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Acting State Executive Director's Message



As we look forward to spending time with our families and friends this holiday season, the Oregon FSA staff would like to wish you all happy holidays! *(Photo: Wallowa County USDA Service Center: NRCS, Kacie Otley; FSA, Lela Kunkle and Julianna Eckley).*



Yesterday, Oregon FSA and Robert Bonnie, USDA's Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, attended a round table discussion in Salem with some of Oregon's Ag commodity groups and specialty crop growers. We appreciated

the opportunity to get feedback and hear the concerns of the impacts from the severe weather and droughts Oregon experienced for the last two years.

I also recently attended the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Tri-State Grain Grower's conventions. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to present at each of these events about Oregon FSA's accomplishments this year, and to highlight a few upcoming relief programs and our farm loan programs. Please stay tuned for further USDA program announcements related to the historic drought Oregon experienced in 2020 and 2021. USDA is also announcing more relief programs under the Pandemic Assistance for Producers highlighted below.

- The [Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program \(SMHPP\)](#) is part of USDA's [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#), to assist hog producers who sold hogs through a

negotiated sale during the period in which these producers faced the greatest reduction in market prices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible hog producers can apply for SMHPP starting Dec. 15, 2021, by completing the FSA-940, *Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program* application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/smhpp for a copy of the Notice of Funds Availability, information on applicant eligibility and more information on how to apply. Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. To find your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator. Hog producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

- The [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\) Program](#) signups opened Dec. 8 and expanded the program to allow dairy producers to better protect their operations by enrolling supplemental production. This signup period enables producers to get coverage through this important safety-net program for another year as well as get additional assistance through the new Supplemental DMC. **The signup runs from Dec. 13, 2021 to Feb. 18, 2022.** For further information [click here](#).
- The [Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers \(PATHH\) program](#) will issue final pandemic assistance payments by USDA. In total, \$200 million will be provided to loggers and log trucking businesses who experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during Jan. 1 through Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 through Dec. 1, 2019. This support is part of USDA's broader [Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative](#).

For assistance with FSA programs please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

If you missed the recent Guaranteed Lender Training presented by FSA's Farm Loan Programs, the recorded session is available on Oregon FSA's website at [Oregon State Resources \(usda.gov\)](#).

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Josh Hanning
Acting State Executive Director

The Sherman County USDA Service Center is temporarily closed. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff are teleworking and able to support customers for virtual or scheduled in-person visits. We appreciate your patience during this time. To connect with NRCS staff, call 541-298-8559, ext. 3. To connect with FSA staff, call 541-565-3551, ext. 2. Questions? Email ORInfo@usda.gov.

Interest Rates

USDA Announced December 2021 Lending Rates for Agricultural Producers

Farm Operating Loans – Direct, 2.000%
Farm Operating – Microloans, 2.000%
Farm Ownership Loans – Direct, 3.000%
Farm Ownership-Direct, Joint Financing, 2.500%
Farm Ownership-Down Payment, 1.500%

Emergency Loans Actual Loss, 3.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 3 Years, 0.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 5 Years, 1.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 7 Years, 1.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 10 Years, 1.625%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. You can find out which of these loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

Important Dates

- **Dec. 13, 2021 - Feb 18, 2022:** [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) program signup.
 - **Dec. 15:** Eligible hog producers can apply for [SMHPP](#) starting Dec. 15, 2021
 - **Dec. 15:** Oregon [Acreage Reporting](#) Deadline for fall planted crops, including fall alfalfa seed, fall barley, fall canola, fall mint, onions (planted 8/15-9/15), fall wheat and all other fall seeded small grains, perennial forage (hay and grazing).
 - **Dec. 24:** Offices Closed for Christmas Federal Holiday.
 - **Dec. 31:** Offices Closed for New Year's Day Holiday.
 - **Jan. 17:** Offices Closed for Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday Holiday.
 - **Jan. 22, 2022:** [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program \(OTECP\)](#) applications due.
 - **Jan. 31, 2022:** [Assistance for Feed Transportation Costs \(ELAP\)](#)
 - **March 15, 2022:** [ARC/PLC Election and Enrollments ends](#).
 - [NRCS Program Applications Ranking Dates](#)
- [Click here to learn more about local deadlines and ongoing programs.](#)



USDA Climate Hubs

The USDA Climate Hubs translate climate science into action, putting USDA research and resources into practice. The Hubs develop and deliver science-based, region-specific information and technology to natural resource and agricultural managers to help you make climate-informed decisions that reduce agricultural risk and build resilience to climate change. Our useful tools can help you plan for and manage weather- and climate-related risks.



