

January 2021



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [A Message from our SED](#)
- [Interest Rates](#)
- [Important Dates](#)
- [USDA Offers Secure New Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online](#)
- [Signature Policy](#)
- [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#)
- [Keeping Livestock Inventory Records](#)
- [NRCS Announces Application Cut-off for Agricultural and Wetland Conservation Easements](#)
- [USDA Announces Increased Subsidies and Other Improvements to the Livestock Risk Protection Insurance Program](#)
- [Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction](#)
- [Borrower Training for Farm Loan Customers](#)

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

Acting State Executive Director (SED):

Josh Hanning

State Committee:

Anna Sullivan, Chair

Sam Asai, Member

Phil Hassinger, Member

TJ Hansell, Member

Denver Pugh, Member

A Message from our SED

Welcome to a new year! Today, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide additional assistance through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), expanding eligibility for some agricultural producers and commodities as well as updating payments to accurately compensate some producers who already applied for the program. Producers who are now eligible and those who need to modify existing applications due to these updates can contact USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) between Jan. 19 and Feb. 26. New applicants can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364. To learn more about this additional assistance, visit farmers.gov/cfap.

While Oregon FSA wraps up many programs from last year, we look forward to upcoming program sign-ups as well, such as the new Conservation Reserve Program, acreage certification and ARC/PLC.

Even though we are still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, our [USDA Services Centers](#) and staff are available to help our

Next STC Meeting:
March 10-11 (tentative)

Administration:
Martin Nguyen
Administrative Officer

Farm Programs:
Josh Hanning, Acting Chief

Farm Loan Programs:
Kathey Brucker, Chief

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

How can we help you? Submit questions or requests for further information to [Ask USDA](https://ask.usda.gov/s/) at <https://ask.usda.gov/s/>

[ASK.USDA.GOV](https://ask.usda.gov/s/)
1-833-ONE-
USDA ASKUSDA@USDA.GOV

valued farmers and producers. You may need to contact a Service Center by phone or schedule an appointment to conduct business on-site. You can learn the status of your service center through [this tool](#). Business can also be conducted through on-line tools such as [USDA's Box and OneSpan](#). You can also contact the Oregon FSA State Office at 503-692-3688 for direct assistance.

Josh Hanning
Acting State Executive Director

Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans - Direct: 1.375%
Farm Operating - Microloan: 1.375%
Farm Ownership Loans-Direct: 2.500%
Farm Ownership - Microloan: 2.500%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing: 2.500%
Farm Ownership-Down Payment: 1.500%
Emergency Loans Actual Loss: 2.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 Year: 0.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 Year: 0.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 Year: 0.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 Year: 0.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 Year: 1.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 15 Year: 1.250%

Important Dates

- **CFAP Additional Assistance:** Jan. 19-Feb. 26.
- **Jan. 30:** Emergency Forest Restoration Program sign-up ends (certain qualifying counties).
- **Jan. 30:** Emergency Conservation Program sign-up ends (certain qualifying counties).
- **Feb. 1:** Livestock Forage Program 2020 qualifying losses sign-up ends
- **Feb. 2** ELAP applications due (with a notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent (15 days for honeybee losses)
- **Feb. 12:** 2021 CRP general sign-up closes
- **March 1:** Livestock Indemnity Program applications due (in addition to filing notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when loss is first apparent)
- **March 5:** Urban Ag Advisory Committee nomination packages due.
- **March 5:** Quality Loss Assistance Applications due.
- **March 15:** ARC/PLC enrollment closes for 2021
- **April 23:** CRP Grasslands Signup 203 closes
- **Sept. 30:** Continuous and CREP Signup 55 closes

USDA Offers Secure New Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers working with USDA's Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or

agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.

OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer's personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you're interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

Visit farmers.gov/mydocs to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

To learn more about program flexibilities and Service Center status during the coronavirus pandemic, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits.

The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman must sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from the minor's parent

Note, by signing a document with a minor, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc.

When signing on one's behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc.

FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Examples of documents not approved for FAXED signatures include:

- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office.

Spouses cannot sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Likewise, a spouse cannot sign a document on behalf of the other in order to affirm the eligibility of oneself.

Any member of a general partnership can sign on behalf of the general partnership and bind all members unless the Articles of Partnership are more restrictive. Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office. Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts must consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity.

For additional clarification on proper signatures visit your local FSA office (to find a USDA Service Center visit the [USDA Service Center Locator](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.)

