

In This Edition of the Ohio FSA State Newsletter:

- [A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office](#)
- [Nominations Open June 15 for the 2022 County Committee Elections](#)
- [USDA Advances Food System Transformation with \\$43 Million for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, Adds New Urban County Committees](#)
- [USDA to Allow Producers to Request Voluntary Termination of Conservation Reserve Program Contract](#)
- [USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers](#)
- [2022 Acreage Reporting Dates](#)
- [USDA to Provide \\$6 billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2020 and 2021 Natural Disasters](#)
- [USDA National Water Quality Initiative Funding Available to Build on Ohio Source Water Protection Efforts](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [June 2022 Loan and Interest Rates](#)

A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office

We want to remind everyone again that our FSA county offices continue to busy with acreage certification and they need to hear from you as soon as you are finished with planting. Ohio has thousands of customers to get through the acreage reporting process so the sooner you contact your FSA office, the better. This includes those of you with perennial forage (pasture) and CRP acres. Please remember to follow the acreage reporting process outlined by your [FSA County office](#) and get in touch with them as soon as you finish planting.

Recently, FSA announced the opening of signup for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP). This program provides financial assistance to commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2020 and 2021. The program uses existing Federal Crop Insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program data as the basis for determining assistance, and FSA is sending pre-filled application forms to producers who already have this data on file in Phase I. There will be a PHASE II of the program, yet to be announced. Read the article below for more information.

FSA also announced that we will allow Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants who are in the final year of their CRP contract to request voluntary termination of their CRP

contract following the end of the primary nesting season for fiscal year 2022. USDA has determined to waive refunds and penalties for CRP participants who voluntarily request to terminate a CRP contract that is set to expire on 9/30/2022. FSA is [mailing letters to producers](#) with expiring acres that detail this flexibility and share other options, such as re-enrolling sensitive acres in the CRP Continuous signup and considering growing organic crops. Producers will be asked to make the request for voluntary termination in writing through their [FSA County office](#). If approved for voluntary termination, preparations can occur after the conclusion of the [primary nesting season](#). Additional information is provided in our newsletter.

The nomination period for FSA county committees is open from June 15 through Aug. 2. Each county office is looking for producers to serve on the local county committee. County committees are unique to FSA and serve as a direct link between agricultural communities across the country and USDA. Producers who serve on committees work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers. Are you interested? Contact your [FSA County office](#) to see which area in your county is up for election. Nomination forms can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections or from any FSA county office.

All USDA Service Centers in Ohio continue to be 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. Please be mindful that county office in-person business operations may change day to day, due to Covid-19 case number increases, so please be sure to contact your [FSA County office](#) before visiting in-person.

We wish you the best as you wrap-up planting and move on to spraying, cultivating, and haying season.

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

Nominations Open June 15 for the 2022 County Committee Elections

The USDA FSA encourages all farmers and FSA program participants to take part in the County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2022 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2022. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member* available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections.

USDA Advances Food System Transformation with \$43 Million for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, Adds New Urban County Committees



Funding is First Part of \$75 Million Investment to Support a Fairer Food System and Expand Access to Nutritious Food

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces significant investments to support urban agriculture, including \$43.1 million for grants and cooperative agreements as well as six new urban county committees to help deliver key USDA programs to urban producers. These actions support USDA's efforts to strengthen the food supply chain and transform the food system to be fairer, more competitive, and more resilient. Specifically, USDA is investing \$10.2 million in new cooperative agreements to expand compost and food waste reduction efforts and \$14.2 million in new grants to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects. Additionally, \$18.7 million will fund 75 worthy grant proposals from the 2021 application cycle, which was oversubscribed. Learn more [<link to release>](#)

USDA to Allow Producers to Request Voluntary Termination of Conservation Reserve Program Contract

USDA is giving producers with expiring CRP acres options for returning their land to production and boosting food supplies, consider organic practices, or continuing conservation efforts.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will allow Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants who are in the final year of their CRP contract to request voluntary termination of their CRP contract following the end of the primary nesting season for fiscal year 2022. USDA has determined to waive refunds and penalties for CRP participants who voluntarily request to terminate a CRP contract that is set to expire on 9/30/2022. Today, USDA also announced additional flexibilities for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

FSA is [mailing letters to producers](#) with expiring acres that detail this flexibility and share other options, such as re-enrolling sensitive acres in the CRP Continuous signup and considering

growing organic crops. Producers will be asked to make the request for voluntary termination in writing through their local USDA [Service Center](#).

If approved for voluntary termination, preparations can occur after the conclusion of the [primary nesting season](#). Producers will then be able to hay, graze, begin land preparation activities and plant a fall-seeded crop before October 1, 2022. For land in colder climates, this flexibility may allow for better establishment of a winter wheat crop or better prepare the land for spring planting.

Organic Considerations

Since CRP land typically does not have a recent history of pesticide or herbicide application, USDA is encouraging producers to consider organic production. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides [technical and financial assistance](#) to help producers plan and implement conservation practices, including those that work well for organic operations, such as pest management and mulching. Meanwhile, FSA offers [cost-share for certification costs](#) and other fees.

