



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Oregon FSA Newsletter - January 2022

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Acting State Executive Director's Message

Greetings to all of you and happy new year! The 2022 USDA in Oregon calendars will be available soon!

Our new year started off with some severe winter weather and we may have to contend with more for the next several months. I would like to remind you of the various FSA [Disaster Assistance Programs](#), emergency loans and disaster designation information that is available (please see the article below also). It will be important to note in



that article the documentation requirements and maintaining accurate records prior to and after a loss from severe weather events.

As we also continue to ride out this "pandemic storm", some of the Oregon USDA Service Centers may need to close to visitors for brief periods of time. Prior to visiting, you will need to call your local Service Center to find out if it is staffed. You may need to conduct your business on-line or by phone. Our staff will continue to work from home when an office is closed to visitors (or during inclement weather) and we are committed to be available to assist all of our customers.

Another article below provides a reminder that you can digitally complete business transactions or share documents with [Box or OneSpan](#), and I encourage you to visit this link to get started. You will also find additional resources for conducting business with USDA online. You can contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) to initiate this process.

While we hope to attend on-site outreach events this year, there are some upcoming virtual webinars available provided on our [Oregon FSA web page/State Events](#).

Josh Hanning
Acting State Executive Director

Interest Rates

USDA Announced January 2021 Lending Rates for Agricultural Producers

Farm Operating Loans – Direct, 2.125%
Farm Operating – Microloans, 2.125%
Farm Ownership Loans – Direct, 3.000%
Farm Ownership – Microloan, 3.000%
Farm Ownership-Direct, Joint Financing, 2.500%
Farm Ownership-Down Payment, 1.500%
Emergency Loans Actual Loss, 3.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 3 Years, 0.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 5 Years, 1.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 7 Years, 1.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 10 Years, 1.500%

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

- **Jan. 17:** Offices Closed for Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday Holiday.
- **Jan. 18: Acreage Reporting Deadline** for reporting orchard fruit crops, blueberries, grapes & cranberries.
- **Jan. 31, 2022:** [Assistance for Feed Transportation Costs \(ELAP\)](#)

- **Feb. 4, 2022:** [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program \(OTECP\)](#) applications due.
- **Feb. 4, 2022:** Applications due for NRCS-[Agricultural Land Easements \(ALE\)](#)
- **Feb. 11, 2022:** Sign-up due for the current round of [NRCS-EQIP-CIC](#).
- **Feb. 18, 2022:** [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\) Program](#) signups end.
- **Feb. 25, 2022:** [Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program \(SMHPP\)](#) applications due February 25, 2022.
- **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 Offers Disaster Assistance for Producers Facing Inclement Weather

Severe weather events create significant challenges and often result in catastrophic loss for agricultural producers. 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 or for loss of grazing acres, feed and forage. And, the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) provides assistance to producers of grazed forage crop acres that have suffered crop loss due to a qualifying drought. Livestock producers suffering the

impacts of drought can also request [Emergency Haying and Grazing](#) on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres.

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 a 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](#).

USDA Offers 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.

NRCS Oregon accepting applications for Agricultural Land Easements

Apply by February 4, 2022

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?

The [USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/) (NRCS) in Oregon offers [Agricultural Land](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/land/)



[Easements](#) (ALE) through the [Agricultural Conservation Easements Program](#) (ACEP) to help private landowners, state and local governments, Indian tribes, and non-profit groups protect Oregon's working agricultural lands for future generations.

NRCS Oregon is currently accepting applications for Agricultural Land Easements (ALE). Applications are accepted on an on-going basis but should be submitted by **February 4** to be considered for fiscal year 2022 funding.

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.

Agricultural land 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.

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 Offers Expanded Conservation Program Opportunities to Support Climate-Smart Agriculture in 2022

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing several new and expanded opportunities for climate-smart agriculture in 2022.



