

February 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Oregon FSA Newsletter

Oregon Farm Service Agency

7620 SW Mohawk St.
Tualatin, OR 97062

Phone: 503-692-3688
Fax: 855-824-6185
www.fsa.usda.gov/or

State Executive Director:
Barry Bushue

State Committee:
Anna Sullivan, Chair
Sam Asai, Member
Phil Hassinger, Member
TJ Hansell, Member
Denver Pugh, Member

Conservation Reserve Program Signup Reminder

Make an appointment today for CRP 2020 general signup.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds agricultural producers interested in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2020 general signup that there is less than two weeks before the enrollment deadline of February 28, 2020. This signup is available to farmers and private landowners who are either enrolling for the first time or re-enrolling for another 10- to 15-year term.

Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive yearly rental payments for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”), which can control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

CRP has 22 million acres enrolled, but the 2018 Farm Bill lifted the cap to 27 million acres.

Administration:
Martin Nguyen Administrative
Officer

Farm Programs:
Kent Willett, Acting Chief

Farm Loan Programs:
Kathey Brucker, Chief

Next STC Meeting: tbd

**Sign up for important text
message alerts from your
local county FSA office! To
subscribe, text FSANOW
(372-669).**

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the U.S. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. Marking its 35th anniversary in 2020, CRP has had many successes, including:

- Preventing more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;
- Reducing nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively;
- Sequestering an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road;
- Creating more than 3 million acres of restored wetlands while protecting more than 175,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, enough to go around the world 7 times; and
- Benefiting bees and other pollinators and increased populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, grasshopper sparrows and many other birds.

The CRP continuous signup is ongoing, which enables producers to enroll for [certain practices](#). FSA plans to open the Soil Health and Income Protection Program, a CRP pilot program, in early 2020, and the 2020 CRP Grasslands signup runs from March 16, 2020 to May 15, 2020.

To enroll in CRP, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

February Interest Rates

90 Day Treasury Bill: 1.625%
Direct Operating Loans: 2.625%
Farm Ownership and Conservation Loans: 3.250%
Farm Ownership Down Payment: 1.500%
Farm Ownership Joint Financing: 2.500%
Emergency Loans Actual Loss: 3.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 Year: .625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 Year: 1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 Year: 1.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 Year: 1.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 Year: 1.875%

Important Dates

Feb. 28: General CRP Signup closes; signup for continuous CRP is ongoing.

Within 15 Days: The earlier of (A) when a disaster occurred or damage to the crop or commodity becomes apparent or (B) normal harvest date for reporting a Notice of Loss for NAP

Within 30 Days: When loss is apparent for reporting a Notice of Loss for LIP and ELAP.

TAP: Submit the application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.

Applications accepted for WHIP+ for milk loss, and loss of on-farm stored commodities resulting from eligible disaster (into 2020).

March 1: LIP: In addition to filing a LIP notice of loss, producers must also submit a LIP application for payment by March 1, 2020.

March 15: ARC-PLC Program Year 2019 signup ends.

June 30, 2020: ARC-PLC Program Year 2020 signup ends.

USDA Offers Flood Impacted Oregon Farmers and Ranchers Immediate Disaster Assistance

Farm Service Agency Stands Ready to Assist Agricultural Producers Slammed by Recent Heavy Rains

Oregon Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers across the state of federal farm program benefits that may be available to help eligible producers recover from recent heavy rains and flooding.

FSA offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts following floods or similar qualifying natural disasters. Available programs and loans include:

- **Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2019 crops.
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, tropical storms, tornados lightening, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disaster.
- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** - provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed that was purchased, or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for the **producer's** eligible livestock. In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled; forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds and tornadoes.
- ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to floodwaters.
- **Emergency Loan Program** – Available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous **Secretarial Disaster designation**. These low

interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding.

- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.
- **HayNet** - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze. www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet.

To establish or retain FSA program eligibility, farmers and ranchers must report prevented planting and failed acres (crops and grasses). Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form *FSA-576, Notice of Loss*, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

For more information on disaster assistance programs and loans visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ or contact your local FSA Office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Announces Details of Risk Management Programs for Hemp Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of two programs that protect hemp producers' crops from natural disasters. A pilot hemp insurance program through Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) provides coverage against loss of yield because of insurable causes of loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain or Cannabidiol (CBD) oil and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage protects against losses associated with lower yields, destroyed crops or prevented planting where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. Producers may apply now, and the deadline to sign up for both programs is March 16, 2020.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

NAP provides coverage against loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, seed or CBD for the 2020 crop year where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

NAP basic 50/55 coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. The 2018 Farm Bill allows for buy-up levels of NAP coverage from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Pilot Insurance Program

The MPCI pilot insurance is a new crop insurance option for hemp producers in select counties of 21 states for the 2020 crop year. The program is available for eligible producers in certain counties in Alabama, California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin. Information on eligible counties is accessible through the USDA Risk Management Agency's Actuarial Information Browser.