Other CRP Options

Participants can also choose to enroll all or part of their expiring acres into the Continuous CRP signup for 2022. Important conservation benefits may still be achieved by re-enrolling sensitive acres such as buffers or wetlands. Expiring water quality practices such as filter strips, grass waterways, and riparian buffers may be eligible to be reenrolled under the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR) and CLEAR 30 options under CRP. Additionally, expiring continuous CRP practices such as shelterbelts, field windbreaks, and other buffer practices may also be re-enrolled to provide benefits for organic farming operations.

If producers are not planning to farm the land from their expiring CRP contract, the Transition Incentives Program (TIP) may also provide them two additional annual rental payments after their contract expires on the condition that they sell or rent their land to a beginning or veteran farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

Producers interested in the Continuous CRP signup, CLEAR 30, or TIP should contact FSA by Aug. 5, 2022.

NRCS Conservation Programs

USDA also encourages producers to consider NRCS conservation programs, which help producers integrate conservation on croplands, grazing lands and other agricultural landscapes. EQIP and CSP can help producers plant cover crops, manage nutrients and improve irrigation and grazing systems. Additionally, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), or state or private easement programs, may be such an option. In many cases, a combination of approaches can be taken on the same parcel. For example, riparian areas or other sensitive parts of a parcel may be enrolled in continuous CRP and the remaining land that is returned to farming can participate in CSP or EQIP and may be eligible to receive additional ranking points.

Other Flexibilities to Support Conservation

Additionally, NRCS is also offering a new flexibility for EQIP and CSP participants who have cover cropping including in their existing contracts. NRCS will allow participants to either

modify their plans to plant a cover crop (and instead shift to a conservation crop rotation) or delay their cover crop plans a year, without needing to terminate the existing contract. This will allow for flexibility to respond to market signals while still ensuring the conservation benefits through NRCS financial and technical assistance for participating producers.

More Information

Producers and landowners can learn more about these options by contacting FSA and NRCS at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers

Applications for the Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program (OTECP) and Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) due October 31, 2022.

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can now apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program](#) (OTECP) and [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses. Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022.

OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).
- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per category of certification costs in 2022.

This cost share for certification is available for each of these categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and State organic program fees.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. Producers have until October 31, 2022 to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center. As part of completing the OCCSP applications, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses. Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating State agencies.

Additional details can be found on the [OTECP](#) and [OCCSP](#) webpages.

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.

July 15, 2022 ---- Report all your Burley Tobacco, Cabbage (Planted 3/19/22-5/31/22), Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hybrid Corn Seed, Spring Oats, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Tomatoes and all other crops. Report Perennial Forage Crops. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 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 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 regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, producers are encouraged to contact their [County FSA office](#).

USDA to Provide \$6 billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2020 and 2021 Natural Disasters

First Wave of Payments Based on Crop Insurance Data

The U. S Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2020 and 2021 will soon begin receiving emergency relief payments totaling approximately \$6 billion through the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) new [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\)](#) to offset crop yield and value losses.

Background

On September 30, 2021, President Biden signed into law the *Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act* (P.L. 117-43), which includes \$10 billion in assistance to agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms, and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021. FSA recently made payments to ranchers impacted by drought and wildfire through the first phase of the Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP). ERP is another relief component of the Act.

For impacted producers, existing [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) data is the basis for calculating initial payments. USDA estimates that phase one ERP benefits will reach more than 220,000 producers who received indemnities for losses covered by federal crop insurance and more than 4,000 producers who obtained NAP coverage for 2020 and 2021 crop losses.

ERP Eligibility – Phase One

ERP covers losses to crops, trees, bushes, and vines due to a qualifying natural disaster event in calendar years 2020 and 2021. Eligible crops include all crops for which crop insurance or NAP coverage was available, except for crops intended for grazing. Qualifying natural disaster events include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions.

For drought, ERP assistance is available if any area within the county in which the loss occurred was rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a:

- D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks; or
- D3 (extreme drought) or higher level of drought intensity.

Lists of [2020](#) and [2021](#) drought counties eligible for ERP is available on the emergency relief website.

To streamline and simplify the delivery of ERP phase one benefits, FSA will send pre-filled application forms to producers where crop insurance and NAP data are already on file. This form includes eligibility requirements, outlines the application process and provides ERP payment calculations. Producers will receive a separate application form for each program year in which an eligible loss occurred. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP phase one payment.

Additionally, producers must have the following forms on file with FSA within 60 days of the ERP phase one deadline, which will later be announced by FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, *Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs* (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, if applicable, for the 2021 program year.
- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm the status of their forms can contact their [local FSA county office](#).

ERP Payment Calculations – Phase One

For crops covered by crop insurance, the ERP phase one payment calculation for a crop and unit will depend on the type and level of coverage obtained by the producer. Each calculation will use an ERP factor based on the producer's level of crop insurance or NAP coverage.

