A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office

It’s hard to believe we already find ourselves in the month of August, with over half of 2022 behind us. Below you’ll find articles that highlight some of the key things keeping our offices busy right now.

The USDA recently announced that it will indefinitely extend the deadline for producers to return the pre-filled applications for Phase One of the Emergency Relief Program (ERP). A new deadline will be announced after the last Phase One applications are mailed and provide at least 30 days following the mailing. Continuing to build on the initial mailing of pre-filled applications in May, the Department will continue using existing information in USDA and crop insurance files to send additional pre-filled applications for potentially eligible Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) participants through ERP to offset crop yield and value losses.

The USDA Ohio FSA is seeking qualified individuals with knowledge of field crops and specialty crops who are interested in becoming independent crop loss adjustment contractors for FSA. FSA utilizes contracted crop loss adjusters when eligible producers experience crop losses and planting prevented by disasters. Interested individuals should submit a resume and a brief written summary of their agricultural background by close of business on September 2, 2022. For more information, attached is our loss adjuster job description and check out our newsletter for additional details.
We are asking for your help so our staff can continue to provide the best service to you. If you have changed your home phone number, cell phone number or email address be sure to provide your FSA County office with the updated contact information. This will allow our staff an opportunity to keep producers informed of program announcement and deadlines, reporting requirements and other important updates. Our staff can send short SMS messages and emails to producers, to keep you updated on programs. To subscribe, visit farmers.gov/subscribe to sign-up and receive emails and text messages. Producers can also ask our staff for assistance to subscribe for these services.

Lastly, we want to note that USDA continues its efforts to protect its customers and staff from the COVID-19 new variants that continue to cause issues across the nation. This includes analysis of rates of infections and hospitalizations that could lead to the return of a mask requirement while you are doing business at your local FSA office or a reduction of staffing in FSA County offices. Please know that if you are asked to wear a mask, your FSA County staff is following a directive that is intended to keep you (and them) safe. Your continued patience and support are very much appreciated.

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

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**USDA Invests $14.5 Million in Taxpayer Education, Program Outreach Efforts for Farmers and Ranchers**

FSA is investing in two outreach and education efforts for farmers and producers, including those who are new to agriculture or who have been historically underserved by programs.

First, FSA is announcing $10 million in the new Taxpayer Education and Asset Protection Initiative. Through this initiative, FSA has partnered with the University of Arkansas and the National Farm Income Tax Extension Committee to deliver tax education resources for farmers and ranchers, which includes engagement with agricultural educators, and tax professionals through partnerships with community groups and minority serving institutions across the country.

Second, FSA is investing $4.5 million in outreach for the Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program (CRP TIP), which increases access to land for new farmers and ranchers. FSA will award cooperative agreements to 15 to 20 partner and stakeholder organizations to conduct outreach and technical assistance and promote awareness and understanding among agricultural communities, particularly those who are military veterans, new to farming, or historically underserved.

View the full news release to learn more and register for a free webinar on tax preparation.

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**Ohio FSA Seeks Independent Crop Loss Adjustment Contractors**
The USDA Ohio FSA is seeking qualified individuals with knowledge of field crops and specialty crops who are interested in becoming independent crop loss adjustment contractors for FSA.

FSA administers the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) which provides financial assistance to eligible producers affected by drought, flood, hurricane, or other natural disasters.

FSA utilizes contracted crop loss adjusters when eligible producers experience crop losses and planting prevented by disasters. Contracted crop loss adjusters will be responsible for completing field inspections, reading maps and aerial photos, measuring fields and assessing damage or loss. The crop loss adjuster will perform fact-finding duties (regarding crop damage), record information and transmit loss information to accurately assess indemnity.

Interested individuals should submit a resume and a brief written summary of their agricultural background and mail the information to the address listed below. Packages must be received by close of business on September 2, 2022.

Ohio FSA State Office  
Attn: Christina Piper  
200 North High Street,  
Room 540 Columbus, Ohio 43215

**NOTE:** Selected individuals must have their own transportation and be willing to travel anywhere in Ohio to work crop loss claims. Travel expenses are reimbursable. Further training will be provided to crop loss adjusters once contractor selections are made.

View the [detailed job description](#) link for more information about the independent crop loss adjustment contractor position.

For more information or questions about the independent crop loss adjustment contractor position, contact Christina Piper at the Ohio FSA State Office at 614-255-2445.

