 13*

The FSA encourages producers and landowners to enroll in the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) starting this week through May 13, 2022. Grassland CRP provides a unique opportunity for farmers, ranchers, and agricultural landowners to keep land in agricultural production and supplement their income while improving their soils and permanent grass cover.

Grassland CRP is a federally funded voluntary working lands program. Through the program, FSA provides annual rental payments to landowners to maintain and conserve grasslands while allowing producers to graze, hay, and produce seed on that land. Maintaining the existing permanent cover provides several benefits, including reducing erosion, providing
wildlife habitat and migration corridors, and capturing and maintaining carbon in the soil and cover.

FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. The annual rental rate varies by county with a national minimum rental rate of $13 per acre for this signup. Contract duration is 10 or 15 years.

Alongside Grassland CRP, producers and landowners can also enroll acres in Continuous CRP under the ongoing sign up, which includes projects available through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE).

**Broadening Reach of Program**

As part of the Agency’s Justice40 efforts, producers and landowners who are historically underserved, including beginning farmers and military veterans, will receive 10 additional ranking points to enhance their offers.

Additionally, USDA is working to broaden the scope and reach of Grassland CRP by leveraging the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to engage historically underserved communities. CREP is a partnership program that enables states, Tribal governments, non-profit, and private entities to partner with FSA to implement CRP practices and address high priority conservation and environmental objectives. Interested entities are encouraged to contact FSA.

**More Information on CRP**

Landowners and producers interested in Grassland CRP should contact their County FSA office to learn more or to apply for the program before the May 13 deadline.

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**USDA Updates Eligibility for Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has clarified the definition of a spot market sale and hog eligibility under the Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program (SMHPP), which assists producers who sold hogs through a spot market sale from April 16, 2020, through Sept. 1, 2020. Hog producers will also now be required to submit documentation to support information provided on their SMHPP application. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) **will accept applications through April 29, 2022**, which is an extension of the April 15, 2022, deadline previously set for the program.

USDA is offering the SMHPP in response to a reduction in packer production due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in fewer negotiated hogs being procured and subsequent lower market prices. The program is part of USDA’s broader Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative and addresses gaps in previous assistance for hog producers.

**SMHPP Program Updates**

When the pandemic disrupted normal marketing channels, including access to packers, producers sold their hogs through cash sales to local processors or butchers, direct sales to individuals and third-party intermediaries, including sale barns or brokers. The use of third-party intermediaries was the only available marketing alternative for many producers and are
now included in SMHPP. The only direct to packer sales that are eligible for SMHPP are those through a negotiated sale. Hogs sold through a contract that includes a premium above the spot-market price or other formula such as the wholesale cut-out price remain ineligible. Hogs must be suitable and intended for slaughter to be eligible. Immature swine (pigs) are ineligible.

FSA will now require documentation to support the accuracy of information provided on the FSA-940 Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program application, including the number of hogs reported on the application that were sold through a spot market sale and how the price was determined for the sale.

SMHPP payments will be calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible hogs, not to exceed 10,000 head, by the payment rate of $54 per head. To ensure SMHPP funding availability is disbursed equitably to all eligible producers, FSA will now issue payments after the application period ends. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be factored.

**Applying for Assistance**

Eligible hog producers can apply for SMHPP by April 29, 2022, by completing the FSA-940, Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program application, along with required supporting documentation. Producers can visit [farmers.gov/smhpp](http://farmers.gov/smhpp) for examples of supporting documentation, information on applicant eligibility and more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the [FSA office](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Hog producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

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**Ohio NRCS Announces Second Round of Conservation Stewardship Program Funding**

The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Ohio has announced a second round of funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Private landowners interested in building on existing conservation efforts to improve production and reduce overall input costs are encouraged to apply by the **May 13, 2022 deadline**.

Through CSP, agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, ecologically-based pest management, buffer strips, and pollinator and beneficial insect habitat – all while maintaining active agriculture production on their land.

“NRCS conservation programs are good for natural resources and for your operation’s bottom line,” said John Wilson, NRCS Ohio State Conservationist. “The Conservation Stewardship Program allows you to address resource concerns like nutrient management, soil quality and energy use, which can really impact a farmer’s margins.”

CSP encourages the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques such as precision agriculture applications, on-site carbon storage and planting for high carbon sequestration rates, and new soil amendments to improve water quality.
Learn more about the CSP application process and eligible land use resource concerns: CSP FAQ Sheet

Contact a local Ohio USDA service center or visit the Ohio NRCS CSP webpage to get started. While applications for CSP are accepted throughout the year, producers should submit applications by the deadline to be considered for the current funding period.