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible losses include:

- **Livestock** - grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.
- **Honeybee** - loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.
- **Farm-Raised Fish** - death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

If you suffered eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses during calendar year 2020, you must file:

- A notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent (15 days for honeybee losses)
- An application for payment by Jan. 30, 2021 (which is a Saturday), deadline February 2, 2021.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- [ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet](#)
- [ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet](#)

- [ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet](#)

Keeping Livestock Inventory Records

Livestock inventory records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster, so remember to keep them updated.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can help you if you've suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, you'll be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. For grazing or feed losses, you must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

You should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your USDA Service Center. Visit the [USDA Service Center Locator](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

NRCS Announces Application Cut-off for Agricultural and Wetland Conservation Easements

Do you want to keep your farm or ranch in agriculture for future generations? Do you want to protect your agricultural land from future development? Do you want to restore wetland habitat on your land and protect it for migratory birds, fish, and other wildlife?

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Oregon offers easement programs to help private landowners, state and local governments, Indian tribes, and non-profit groups protect Oregon's working agricultural lands and wetlands for future generations.

NRCS is accepting applications for the [Agricultural Conservation Easements Program](#) (ACEP). Applications must be submitted by **February 8, 2021** to be considered in the first batch of fiscal year 2021 applications.

NRCS will rank applications based on identified natural resource concerns and priority areas throughout the state. Easement priority areas in Oregon include critical water bird habitat, Coho and steelhead salmon habitat, sage grouse habitat, grasslands, and more.

"The ACEP is an exciting opportunity for private landowners and conservation partners to protect Oregon's wetlands and working agricultural lands for the long-term," said Jason Jeans, acting state conservationist in Oregon.

Through the ACEP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to secure easements for both working agricultural lands and for wetlands. The program has two components: one for Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and one for Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE).

Under the ALE component, NRCS provides funds to eligible entities (such as non-profit conservation groups) to purchase permanent easements that protect the agricultural use and

conservation values of the land. These easements prevent productive working lands from being converted to non-agricultural uses, keeping the land in agriculture for future generations. They support and maximize protection of land devoted to food and fiber production. Cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and non-industrial private forestland are all eligible for ALE.

Under the WRE component, NRCS provides funding directly to private landowners for the purchase of a 30-year or permanent easements and for wetland restoration activities. These easements restore and enhance wetlands and improve habitat for a variety of fish, migratory birds and other wildlife. WRE projects also improve water quality, reduce flood damage, and encourage outdoor education and recreation. Eligible lands include farmed or converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored.

Learn more about ACEP opportunities and how to apply in Oregon by visiting the [NRCS Oregon ACEP webpage](#).

To find a local NRCS office near you, visit the NRCS Oregon website at www.or.nrcs.usda.gov and view the "Contact Us" tab for a [map of local service centers](#).

USDA Announces Increased Subsidies and Other Improvements to the Livestock Risk Protection Insurance Program

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced it is increasing premium subsidies and will make other improvements to the Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) plan of insurance for feeder cattle, fed cattle and swine starting with the 2021 crop year. The increased premium subsidy is retroactive to the beginning of the 2021 crop year and is based on the coverage selected by you. RMA will implement the other improvements later this year.

Other improvements to be implemented include:

- Increasing livestock head limits for feeder and fed cattle to 6,000 head per endorsement/12,000 head annually, and swine to 40,000 head per endorsement/150,000 head annually
- Modifying the requirement to own insured livestock until the last 60 days of the endorsement
- Increasing the endorsement lengths for swine up to 52 weeks
- Creating new feeder cattle and swine types to allow for unborn livestock to be insured

For more information on the LRP program, please see the [RMA website](#). RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities, and to make improvements essential to an operation.

Applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.

Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. If applying for a direct loan to finance a construction project, the applicant must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.

A surety bond is required when a contract exceeds \$100,000. An authorized agency official determines that a surety bond appears advisable to protect the borrower against default of the contractor or a contract provides for partial payments in excess of the amount of 60 percent of the value of the work in place.

Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant's farming operation or work schedule.

Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.

For more eligibility requirements and information about FSA Loan programs, visit the [USDA Service Center Locator](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Borrower Training for Farm Loan Customers

Borrower training is available for all Farm Service Agency (FSA) customers. This training is required for all direct loan applicants, unless the applicant has a waiver issued by the agency.

Borrower training includes instruction in production and financial management. The purpose is to help the applicants develop and improve skills that are necessary to successfully operate a farm and build equity in the operation. It aims to help the producer become financially successful. Borrower training is provided, for a fee, by agency approved vendors. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager for a list of approved vendors.

Visit the [USDA Service Center Locator](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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).



Questions?
[Contact Us](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Delete Profile](#) | [Help](#)