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**Deadline Extended and More Pre-Filled Forms For 2020 and 2021 Disasters on the Way**

*More Producers to Soon Receive Applications for over $105 Million in Additional Emergency Relief*

The USDA recently announced that it will indefinitely extend the deadline for producers to return the pre-filled applications for Phase One of the Emergency Relief Program (ERP). A new deadline will be announced after the last Phase One applications are mailed and provide at least 30 days following the mailing.

Continuing to build on the initial mailing of pre-filled applications in May, the Department will continue using existing information in USDA and crop insurance files to send additional pre-filled applications starting this week for potentially eligible [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) participants. Once applications from eligible NAP producers are returned, these producers are expected to receive about $105 million in ERP payments for eligible losses from 2020 and 2021 disasters.
FSA is now mailing pre-filled applications to NAP producers through ERP to offset crop yield and value losses. To receive a relief payment, producers should complete and return the applications by announced deadlines.

Producers are expected to receive assistance direct deposited into their bank account within three business days after they sign and return the prefilled application to the FSA county office and the county offices enters the application into the system.

While most crop insurance customers that may be eligible for ERP Phase One received the pre-filled applications in May, there are some who should expect to receive a form in August including:

- Producers who had an eligible loss in 2020 that had been recorded in the crop insurance records as a 2019 loss (e.g., prevented planting claims); and
- Producers with policies that required additional information before being able to calculate an indemnity for 2021 losses (producers with 2020 losses would have already received that application). Policies that required additional information include Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO), Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO), Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX), Margin Protection Plan (MP) or Area Risk Protection Insurance (ARPI).

Producers without risk management coverage through crop insurance or NAP and those with shallow losses may be covered by the forthcoming Phase Two of ERP.

USDA estimates that Phase One ERP benefits will reach more than 5,200 producers with NAP coverage for eligible 2020 and 2021 crop losses. This emergency relief complements ERP assistance recently provided to more than 162,000 producers who had received crop insurance indemnities for qualifying losses. Nearly 13,000 additional crop insurance customers will also receive pre-filled applications in August to cover eligible 2020 losses described above and for producers with more complex policies where indemnities could not be calculated for 2021 previously.

ERP and the previously announced Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) are funded by the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, which President Biden signed into law in 2021. The law provided $10 billion to help agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021. Overall, USDA has already quickly disbursed over $6 billion dollars under ERP and ELRP with reduced paperwork for the producer and field offices.

For more information on ERP eligibility, program provisions for socially disadvantaged or historically underserved producers as well as Frequently Asked Questions, NAP applicants can visit FSA’s Emergency Relief webpage, ERP program fact sheet or contact their FSA County office.

FSA is Adjusting to Fit the Situation Facing Livestock Producers

In recent meetings between USDA FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux, Senator John Hoeven, FSA North Dakota State Executive Director Marcy Svenningsen, and livestock producers in North Dakota impacted by catastrophic 2021 winter storms, it became apparent
that our Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) payment rates were not reflective of the true market value for non-adult beef, beefalo, bison, and dairy animals.

LIP provides benefits to livestock owners and some contract growers for livestock deaths exceeding normal mortality from eligible adverse weather events, certain predation losses and reduced sales prices due to injury from an eligible loss. Indemnity payments are made at a rate of 75 percent of the market value of the livestock on the day before the date of death.

To better capture ranchers’ investments in their animals, we recently announced increased LIP payment rates for beef, beefalo, bison, and dairy animals less than 250 pounds. These now-updated payment rates are reflective of the substantial increased cost of these non-adult livestock in 2022:

The updated LIP payment rates are effective immediately and will be applied retroactively starting January 1, 2022, for all eligible causes of loss including excessive heat, tornado, winter storms, and other qualifying natural disasters. Producers who have already received LIP payments for 2022 will receive an additional payment, if applicable, commensurate with these updated rates. For details on eligibility and payment rates, you can review our LIP fact sheet.

Other Program Improvements

These LIP policy changes complement enhancements we recently made to our Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) – changes that also were derived from the direct input and feedback of producers and the livestock groups.

In addition to paying above normal costs for hauling water to drought-stricken livestock, we also added compensation for hauling feed to livestock and livestock to forage or other grazing acres. And, in 2021, we added fish raised for food as an ELAP-eligible commodity because producers and industry leaders expressed the need.

For questions regarding LIP, please contact your FSA County 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*

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (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.

