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A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office

Summer is a busy time of year for farmers and producers as well as your County FSA office. The deadline for certification of spring crop, perennial forage (pastures) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres is July 15. Please remember we also need to know of failed crops prior to disposition. If you have not yet communicated with your county FSA office on this, please do so immediately.

Was your operation impacted by natural disaster to crops in 2020 and/or 2021 to the point of receiving insurance indemnification? If so, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Emergency Relief Program (ERP). Impacted producers already should have received a pre-filled application for this program from FSA, however producers still will need to work with their county FSA office to ensure all paperwork is complete to receive this assistance. The deadline to complete this process is July 22, 2022. Producers who did not receive a pre-filled application, but believe they may be eligible, should contact their county FSA office for more information. Read below for additional information.

FSA continues to accept applications for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Continuous Signup re-enrollments, CLEAR 30 and the Transition Incentive Program (TIP) programs until August 5. The application process can take some time, so if you are interested in this program, please contact your County FSA office as soon as possible for more
information and to schedule an appointment to submit an offer. Articles included in this newsletter provide additional details.

With the recent storms moving through Ohio, we want to mention FSA's Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP). EFRP provides payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land to enable them to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster.

In order to meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and be sustainable for growing trees. The land must also be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land. The natural disaster must have resulted in damage that if untreated would impair or endanger the natural resources on the land and/or materially affect future use of the land.

Eligible forest restoration practices include debris removal, such as down or damaged trees, in order to establish a new stand or provide natural regeneration; site preparation, planting materials and labor to replant forest land; restoration of forestland roads, fire lanes, fuel breaks or erosion control structures; fencing, tree shelters and tree tubes to protect trees from wildlife damage; and wildlife enhancement to provide cover openings and wildlife habitat.

After applications are received, local FSA county committees determine land eligibility using on-site damage inspections that assess the type and extent of damage and approve applications. Owners should check with their County FSA office about EFRP after a natural disaster has occurred.

Also, FSA has other emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county and farmers play a vital role in this process.

If producers have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster, you may submit a request to your County FSA office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the County FSA office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

The key thing to remember for FSA program assistance is to contact your USDA Service Center sooner rather than later to report losses and learn more about program options available. They will do their best to help you understand the programs and what is needed for eligibility and to apply.

FSA County Committee (COC) election season continues, with the deadline to submit a nomination to serve on a local committee set for Aug. 1. County Committees are important as they oversee the functions of county FSA offices and provide input on programming and local agricultural issues. For more information on this opportunity, read the article below and then contact your FSA county executive director.

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.

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

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**Eligibility for Nominations for the 2022 County Committee Elections**

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) 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. To be eligible for nomination and hold office as a committee member or alternate, a person must fulfill each of the following requirements: (1) be a producer with an interest in a farming operation, (2) participate or cooperate in any FSA program provided for by law, (3) be a U.S. citizen, (4) be of legal voting age, (5) meet the basic eligibility requirements, and (6) reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in which they will be serving. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

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](http://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

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**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:


**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.

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**Producers with Individual Agriculture Risk Coverage Reminded to Report Yields**

Producers who elected Individual Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC-IC) are required to report yields annually to FSA. The final date to report production from the prior crop year for farms enrolled in ARC-IC is **July 15**. The ARC Program is an income support program that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level.

ARC-IC program payments are issued when the actual individual crop revenue for all covered commodities planted on the ARC-IC farm is less than the ARC-IC guarantee for those covered commodities. ARC-IC uses producer’s certified yields, rather than county level yields. ARC-IC payments are dependent upon the planting of covered commodities on the farm. A producer’s ARC-IC farm is defined as the sum of the producer’s interest in all ARC-IC enrolled farms in the state. Producers with all farms enrolled in County Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage are not required to report production from the prior crop year.

For more information contact your Local USDA Service center.

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**Top 6 Emergency Relief Program Checklist Items for Eligible Farmers**

FSA recently mailed 303,000 pre-filled applications for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP), a new program designed to help agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms, and other qualifying natural disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021.
The past few years have been tough to say the least. As producers have dealt with the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have also struggled to recover from more frequent, more intense natural disasters. Congress passed, and President Biden signed into law the *Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 117-43)*, which includes $10 billion in critical emergency relief.

After extensive stakeholder outreach, FSA began work developing a responsive, easier-to-access program that could be rolled out in phases. FSA is now rolling out the first phase of ERP, which uses existing *Federal Crop Insurance* or *Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)* data as the basis for calculating initial payments.

By leveraging existing data, FSA will be able to deliver approximately $6 billion in assistance on a faster timeline; at the same time, ensuring that producers who do not have existing data on file with USDA are captured in the second phase of ERP, which will be explicitly focused on filling gaps in previously implemented emergency assistance.

To apply for ERP Phase 1, here’s what you need to do:

1. **Check Your Mailbox**

   The form being mailed, includes eligibility requirements, outlines the application process, and provides estimated 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. This application takes less than 15 minutes for producers to complete.

