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

Recently, the Biden Administration appointed John Patterson as the new State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA). Patterson joined the Ohio FSA team on April 25, 2022. As SED, Patterson will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of FSA programs to agricultural producers in Ohio. These commodity, conservation, credit, and disaster assistance programs ensure a safe, affordable, abundant, and nutritious food, fiber, and fuel supply for consumers. Additional details on his appointment can be found below in the newsletter.

Spring planting is well under way in Ohio which leads to future visits, virtually or in-person, to your FSA County office. Our county offices are working diligently to make sure your acreage reporting maps are available as you prepare to provide crop reports to FSA and RMA.

Acreage reporting is required to establish or maintain FSA program eligibility. In order to assist us with getting everyone through this process by the mid-July deadline, we need you to reach out to your local FSA County office soon after you finish planting. Your county FSA office will work with you to complete your acreage reporting. Please note we also need to know about
any acres you are unable to plant due to weather circumstances. Updated records will also help this process run smoothly. Please contact your office as soon as possible, if you have had changes in your farming operation, such as renting new acreage for 2022, dropping farms, ownership changes, breaking out new land, and changes to your operation. Updated farm records are important to maintain the accuracy and integrity of programs administered by FSA. Please remember to follow the acreage reporting process outlined by your county FSA office and get in touch with them as soon as you finish planting.

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. Four vacancies are now advertised through the USAJOBS website for the County Executive Director in Training position. Additional employment details are below in the newsletter.

FSA’s Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup ends May 13. 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. Producers are encouraged to contact their USDA FSA County office if interested in signing up.

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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**Biden Administration Appoints John Patterson to Serve as State Executive Director for USDA’s Farm Service Agency in Ohio**

The Biden Administration recently appointed John Patterson as the new State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA). Patterson joined the Ohio FSA team on April 25, 2022.

"Individuals selected to serve as FSA State Executive Directors are incredible public servants who have a proven track record when it comes to their commitment to advance their states and communities," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Each will serve on the frontlines, carrying out USDA's mission at the state level and ensuring the voice of each and every USDA customer is heard. We are fortunate to have each of these talented individuals at this critical time for farmers and producers and rural communities across America."

Patterson is a former state legislator and retired classroom teacher whose work experience spans over 40 years. He recently completed eight years in the Ohio House until term limits prohibited his continued service. During his time in the House, Patterson served on the
Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee, including two terms as ranking member. Patterson was a co-author of HB 7, which provides funding for the H2Ohio initiative begun by Governor DeWine. He was also an original co-author of the Young Farmers Tax Credit bill. A Co-Chairman of the Finance Subcommittee on Primary/Secondary Education in his last term, Patterson co-authored the Cupp-Patterson Fair School Funding Plan which was incorporated into the state budget in 2021.

Prior to his time in the House, Patterson taught U.S. History at his alma mater, Jefferson Area High School in a small, rural district in northeast Ohio. He taught Advanced Placement, Honors, and General U.S. History, retiring in 2012. In addition to his teaching duties, Patterson served as the Model United Nations advisor for nearly three decades. Patterson was also the chief negotiator for his union for over twenty years—a position from which he learned much about compromise and the pursuit of mutually beneficial goals. He also coached basketball, baseball, golf, and cross-country. Patterson earned his Ph.D. in Education at Kent State University in 1996. He has been married to his wife Nancy for 38 years and has two sons, Joshua and Jeremiah.

As SED, Patterson will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of FSA programs to agricultural producers in Ohio. These commodity, conservation, credit, and disaster assistance programs ensure a safe, affordable, abundant, and nutritious food, fiber, and fuel supply for consumers.

"The State Executive Director is a pivotal leadership position for the Agency and for the agricultural producers we serve," said Marcus Graham, FSA Deputy Administrator for Field Operations. "These leaders, appointed by the Biden-Harris Administration, bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to their respective states. We are happy to have them on board and wish them much success."

Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers, foresters, and agricultural partners through the effective, efficient, and equitable delivery of federal agricultural programs. The Agency offers producers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. Additionally, through conservation programs, FSA continues to preserve and protect natural resources and provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including targeted loan funds for beginning, underserved, women and military veterans involved in production agriculture.

