Change to Policy on Filing a Notice of Loss for Grazed Forage Producers with NAP Coverage

For the 2021 and subsequent crop years, NAP forage producers with the intended use of grazing who elect to use independent assessments or other approved alternative loss percentage methods to establish their loss are no longer required to file a CCC-576 Notice of Loss with FSA. However, a CCC-576 Application for Payment form must be submitted to FSA no later than 60 calendar days after the coverage period ends.

Producers that elect to have the grazing loss determined using similar mechanically harvested units still must timely file a CCC-576 Application for Payment form.
**State Committee Members:**
Sarah Dorsey, Bixby
Karen Eifert Jones, Waukomis
Don Allen Parsons, Idabel
J.B. Stewart, Keyes
David Bush, Altus

**State Staff:**
Jaramie Karcher
Farm Loan Programs

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Eligibility

Joy Alspach
Conservation

Danny Lee
Compliance & Price Support

Janlyn Hannah
Administration &
Public Relations/Outreach

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county. FSA Office contact information can be located on our online Directory

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**USDA Offers Disaster Assistance for Producers Facing Inclement Weather**

Most of the nation is facing unusually cold weather, as a winter storm moved coast-to-coast over the weekend. Winter storms create significant challenges and often result in catastrophic loss for agricultural producers, especially for those raising livestock, row crops and vulnerable crops like citrus.

Despite every attempt to mitigate risk, your operation may suffer losses. USDA offers several programs to help with recovery.

**Risk Management**

For producers who have risk protection through Federal Crop Insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), we want to remind you to report crop damage to your crop insurance agent or the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.
If you have crop insurance, contact your agency within 72 hours of discovering damage and be sure to follow up in writing within 15 days. If you have NAP coverage, file a Notice of Loss (also called Form CCC-576) within 15 days of loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

**Disaster Assistance**

USDA also offers disaster assistance programs, which is especially important to livestock, fruit and vegetable, specialty and perennial crop producers who have fewer risk management options.

First, the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) and [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that died as a result of a qualifying natural disaster event—like these winter storms— or for loss of grazing acres, feed and forage.

Next, the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate and replant tree, vines or shrubs loss experienced by orchards and nurseries. This complements NAP or crop insurance coverage, which cover the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases.

For LIP and ELAP, you will need to file a Notice of Loss for livestock and grazing or feed losses within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days. For TAP, you will need to file a program application within 90 days.

**Documentation**

It’s critical to keep accurate records to document all losses following this devastating cold weather event. Livestock producers are advised to document beginning livestock numbers by taking time and date-stamped video or pictures prior to after the loss.

Other common documentation options include:

- Purchase records
- Production records
- Vaccination records
- Bank or other loan documents
- Third-party certification

**Other Programs**

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore damaged farmland or forests.

Additionally, FSA offers a variety of loans available including emergency loans that are triggered by disaster declarations and operating loans that can assist producers with credit needs. You can use these loans to replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, or refinance farm-related debts, and other needs.

Meanwhile, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial resources through its [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) to help with immediate needs and long-term
support to help recover from natural disasters and conserve water resources. Assistance may also be available for emergency animal mortality disposal from natural disasters and other causes.

**Additional Resources**

Additional details – including payment calculations – can be found on our [NAP](#), [ELAP](#), [LIP](#), and [TAP](#) fact sheets. On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help you determine program or loan options.

While we never want to have to implement disaster programs, we are here to help. To file a Notice of Loss or to ask questions about available programs, contact your local USDA Service Center. All [USDA Service Centers](#) are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments because of the pandemic.

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**USDA Expands Farm Loans for Native Americans Farming and Ranching on Tribal Land**

The Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan program (HFIL) provides revolving loan funds to qualified intermediary lenders that helps qualified tribes and individuals purchase tribal farmland that has multiple owners.

The first recipient, the Native American Community Development Corporation Financial Services, Inc. (NACDCFS) of Browning, Mont., will lend funds directly to tribal members through a $10 million intermediary HFIL loan from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA). NACDCFS addresses critical needs in Native American communities related to the growth of family assets, supports economic development, and enhances the quality of life for communities and residents located on or near Montana’s seven Indian reservations. NACDCFS provides one-on-one technical assistance to Native American entrepreneurs and agricultural producers. NACDCFS is a 501(c) (3), certified Native Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), through the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Under the [1887 Dawes Act](#), Indian reservation land was divided and allotted to individual tribal members such that with the passing of each generation, title ownership was divided and parcelled among heirs, while the land was not. As a result, land once owned by a single person could today be owned by hundreds or thousands of individuals, resulting in what is known as “highly fractionated Indian land.” In many instances, landowners are unknown or cannot be located, which complicates the coordination of ownership or prevents the use of the property altogether. There are more than 245,000 owners of three million fractionated land interests, spanning approximately 150 Indian reservations.