### 2022 Acreage Reporting Dates

To comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to contact their FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for:

**May 31, 2022** ---- Report Nursery Crop Acreage.


**Aug. 15, 2022** --- Report Cabbage (Planted 6/1/22-7/20/22).

**Sept. 30, 2022** --- Report Aquaculture. other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above 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 above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendars 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 regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, producers are encouraged to contact their County FSA office.
USDA to Extend Application Deadlines for Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Seeks to Pilot New Revenue Streams for America’s Climate-Smart Farmers, Ranchers and Forest Landowners

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending the deadlines to apply for the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities funding opportunity after requests from many stakeholders. “There has been a high level of interest in the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities funding opportunity, and we want to ensure that a diverse applicant pool is able to apply,” said Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Robert Bonnie. “USDA is extending the deadline for the funding opportunity to provide more time for these applications.”

The new deadlines to apply via Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. ET:

- First Funding Pool – May 6, 2022 Proposals from $5 million to $100 million
- Second Funding Pool – June 10, 2022 Proposals from $250,000 to $4,999,999

The Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities funding opportunity will finance pilot projects that create market opportunities for U.S. agricultural and forestry products that use climate-smart production practices and include innovative, cost-effective ways to measure and verify greenhouse gas benefits. USDA began accepting project applications for fiscal year 2022 on Feb. 7, 2022, and since then, Department officials have heard from many stakeholders that an extension would allow them to prepare more robust applications to further development of climate-smart markets for a diverse range of producers. Funding will be provided to partners through the USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation for pilot projects to provide incentives to producers and landowners to:

- Implement climate-smart production practices, activities, and systems on working lands,
- Measure/quantify, monitor, and verify the carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) benefits associated with those practices, and
- Develop markets and promote the resulting climate-smart commodities.

How to Apply

A range of public and private entities may apply, including:

- County, city or township governments
- Special district governments
- State governments
- Small businesses
- For profit organizations other than small businesses
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) (other than institutions of higher education)
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) (other than institutions of higher education)
- Private institutions of higher education, or
- Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education.

In response to questions received from potential applicants, USDA has also provided additional clarity regarding requirements in the funding opportunity, including:

- The definition of “domestic applicant;”
- Producers’ eligibility as beneficiaries of the funding; and
- Quantification requirements.

Frequently asked questions are also available on the website to help answer questions.

USDA is committed to equity in program delivery and is specifically seeking proposals from entities serving all types of producers, including small or historically underserved producers. Providing sufficient incentives to encourage producer participation and generating both verifiable greenhouse gas reduction and carbon sequestration benefits are critical to project success and will be considered in the evaluation criteria.

**More Information**

USDA published a Request for Information in September 2021 seeking public comment and input on design of this new initiative and used the nearly 400 comments received to inform this funding opportunity. The funding opportunity has received praise from across multiple industries for its support to create innovative and cost-effective markets.

Visit usda.gov for additional information, including details on Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities and resources to support your application.

**Dates to Remember**

**April 1** ---- Signup begins for CLEAR30. Landowners and producers currently enrolled in the CRP can enroll in a 30-year contract that is a water-quality focused option available through CRP. Interested producers with CRP contracts expiring September 30, 2022, should sign up by August 5, 2022.

**April 4** ---- CRP Grasslands sign-up begins. Contact the FSA office as the deadline is May 13, 2022.

**April 29** --- Deadline to enroll in the Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program (SMHPP).

**May 13** ---- CRP Grasslands sign-up deadline.

**May 30** ---- Memorial Day Holiday. FSA Offices are Closed.
May 31 — **Deadline** to apply for 2021 commodity loans and LDP’s on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.

June 15 — County Committee Nomination Period begins.

June 20 — Juneteenth National Independence Day. **FSA Offices are Closed.**

July 4 — Independence Day Holiday. **FSA Offices are Closed.**

July 15 — End of primary nesting season for CRP program purposes.

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. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

July 15 — Final Date to Report Production for the preceding Crop Year for Farms Enrolled in ARC-IC.

August 1 — **Last day** to file County Committee Nomination forms.

August 1 — **Deadline** to Request farm reconstitutions and transfers for 2022.

August 5 — **Deadline** for producers to request **re-enrollment of Continuous Signup contracts** or enrollment into **TIP**.

**Ongoing**

Reports of Failed Acreage must be filed with the County Office before disposition of the crop.

Reports of Prevented Planting Acreage must be filed with the County Office no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date for that county and producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Contact FSA right away for notice of loss deadlines and disaster program requirements.

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**April 2022 Loan and Interest Rates**

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<th>Interest Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Direct</td>
<td>-- 3.250%</td>
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<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>
<td>-- 3.750%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commodity Loans</td>
<td>-- 2.125%</td>
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Ohio FSA State Office

200 North High Street
Room 540
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Phone: 614-255-2441
Visit the Ohio FSA website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

**Acting State Executive Director:** Glenda Ward

**Administrative Officer:** Traci Garza

**Conservation Chief:** Brandi Koehler

**Farm Loan Chief:** Darren Metzger

**Price Support Chief:** Vacant

**Production Adjustment / Compliance and Risk Management Chief:** Matt Kleski

Ohio FSA State Committee Members

Theodore Finnarn