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**USDA Reminds Producers to Enroll in Grasslands CRP, as Signup Deadline Approaches**

The FSA encourages producers and landowners to enroll in the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) before **signup ends May 13**. 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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**Ohio FSA is Hiring 4 County Executive Director in Training (CEDT) 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.

Four vacancies are currently being advertised for the County Executive Director in Training (CEDT) 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.

CEDTs 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 Executive Director in Training 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, 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 at www.usajobs.gov. You must complete this application process and submit all required documents electronically by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on the closing date of this announcement (May 18, 2022). To apply, click on the link to submit your application:

**County Executive Director in Training (CEDT)** – Throughout Ohio – closes Wednesday, May 18, 2022.

Applicants interested in learning more about or applying for these positions should establish a user profile through 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) 255-2522.

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**USDA Accepts 2 Million Acres in Conservation Reserve Program General Signup**

*This year sees over 4,000 accepted acres in Ohio add to the CRP General Signup total*

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting more than 2 million acres in offers from agricultural producers and landowners through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup, which included more than 4,000 acres in Ohio. This is the first of the program’s multiple signups occurring in 2022. With about 3.4 million acres expiring this year, Vilsack encourages producers and landowners to consider the Grassland and Continuous signups, both of which are currently open.

Producers submitted re-enrollment offers for just over half of expiring acres, similar to the rate in 2021. Offers for new land under General CRP were considerably lower compared to last year’s numbers, with fewer than 400,000 acres being offered this year versus over 700,000 acres offered last year.

It is important to note that submitting and accepting a CRP offer is the start of the process, and producers still need to develop a conservation plan before enrolling their land on October 1, 2022. Each year, during the window between offer acceptance and land enrollment, some producers change their mind and ultimately decide not to enroll some accepted acres without penalty.

The three other types of CRP — Grassland, Continuous, and CREP — are still available for either working-lands or targeted, often smaller sub-field, offers. Producers have submitted offers on nearly 260,000 acres through the Continuous and CREP signup so far this year. The Grassland signup – which last year had its highest participation ever – closes May 13, 2022.

**General CRP Signup**

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The General CRP Signup 58 ran from Jan. 31 to March 11, 2022.

Through CRP, producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve soil health and water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat on agricultural land. In addition to the other well-documented benefits, lands enrolled in CRP are playing a key role in climate change mitigation efforts across the country.

In 2021, FSA introduced improvements to the program, which included a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This incentive provides a 3%, 5% or 10% incentive payment based on the predominant vegetation type for the practices enrolled – from grasses to trees to wetland restoration.

More Information

While the General Signup is closed, producers and landowners can still apply for the Continuous and Grassland signups by contacting their FSA County office.

### 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.

**Dec. 15, 2022** ---- Report Fall-Seeded 2023 crops, Barley, Fall Wheat, and all 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.

First Round of Proposals for Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Shows Strong Interest: Deadline for Second Funding Pool Closes Friday, June 10

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the first round of funding through the new Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities received over 450 proposals ranging from $5 million to $100 million each. The deadline for these large-scale proposals closed on Friday, May 6, 2022. The applications USDA received came from over 350 groups, including nonprofit, for-profit and government entities; farmer cooperatives; conservation, energy and environmental groups; state, tribal and local governments; universities (including minority serving institutions); small businesses and large corporations. The applications covered every state in the nation as well as tribal lands, D.C. and Puerto Rico, which demonstrates the tremendous geographic scope of this need. Click here to read the rest of the press release.

RMA Extends Crop Insurance Flexibilities to June Due to COVID-19

Because of the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending program flexibilities to Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) and agricultural producers until June 30, 2022 or later. Originally, these flexibilities were expiring this month.

Extended flexibilities include:

- Allowing notifications to be sent electronically, including policy related information over the phone or other electronic methods to select policy elections by sales closing, acreage reporting and production reporting dates, including options, endorsements and their forms. Producers may sign electronically or within 60 calendar days.
- Allowing producers to submit a request for a written agreement after the sales closing date.
- Allowing producers with inability to physically sign a written agreement because of COVID-19 to do so after the expiration date.
- Providing additional time for AIPs to accept Regional Office Determined Yield, Master Yield, and Irrigated Determined Yield requests for Category B (annual) crops.
- Allowing AIPs to request a 30-day extension to submit Determined Yield requests for Category C (perennial) crops.
- Waiving the witness signature requirement for approval of Assignments of Indemnity.
USDA Updates Crop Insurance to Respond to Producer Needs, Support Conservation and Climate Mitigation Efforts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making updates to crop insurance to respond to the needs of agricultural producers, including organic producers, as well as to support conservation of natural resources on agricultural land.