- **Crop Insurance** – the ERP factor is 75% to 95% depending on the level of coverage ranging from catastrophic to at least 80% coverage.
- **NAP** – the ERP factor is 75% to 95% depending on the level of coverage ranging from catastrophic to 65% coverage.

Full ERP payment calculation factor tables are available on the emergency relief website and in the program [fact sheet](#).

Applying ERP factors ensures that payments to producers do not exceed available funding and that cumulative payments do not exceed 90% of losses for all producers as required by the Act.

Also, there will be certain payment calculation considerations for area plans under crop insurance policies.

The ERP payment percentage for historically underserved producers, including beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and ranchers will be increased by 15% of the calculated payment for crops having insurance coverage or NAP.

To qualify for the higher payment percentage, eligible producers must have a CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, form on file with FSA for the 2021 program year.

Because the amount of loss due to a qualifying disaster event in calendar years 202 and 2021 cannot be separated from the amount of loss caused by other eligible causes of loss as

defined by the applicable crop insurance or NAP policy, the ERP phase one payment will be calculated based on the producer's loss due to *all eligible causes of loss*.

Future Insurance Coverage Requirements

All producers who receive ERP phase one payments, including those receiving a payment based on crop, tree, bush, or vine insurance policies, are statutorily required to purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, for the next two available crop years, as determined by the Secretary. Participants must obtain crop insurance or NAP, as may be applicable:

- At a coverage level equal to or greater than 60% for insurable crops; or
- At the catastrophic level or higher for NAP crops.

Coverage requirements will be determined from the date a producer receives an ERP payment and may vary depending on the timing and availability of crop insurance or NAP for a producer's particular crops. The final crop year to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage to meet the second year of coverage for this requirement is the 2026 crop year.

Emergency Relief – Phase Two (*Crop and Livestock Producers*)

Today's announcement is only phase one of relief for commodity and specialty crop producers. Making the initial payments using existing safety net and risk management data will both speed implementation and further encourage participation in these permanent programs, such as Federal crop insurance, as Congress intended.

The second phase of both ERP and ELRP programs will fill gaps and cover producers who did not participate in or receive payments through the existing programs that are being leveraged for phase one implementation. When phase one payment processing is complete, the remaining funds will be used to cover gaps identified under phase two.

Through proactive communication and outreach, USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as program details are made available. More information on ERP can be found in the [Notice of Funding Availability](#).

Additional Commodity Loss Assistance

The Milk Loss Program and On-Farm Stored Commodity Loss Program are also funded through the *Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act* and will be announced in a future rule in the Federal Register.

More Information

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#). For FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#).

USDA National Water Quality Initiative Funding Available to Build on Ohio Source Water Protection Efforts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced a second round of funding for the National Water Quality Initiative. Agricultural producers in Brown, Clermont, Clinton, and Highland counties are eligible to apply for financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that protect and improve water quality. Interested producers are encouraged to apply by the June 30, 2022 deadline.

Now in its eleventh year, the National Water Quality Initiative is a partnership among NRCS, state water quality agencies, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to identify and address impaired water bodies through voluntary conservation. NRCS provides targeted funding in small watersheds most in need and where farmers can use conservation practices to make a difference. Selected Ohio watersheds include [Glady Creek, Solomon Run and Five Mile Creek](#), all of which are upstream of William H. Harsha Lake, a vital source of drinking water for more than 50% of Clermont County residents.

“The National Water Quality Initiative allows us to work with local partners to provide Ohio farmers with needed resources to implement on-farm conservation practices,” said John Wilson, NRCS Ohio State Conservationist. “This approach accelerates the reduction of nutrient and sediment loading, improving water quality locally and further downstream.”

Together, Ohio NRCS and the Brown, Clermont, Clinton, and Highland Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) will utilize funds to help producers implement core water quality practices. Conservation systems include practices that promote soil health, reduce erosion, and lessen nutrient runoff, such as filter strips, cover crops, reduced tillage, and manure management. These practices not only benefit natural resources but enhance agricultural productivity and profitability by improving soil health and optimizing the use of agricultural inputs.

Contact a local [Ohio USDA service center](#) or visit the Ohio NRCS [EQIP Funding Categories](#) webpage to get started. While applications for EQIP are accepted throughout the year, producers should submit applications by the deadline to be considered for the current funding period.

Dates to Remember

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.

Aug. 31 --- **Deadline** to obtain 2021 NAP coverage for Aquaculture, Christmas trees, Floriculture, Ginseng, Mushrooms, Turf grass Sod and Watercress.

Sept. 5 ---- Labor Day Holiday. **USDA Service Center is Closed.**

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.

June 2022 Loan and Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans, Direct	-- 3.625%
Farm Ownership Loans, Direct	-- 3.750%
Limited Resource Loans	-- 5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment	-- 1.500%
Emergency Loans	-- 3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year	-- 2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year	-- 2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year	-- 3.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year	-- 2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year	-- 3.000%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year	-- 3.125%
Commodity Loans	-- 3.000%

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