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 FSA County 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.
USDA Expands Farmers.gov to Include Farm Records

Producers with farmers.gov accounts can now access farm records and maps online, the latest self-service feature added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website.

You can quickly and easily access your land information in real time by desktop computer, tablet or phone. Capabilities include:

- View, print and export detailed farm records such as cropland, base acres, yields, CRP acres, land ownership details, and much more;
- View, print and export farm/tract maps that can be provided to lenders, chemical or fertilizer providers, and FSA for reporting acreage and crop insurance agents; and
- Export common land unit (field) boundaries as ESRI shapefiles.

The ability to access these records on demand without a visit to the service center saves you time and money.

Farmers.gov now includes the most popular functionalities from FSAFARM+, the FSA portal for producers, while providing enhanced functionality and an improved user experience. A new enhancement expands the scope of accessibility to include farmers and ranchers who are members of an entity, as well as people with a power of attorney form (FSA-211) on file with FSA.

Managing USDA Business Online

Using farmers.gov, producers, entities and those acting on their behalf can also:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign conservation documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices, plans and contracts.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View farm loan and interest information (producers only).

Future plans include adding the ability to import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture planting boundaries.

To access your information, you’ll will need a USDA eAuth account to login to farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit farmers.gov and sign into the site’s authenticated portal via the Sign In/Sign Up link at the top right of the website. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.
RMA Makes It Easier for American Farmers to Grow Food, Ease Burdens for American Families

The Biden Administration recently announced additional steps it’s taking to support U.S. farmers in their work to stabilize food prices and feed Americans and the world amidst continuing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruptions, and the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is reducing the economic risk of raising two crops on the same land in one year, making it easier for U.S. farmers to grow food in America, increase food supply, and lower food costs for American families. This action is part of a broader set of commitments made earlier this year by President Biden and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to increase domestic food production amid potential global food shortages related to the invasion of Ukraine.

To reduce the risk of raising two crops on the same land in one year – a practice known as double cropping - USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) is expanding double crop insurance opportunities in nearly 1,500 counties where double cropping is viable. See maps for where expanded opportunities for soybeans and sorghum are located.

Improvements include:

- For soybeans, double crop coverage will be expanded to or streamlined in at least 681 counties, including all of those that were initially targeted for review. While some additional counties were permanently added to be double crop counties, the majority of expansion removed barriers such as requiring production records and streamlined the process to get personalized coverage through a written agreement.

- For grain sorghum, double crop coverage will be expanded to or streamlined in at least 870 counties that were initially targeted for review. Similar to soybeans, most of these changes included streamlining the administrative burden and requirements to obtain written agreements. Written agreements provide the producer with the maximum flexibility by allowing them to obtain crop insurance coverage, but not requiring the coverage of both the spring and winter crops as in permanent double crop counties.

- RMA will also work with the crop insurance industry and farm organizations to highlight the availability and improvements in written agreements as an option for any farmer that grows a crop outside the area where a policy is automatically offered.

This expansion of coverage was guided by extensive outreach to nearly 70 grower groups covering 28 states. This includes a wide array of stakeholders such as producers, agents, university extension and other agricultural experts, commodity associations, state departments of agriculture and insurance companies. USDA may add additional counties as it explores these options with farmers this summer, with the final rules being locked in by the fall. Since farmers need to plan ahead for adding a winter crop to a rotation, USDA wanted to make sure they had time to consider this option and consult with local extension and agriculture experts and their crop insurance agent.

Additional resources released today by USDA include frequently asked questions as well as the Helping Farmers Address Global Food Insecurity webpage on farmers.gov.

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. Producers can learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

**Dates to Remember**

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

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

**September 30** ---- **Deadline** to obtain 2022 NAP coverage for Winter Wheat, Rye, Barley and Speltz.

**October 10** -------- Columbus Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

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

**ERP Phase 1: Deadline TBA:** The deadline for producers to return the pre-filled applications for Phase One of the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) has been extended. A new deadline will be announced after the last Phase One applications are mailed and provide at least 30 days following the mailing.

**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.

**August 2022 Loan and Interest Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Operating Loans, Direct</td>
<td>-- 4.000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Direct</td>
<td>-- 4.250%</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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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year</td>
<td>-- 3.250%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commodity Loans</td>
<td>-- 4.000%</td>
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Farm Loan Chief: Darren Metzger
Production Adjustment / Compliance and Risk Management Chief: Matt Kleski

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