The Climate Hubs offer a variety of resources to help you manage weather and climate-risks, including tools and technology, outreach and education, and risk assessments:

- Tools and technology to help you respond effectively to climate change impacts including drought, extreme weather events, and changing growing seasons. We provide coordinated technical support to enhance USDA program delivery, especially to underserved and vulnerable communities.

The following tools can help you make informed management decisions on your operation:

- [Adaptation Workbook](#): A flexible process to consider the potential effects of climate change and design land management and conservation actions to prepare for changing conditions.
- [Grass-Cast](#): A grassland and forage productivity forecast for ranchers and rangeland managers.
- [AgRisk Viewer](#): A new platform to access, analyze, and visualize historical crop insurance loss data to inform risk management efforts.
- [Seedlot Selection Tool](#): A web-based mapping application that uses current or future climates to match seedlots and planting sites.
- Outreach, education, and technical support on innovative ways to help lower barriers to adaptation, mitigation, and resilience-building:
 - [Hurricane preparedness and recovery commodity guides](#): Guides to help producers prepare for and recover from hurricane events.
 - [‘As If You Were There’ 360 Demonstrations](#): A unique collection of virtual field tours to experience how others are adapting to and mitigating extreme weather and climate-driven events.
 - [Pacific Northwest Biochar Atlas](#): Science-based guidance regarding biochar and its benefits, decision-support tools for biochar application, and case studies from early adopters.
- [Regional assessments of risk and vulnerability](#) and user-friendly information and data to support risk management and climate change response.

The Climate Hubs are a unique collaboration that connects USDA research and program agencies like the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Risk Management Agency (RMA), Economic Research Service, and Foreign Agricultural Service, among others.

We support USDA stakeholders by providing vulnerability assessments, curating decision-making tools, and facilitating stakeholder outreach on climate change and its impacts on working lands.

The Climate Hubs also amplify the work of other USDA agencies to ensure USDA is meeting the needs of customers like you.

- For example, the Southwest Climate Hub worked with RMA to provide more accessible, discoverable, and usable crop insurance data through the [AgRisk Viewer](#).
- Our Northern Plains Climate Hub developed a grassland and forage productivity model and [rangeland drought dashboard](#) working closely with agencies and partners.

- At our Northeast Climate Hub, the NRCS liaison developed a [webinar training](#) titled “*Helping farmers help the land through climate-smart farming*” highlighting NRCS resource concerns and practices.

There are 10 regional Climate Hubs across the nation co-located at Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) research units. To find your regional Climate Hub contacts visit climatehubs.usda.gov/contact. For more information on the Climate Hubs, visit climatehubs.usda.gov/. We are happy to help connect producers, USDA staff, and stakeholders to each other and to the best resources USDA has to offer.

USDA Invests \$633 Million in Climate-Smart and Resilient Infrastructure for People in Rural Communities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the Department is [investing \\$633 million to reduce the impacts of climate change](#) on rural communities. With the enactment of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and as part of the broader Build Back Better agenda, the Biden-Harris Administration has made investing in rural communities, creating good-paying jobs and combatting the climate crisis top priorities. [Click here](#) to read the Dec. 3, Press Release No. 0263.21. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

NRCS Oregon Accepting Applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications from agricultural producers and forest landowners in Oregon for the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Program](#) (ACEP - WRE), which helps producers enroll wetlands into conservation easements.



While USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) accepts ACEP applications year-round, Oregon producers and landowners should **apply by December 17** to be considered for WRE funding in the current cycle. Applications received after the ranking date will automatically be considered during the next funding cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process.

State Technical Committees, composed of conservation and agricultural-related agency and organization representatives, work with NRCS to identify resource priorities and how best to address them. NRCS then sets state-specific ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding that account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunities to apply.

ACEP enrollment options include:

- [ACEP-Wetland Reserve Easements \(WRE\)](#): Helps restore, protect and enhance wetlands on eligible land. Wetland reserve easements are either perpetual, 30-

years, or maximum duration under state law, or 30-year contracts (for Indian Tribes). Apply by December 17 to be considered in the current WRE funding cycle.

- **[ACEP-Agricultural Land Easements \(ALE\)](#)**: Protects farmlands and grasslands by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. Agricultural Land Easements are either perpetual or the maximum duration allowed under State law. Application period ALE will be announced in January 2022.