Among other requirements, to be eligible for the pilot program, a hemp producer must have at least one year of history producing the crop and have a contract for the sale of the insured hemp. In

addition, the minimum acreage requirement is 5 acres for CBD and 20 acres for grain and fiber. Hemp will not qualify for replant payments or prevented plant payments under MPCI.

This pilot insurance coverage is available to hemp growers in addition to revenue protection for hemp offered under the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection plan of insurance. Also, beginning with the 2021 crop year, hemp will be insurable under the Nursery crop insurance program and the Nursery Value Select pilot crop insurance program. Under both nursery programs, hemp will be insurable if grown in containers and in accordance with federal regulations, any applicable state or tribal laws and terms of the crop insurance policy.

Eligibility Requirements

Under a regulation authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill and issued in October 2019, all growers must have a license to grow hemp and must comply with applicable state, tribal or federal regulations or operate under a state or university research pilot, as authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

Producers must report hemp acreage to FSA after planting to comply with federal and state law enforcement. The Farm Bill defines hemp as containing 0.3 percent or less tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) on a dry-weight basis. Hemp having THC above the federal statutory compliance level of 0.3 percent is an uninsurable or ineligible cause of loss and will result in the hemp production being ineligible for production history purposes.

For more information on USDA risk management programs for hemp producers, visit farmers.gov/hemp to read our [frequently asked questions](#). For more information on the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program, visit USDA's Agricultural Marketing Services' website to read their [frequently asked questions](#).

FSA Encourages Producers to Enroll Soon in Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. March 15, 2020 is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year.

Although more than 200,000 producers have enrolled to date, FSA anticipates 1.5 million producers will enroll for ARC and PLC. By enrolling soon, producers can beat the rush as the deadline nears.

FSA offices have multiple programs competing for the time and attention of our staff. Because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs; and to ensure FSA meets your program delivery expectations, please do not wait to start the enrollment process. Call your FSA county office and make an appointment soon to ensure your elections are made and contracts signed well ahead of the deadlines.

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Until March 15, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested. Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take

effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our [program fact sheet](#) or our [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#). Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at fsa.usda.gov/arc/plc. To enroll, contact your [FSA county office](#) for an appointment.

Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department's self-service website for farmers.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has [increased the limits](#) for several loan products.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America's agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

For more information or to locate your USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov.

USDA Extends Deadline for Input on Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Rule

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is extending the deadline to March 20, 2020, to submit public comments on its interim rule for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). NRCS is asking for public feedback on two additional questions and made several clarifying changes to the rule preamble.

In the [updated rule](#), NRCS:

- Asked whether the Healthy Forest Reserve Program and Regional Conservation Partnership Program should be used primarily to help protect agricultural lands with forest lands that are beyond what is eligible for enrollment as an ACEP Agricultural Land Easement;
- Asked for input on streamlining access to ACEP and ranking criteria for applications for the program;
- Corrected the docket number and URL to view a copy of the Environmental Assessment;
- Clarified that the revised definition for "wetland restoration" can be found under §1468.3 of the interim rule and the definition of "wetland restoration" in the Jan. 6, 2020, preamble was the prior definition.

Submitting Comments

NRCS invites comments on this interim rule through March 20 on the [Federal Register](#). Electronic comments must be submitted through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket ID NRCS-2019-0006. All written comments received also will be publicly available on [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

NRCS will evaluate public comments to determine whether additional changes are needed to the regulation. The agency plans on publishing a final rule following its review of the public comments.

Applying for ACEP

ACEP aids landowners and eligible entities with conserving, restoring, and protecting wetlands, productive agricultural lands, and grasslands. NRCS accepts ACEP applications year-round, but applications are ranked and funded by enrollment periods that are set locally.

For more information on how to sign up for ACEP, visit your state website at nrcs.usda.gov, or contact your [local NRCS field office](#).

USDA Reminds Farmers of Upcoming Spring Crop and Whole-Farm Revenue Sales Closing Deadlines

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds farmers in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington of the final dates to purchase or modify federal crop insurance coverage on 2020 spring-planted crops is fast approaching. Calendar and early fiscal tax filers also have time to purchase the [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection](#) (WFRP) program policy.

The date for all 2020 spring-seeded crops (excluding wheat in counties with fall and spring planted types and onions and cabbage) and for farmers who file their taxes on an early fiscal or calendar basis can purchase the WFRP by March 15.

Individual yield crop insurance policies provide protection against production losses due to natural perils. The WFRP policy provides revenue protection.

Producers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2020 crop year. 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](#). Growers can use the RMA [Cost Estimator](#) to get a premium amount estimate of their insurance needs online.

Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

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