Under HFIL, tribes and tribal members can submit an application directly to an intermediary lender. To participate, intermediary lenders first must be approved by USDA. The lenders may be private and tribal nonprofit corporations, public agencies, Indian tribes or lenders subject to federal or state regulation (such as a credit union or other financial institution). FSA will lend to the intermediary, which will reblend to the applicant. The intermediary lender also will administer the loan for the applicant.

For more information on the program, visit [fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](#) to find your county office.
Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?

Farmers and ranchers rely on crop insurance to protect themselves from disasters and unforeseen events, but not all crops are insurable through the USDA’s Risk Management Agency. The Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides producers another option to obtain coverage against disaster for these crops. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insured crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

Commercially produced crops and agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available are generally eligible for NAP. Eligible crops include those grown specifically for food, fiber, livestock consumption, biofuel or biobased products, or be commodities such as value loss crops like Christmas trees and ornamental nursery, honey, maple sap, and many others. Contact your FSA office to see which crops are eligible in your state and county.

Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, earthquake, flood. These events must occur during the NAP policy coverage period, before or during harvest, and the disaster must directly affect the eligible crop. For guidance on causes of loss not listed, contact your local FSA county office.

Interested producers must apply for coverage using FSA form CCC-471, “Application for Coverage,” and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. These must be filed by the application closing date. Closing dates vary by crop, so it is important to contact your local FSA office as soon as possible to ensure you don’t miss an application closing date.

At the time of application, each producer will be provided a copy of the NAP Basic Provisions, which describes how NAP works and all the requirements you must follow to maintain NAP coverage. NAP participants must provide accurate annual reports of their production in non-loss years to ensure their NAP coverage is beneficial to their individual operation.

Producers are required to pay service fees which vary depending on the number of crops and number of counties your operation is located in. The NAP service fee is the lesser of $325 per crop or $825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of $1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums also apply when producers elect higher levels of coverage with a maximum premium of $15,750 per person or legal entity depending on the maximum payment limitation that may apply to the NAP covered producer. The service fee can be waived for beginning, qualifying veteran, and limited resource farmers and ranchers. These farmers and ranchers can also receive a 50 percent reduction in the premium.

For more detailed information on NAP, download the NAP Fact Sheet. To get started with NAP, we recommend you contact your local USDA service center.

Applying for Guaranteed Conservation Loans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Guaranteed Conservation Loans are available for applicants who want to install a conservation practice.

These funds may be used for any conservation activities included in a conservation plan or Forest Stewardship Management plan. A copy of the conservation plan is required to complete the application. These loans are not limited to just family farmers. In some cases, applicants can
operate non-eligible enterprises. Loan funds are issued by a participating commercial lender and guaranteed up to 80 percent by FSA or up to 90 percent for beginning and historically underserved producers.

USDA Encourages Participation and Completion of the Annual June Area Survey

Every year in June, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) works on its important Area Survey. This survey samples segments of land and requires National Association of State Department of Agricultural employees to determine who is operating within those segment boundaries. Some previous respondents will remember this by the large aerial photo that NASDA enumerators carry with them to help view the various land tracts.

This year due to the ongoing pandemic, NASS has elected to only collect information over the phone to protect the health and safety of our producers and enumerators. To assist in this change, NASS will be starting the prescreening phase of this survey on March 15th to allow for more time. Potential respondents will receive a letter and a map in the mail to refer to when the enumerator calls to determine who is operating.

Since this survey is based on the land, NASS will be accounting for every piece of land within the Segment to help ensure all agriculture is accounted for in NASS estimates. NASS thanks all of those respondents in advance for their responsiveness to the NASDA Enumerators. If you have questions about the survey, please contact the Oklahoma Field Office at (405) 415-8850.

USDA Offers Conservation Stewardship Program Participants Renewal Options for Contracts Set to Close

Are you new to farming or ranching? USDA can help you get started or grow your farming operation through a variety of programs and services. From farm loans to crop insurance to conservation programs to disaster assistance, USDA is here to support you and your operation.

USDA recently selected a national coordinator and state-level coordinators, who will focus on better serving beginning farmers and ranchers.

Each state coordinator will receive training and develop tailored beginning farmer outreach plans for their state. Coordinators will help field employees better reach and serve beginning farmers and ranchers and will also be available to assist beginning farmers who need help navigating the variety of resources USDA has to offer.

Visit farmers.gov to find Oklahoma’s coordinator to help you get started today.

USDA Seeks Public Comment on Revised Conservation Practice Standards

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it is accepting Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) renewal applications through March 31 for over 11,000 contracts set to end this year. CSP is USDA’s largest working lands conservation program with more than 90 million
acres enrolled. Producers interested in contract renewals or applying for CSP for the first time should visit the [CSP webpage](http://example.com) or contact their local [USDA service center](http://example.com).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).