Specifically, USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) is making permanent a new provision that allows producers to hay, graze or chop cover crops and still receive a full prevented planting payment. To accommodate the different farming practices across the country, RMA is also increasing flexibility related to the prevented planting “1 in 4” requirement, as well as aligning crop insurance definitions with USDA’s National Organic Program.

Haying, Grazing, and Chopping of Cover Crops

In July, RMA announced producers can hay, graze, or chop cover crops for silage, haylage, or baleage at any time and still receive 100% of the prevented planting payment. Previously, cover crops could only be hayed, grazed or chopped after Nov. 1. Otherwise, the prevented planting payment was reduced by 65% if producers took those actions on the cover crop.

RMA added this flexibility starting with the 2021 crop year as part of a broader effort to encourage producers to use cover crops, an important conservation and good farming practice. Cover crops are especially important on fields prevented from being planted because they cover ground that would otherwise be left bare, which helps reduce soil erosion, boost soil health and increase soil carbon sequestration.

This change builds on the advanced research and identified benefits cover crops have supporting healthy soils and cropland sustainability efforts. Studies also show that cover crops provide increased corn and soybean yields. While results vary by region and soil type, cover crops are proven to reduce erosion, improve water quality and increase the health and productivity of the soil while building resilience to climate change. Additionally, RMA provided a premium benefit to producers who planted cover crops through the Pandemic Cover Crop Program to help producers maintain cover crop systems amid the financially challenging pandemic.

“1 in 4” Requirement Flexibilities

For the 2020 crop year, RMA implemented a policy stating that for land to be eligible for prevented planting coverage, the acreage must meet the “1 in 4” requirement, which means the land must be planted, insured and harvested in at least one of the four most recent crop years. Now, RMA is adding flexibilities to recognize different farming practices and crops grown, as well as the availability of risk management options.
New flexibilities allowed in order to meet the “1 in 4” requirement include:

- The annual regrowth for an insured perennial crop, such as alfalfa, red clover, or mint, to be considered planted.
- Allow a crop covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) to meet the insurability requirement.
- If crop insurance or NAP coverage was not available, allow the producer to prove the acreage was planted and harvested using good farming practices in at least two consecutive years out of the four previous years to meet the insurability requirement.

**Aligning Organic Terms**

RMA is revising four organic definitions to be consistent with USDA’s National Organic Program. Consistency across USDA programs is important to eliminate the potential for confusion between the various programs that USDA is committed to providing to the producers.

This change builds on other RMA efforts to expand and improve current options for organic producers. In Sept. 2021, RMA announced several updates to Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP), including increasing farm operation growth limits for organic producers to the higher of $500,000 or 35% over the five-year average allowable income, and to allowing a producer to report acreage as certified organic, or as acreage in transition to organic, when the producer has requested an organic certification by the acreage reporting date. In addition, RMA announced it will be offering the new Micro Farm policy through WFRP that specifically targets coverage for small, diversified farmers, including organic growers.

**Other Changes**

RMA made other changes to Common Crop Insurance Policy Basic Provisions, Area Risk Protection Insurance Regulations, Coarse Grains Crop Insurance Provisions, and other insurance provisions, which published today:

- RMA is providing an option for producers to delay measurement of farm-stored production for 180-days through the Special Provisions, similar to flexibilities already available to grain crop producers.
- RMA added earlage and snaplage as an acceptable method of harvest for coarse grains. During the 2020 Derecho, many producers salvaged their damaged corn crop by harvesting as earlage or snaplage instead of grain or silage.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

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**Dates to Remember**

**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.

August 5 -- Deadline for producers to signup for CLEAR30. Landowners and producers currently enrolled in the CRP with CRP contracts expiring September 30, 2022, can enroll in a 30-year contract that is a water-quality focused option available through CRP.

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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May 2022 Loan and Interest Rates

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