Updates include nationwide availability of the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\) Conservation Incentive Contracts](#) option and added flexibilities for producers to easily re-enroll in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Interested applicants should apply for EQIP-CIC by **February 11, 2022** to be considered for this year's funding. The CSP sign-up deadline will be announced soon.

These improvements to NRCS' working lands conservation programs, combined with continued program opportunities in Oregon, are part of the Biden-Harris Administration's broader effort to support climate-smart agriculture.

"Climate change is happening, and America's agricultural communities are on the frontlines," NRCS State Conservationist Ron Alvarado said. "We have to continue to support and expand the adoption of conservation approaches to support producers in their work to address the climate crisis and build more resilient operations. We are continuously working to improve our programs to ensure we're giving Oregon farmers and ranchers the best tools to conserve natural resources."

EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts

Conservation Incentive Contracts address priority resource concerns, including

sequestering carbon and improving soil health in high-priority areas. Through these contracts, NRCS works with producers to strengthen the quality and condition of natural resources on their operations using management practices, such as irrigation water management, drainage water management, feed management and residue and tillage management that target resource concerns, including degraded soil and water quality, available water and soil erosion.

Conservation Incentive Contracts offer producers annual incentive payments to implement management practices as well as conservation evaluation and monitoring activities to help manage, maintain and improve priority natural resource concerns within state high-priority areas and build on existing conservation efforts. Download our [“Conservation Incentive Contracts” fact sheet](#) for a list of practices. Learn about Oregon’s high-priority areas across the state on the [EQIP-CIC webpage](#).

Conservation Incentive Contracts last five years. The 2018 Farm Bill created the new Conservation Incentive Contract option, and it was piloted in 2021 in four states.

CSP Re-Enrollment Option

NRCS updated CSP to allow an agricultural producer to immediately re-enroll in the program following an unfunded application to renew an existing contract. Previously, if a CSP participant did not re-enroll the year their contract expired, they were ineligible for the program for two years.

This ineligibility was imposed on CSP participants even if their failure to sign a renewal contract was due to the unavailability of funds, which is beyond their control. USDA is now waiving this two-year ineligibility restriction for all CSP applications.

This year, producers renewed 2,600 CSP contracts covering 3.4 million acres. Applicants with unfunded fiscal 2022 CSP renewals will receive letters this month, notifying them they are automatically eligible to apply for future CSP funding opportunities, rather than needing to wait two years to reapply.

How to Apply

NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs year-round, however Oregon producers and landowners interested in Conservation Incentive Contracts should apply by **February 11, 2022** to be considered for this year’s funding. The CSP sign-up deadline will be announced soon. To apply, producers should contact their [local USDA Service Center](#).

Waiver of DCIA Compliance for Commodity and Farm Storage Facility Loan Programs

On January 27, 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration suspended all debt collections, foreclosures, and other adverse actions for borrowers of direct farm loans and Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) through USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) because of the national public health emergency caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

It has been determined that the January 2021 suspension included a waiver of the Debt Collection Improvement Act (DCIA) noncompliance for issuing new Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL), Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) or FSFL to borrowers who are in delinquent status with FSFL or farm loans.

Under normal circumstances, DCIA specifies that a person cannot obtain Federal financial assistance in the form of loans (other than disaster loans), loan insurance, or guarantees if

that person has delinquent Federal non-tax debt. MAL, LDP, and FSFL programs administered by FSA are currently subject to these statutory constraints.

FSA county offices will review MALs, LDPs, and FSFLs that were previously denied on or after January 27, 2021, because of DCIA noncompliance. Offices will notify applicants of the waiver provisions and the opportunity to obtain a loan. All applicable eligibility requirements remain in place with the exception of DCIA waiver.

Reach out to your local FSA office for more information. To find your local office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Oregon FSA Farm Loan teams are already working on operating loans for spring 2022 and asks potential borrowers to submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.



FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new operation, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures, and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

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.



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How can we help you? Submit questions or requests for further information to ASK.USDA.GOV or 1-833-ONE-USDA

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



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