   The deadline to return completed ERP applications to FSA is **Friday, July 22, 2022**. If producers have NAP coverage, then those producers will receive pre-filled ERP applications later this summer. Details on ERP Phase 2 will be forthcoming as well.

2. **Check Your Eligibility**

   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.

   *Lists of [2020](#) and [2021](#) drought counties eligible for ERP are available online.*

3. **Check Required Forms on File with FSA**

   Producers must have the following forms on file with FSA:

   - 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).
   - A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC)*)
and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.

If you have previously participated in FSA programs, you will likely have these required forms on file. However, if you’re uncertain or want to confirm the status of your forms, contact your County FSA office.

4. Check Historically Underserved Status with FSA, If Applicable

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 ERP payment.

To qualify for the higher payment percentage, eligible producers must have the following form on file with FSA:

- Form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification.

5. Check Your Future Insurance Coverage

All producers who receive ERP phase one payments 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.

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.

6. Check Your bank

Once the completed ERP application for payment is submitted to and signed by FSA, producers who have direct deposit should look for payment within three business days.

More Information

We have additional resources, including:

- ERP May 16, 2022 New Release
- ERP Fact Sheet
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Emergency Relief Webpage
- ERP Notice of Funding Availability

Producers should contact their County FSA office if they have questions.

USDA Offers Water Quality-Focused Program That Builds on CRP Contracts
Producers may apply for CLEAR30 through August 5, 2022

The deadline to signup for the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers initiative (CLEAR30) quickly approaches. Interested producers may apply for CLEAR30, a voluntary, incentive-based conservation program, 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.

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.

To sign up for CLEAR30, landowners and producers should contact their County FSA office by Aug. 5, 2022. Additionally, fact sheets and other resources are available at fsa.usda.gov/crp.

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 Transition Incentive Program (TIP) through Aug. 5, 2022.

Landowners with Expiring CRP Contracts Should Consider Transition Incentive Program

CRP contract holders are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the landowner or operator for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires.

CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants must agree to sell, have a contract to sell, or agree to lease long term (at least five years) land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer who is not a family member.

To be considered eligible, veteran, beginning, or SDA farmers and CRP participants must enroll in TIP during the period beginning 2 years before the CRP contract expiration date and
before August 5th of the Fiscal Year that the CRP contract is scheduled to expire. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands. New landowners or renters that return the land to production must use sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information on TIP, contact your County FSA office.

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**USDA Announces Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers**

*New Program Part of Broader Effort to Transform Food System, Create Jobs*

The USDA plans to provide up to $200 million in assistance for specialty crop producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 or 2023. USDA’s new Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program will help to offset costs for specialty crop producers to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements, which is part of USDA’s broader effort to transform the food system to create a more level playing field for small and medium producers and a more balanced, equitable economy for everyone working in food and agriculture.

Specialty crop operations can apply for assistance for eligible expenses related to a 2022 food safety certificate issued on or after June 21, 2022, beginning June 27, 2022. USDA is delivering FSCSC to provide critical assistance for specialty crop operations, with an emphasis on equity in program delivery while building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions. Vilsack made the announcement from Hollis, N.H., where he toured a local, family-owned farm and highlighted USDA’s efforts to help reduce costs for farmers and support local economies by providing significant funding to cut regulatory costs and increase market opportunities for farmers in New Hampshire and across the nation.

**Program Details**

FSCSC will assist specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and related expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023. For each year, FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation’s cost of obtaining or renewing their certification, as well as a portion of their related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small business or very small business; and have paid eligible expenses related to the 2022 (issued on or after June 21, 2022) or 2023 certification.

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
• Training

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each category of eligible costs. A higher payment rate has been set for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers. Details about the payment rates and limitations can be found at farmers.gov/food-safety.

Applying for Assistance

The FSCSC application period for 2022 is June 27, 2022, through January 31, 2023, and the application period for 2023 will be announced at a later date. FSA will issue payments at the time of application approval for 2022 and after the application period ends for 2023. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application. The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. For more information, producers should contact their County FSA office. Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to assist.

Producers can visit farmers.gov/food-safety for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

Ohio Poultry Association Calls for Nominations to Serve on 2023-2024 American Egg Board

The Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) is accepting suggestions for nominations to serve on the 2023-2024 American Egg Board (AEB), which is U.S. egg farmer’s link to consumers in communicating the value of the incredible egg. AEB is seeking an ethnically diverse group of candidates. Appointed members will serve a two-year term.

To be eligible for nomination, individuals must be producers or representatives of producers and they must own 75,000 or more laying hens. Producers who own less than 75,000 hens are eligible provided they have not applied for exemption and are paying assessments to AEB.

All nominations should be submitted by July 13 to OPA at info@ohiopoultry.org. Additional information is available in OPA’s press release.

Dates to Remember

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.

July 22 ---- FSA deadline for producers to complete paperwork for the Emergency Relief Program.

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.

August 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.

Oct. 31 --- FSA deadline for applications to the Organic Certification Cost Share Program and the Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program.

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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**July 2022 Loan and Interest Rates**

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Farm Loan Chief: Darren Metzger
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