Find Oregon's ranking dates for ACEP and other conservation programs at www.nrcs.usda.gov/staterankingdates/. To learn more or apply, please contact your [local NRCS field office](#), or Chris Chapa, NRCS Oregon's easement coordinator, at chris.chapa@usda.gov or 503-414-3248.

USDA Awards Conservation Innovation Projects to Support Climate-Smart Agriculture and Soil Health

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it is awarding \$25 million to conservation partners across the country for 18 new projects under the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials program, including three projects and \$5,302,795 in Oregon.



On-Farm Trials projects support widespread adoption and evaluation of innovative conservation approaches in partnership with agricultural producers. This year's awarded projects increase the adoption of new approaches and technologies to help agricultural producers mitigate the effects of climate change, increase the resilience of their operations and boost soil health.

"Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners play a crucial role in charting the course towards a climate-smart future," said Ron Alvarado, NRCS State Conservationist in Oregon. "On-Farm Trials enable partners to work with producers to test and adopt new climate-smart systems on their operations that support agricultural production and conserve natural resources, while also building climate resilience."

[Click here](#) to find the projects awarded in Oregon and further information. For more information about the Conservation Innovation Grants program, visit the [NRCS website](#).

RMA Makes Improvements to Whole-Farm Revenue Protection

Organic and aquaculture producers can soon benefit from updates to the USDA Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) plan. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is revising the plan of insurance to make it more flexible and accessible to producers beginning in crop year 2022.



Changes to WFRP include:

- Increasing expansion limits for organic producers to the higher of \$500,000 or 35 percent. Previously, small and medium size organic operations were held to the same 35 percent limit to expansion as conventional practice producers.
- Increasing the limit of insurance for aquaculture producers to \$8.5 million. Previously aquaculture producers were held to a \$2 million cap on expected revenue, this change allows more aquaculture producers to participate in the program.
- Allowing a producer to report acreage as certified organic, or as acreage in transition to organic, when the producer has requested an organic certification by the acreage reporting date. This allows organic producers more flexibility when reporting certified acreage.
- Providing flexibility to report a partial yield history for producers lacking records by inserting zero yields for missing years. Previously, missing a year of records would cause the commodity's expected value to be zero, meaning past revenue from the commodity would contribute nothing to the insurance guarantee.

WFRP provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on the farm under one insurance policy and is available in all counties nationwide. This insurance plan is tailored for any farm with up to \$8.5 million in insured revenue, including farms with specialty or organic commodities (both crops and livestock), or those marketing to local, regional, farm-identity preserved, specialty, or direct markets.

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

Higher Loan Limit Now Available for USDA Guaranteed Farm Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a higher loan limit will be available for borrowers seeking a guaranteed farm loan starting Oct. 1, 2021, from \$1.776 million to \$1.825 million.



FSA farm loans offer access to funding for a wide range of producer needs, from securing land to financing the purchase of equipment.

Guaranteed loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. FSA provides up to a 95% guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

In fiscal year 2021, FSA saw continued strong demand for guaranteed loans. FSA obligated more than \$3.4 billion in guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans. This includes nearly \$1.2 billion for beginning farmers. The number of guaranteed borrowers has grown by 10% to more than 38,750 farmers and ranchers over the last decade. FSA expects the increasing demand for farm loans to continue into fiscal year 2022.

Disaster Set-Aside Extension

USDA has additional support available to producers given the recent outbreaks of the COVID-19 Delta variant and has extended the availability of COVID-19 Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) for installments due through Jan. 31, 2022. In addition, FSA will permit a second DSA for COVID-19 and a second DSA for natural disasters for those who had an initial

COVID-19 DSA. Requests for a COVID-19 DSA or a second DSA must be received no later than May 1, 2022.

Last year, FSA broadened the use of the DSA. Normally used in the wake of natural disasters, the DSA can now allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19 and determined to be eligible, to have their next payment set aside. The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This will improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting their [local USDA Service Center](#). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.



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How can we help you? Submit questions or requests for further information to [ASK.USDA.GOV](https://www.farmers.gov/ask-usda) or 1-833-ONE-USDA

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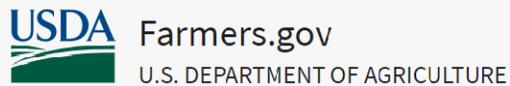
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