

May 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

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Pennsylvania State FSA Newsletter

Pennsylvania Farm Service Agency

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Gary H. Groves

State Committee:

Bonnie Wenger, Chair

USDA Reminds Pennsylvania Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in Pennsylvania are currently open to phone and virtual appointments only but can still work with producers on timely filing crop acreage reports. FSA staff can provide assistance over the phone, by email and through virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in Pennsylvania:

June 15, 2020: Spring Barley, Spring Oats, Rye, Triticale, Spring Wheat
July 15, 2020: All other crops, Perennial Forage, CRP
August 15, 2020: Beans, Cabbage, and Hemp

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline. FSA staff is still able to assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps.

FSA county offices in Pennsylvania will provide maps to producers through mail or email with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete,

George Greig

producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet by mail or email as soon as possible and in advance of the applicable deadline(s) noted above.

Doug Graybill

Barron (Boots) Hetherington

FSA offices are using Microsoft Teams software to virtually meet with producers to review maps and documents for certification. Producers who want to schedule a virtual appointment can download the Microsoft Teams app on their smart phones and call the FSA office for an appointment. You can also use Microsoft Teams from your personal computer without downloading software.

Bill Hoover

Division Chiefs:

Rebecca Csutoras

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and mail or email producers the completed Report of Acreage form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail or email by the applicable deadline(s) noted above.

Farm Programs

David Poorbaugh

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

Farm Loan Programs

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

If you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary documentation to FSA immediately upon receipt from the certifying agent.

For questions, please contact your local FSA office. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator

CLEAR30 the first USDA program to offer 30-year Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will open signup this summer for CLEAR30, a new pilot program that offers farmers and landowners an opportunity to enroll in a 30-year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract. This pilot is available to farmers and landowners with

expiring water-quality practice CRP contracts in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay regions. The program signup period is July 6 to Aug. 21, 2020.

The pilot is available in Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Eligible producers must have expiring Clean Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative contracts, including continuous CRP Cropland contracts with water-quality practices or marginal pasturelands CRP contracts devoted to riparian buffers, wildlife habitat buffers or wetland buffers.

The longer contracts will help ensure that practices remain in place for 30 years, which will help reduce sediment and nutrient runoff and help prevent algal blooms. Traditional CRP contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

Annual rental payment for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus an inflationary adjustment of 27.5 percent, since CLEAR30 contracts will be for 30 years – much longer than the 10 to 15-year contracts for Continuous CRP offers.

Another unique program feature is that FSA will help producers maintain CLEAR30 contract acreage.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. Anyone wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency is required to call to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA Announces Loan Maturity for Marketing Assistance Loans Now Extended to 12 Months

Agricultural producers now have more time to repay Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020. The loans now mature at 12 months rather than nine, and this flexibility is available for most commodities.

Effective immediately, producers of eligible commodities now have up to 12 months to repay their commodity loans. The maturity extension applies to nonrecourse loans for crop years 2018, 2019 and 2020. Eligible open loans must be in good standing with a maturity date of March 31, 2020, or later or new crop year (2019 or 2020) loans requested by September 30, 2020. All new loans requested by September 30, 2020, will have a maturity date 12 months following the date of approval.

The maturity extension for current, active loans will be automatically extended an additional 3 months. Loans that matured March 31 have already been automatically extended by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Producers who prefer a nine-month loan will need to contact their local FSA county office. Loans requested after September 30, 2020, will have a term of nine months.

Eligible commodities include barley, chickpeas (small and large), corn, cotton (upland and extra-long staple), dry peas, grain sorghum, honey, lentils, mohair, oats, peanuts, rice (long and medium grain), soybeans, unshorn pelts, wheat, wool (graded and nongraded); and other oilseeds, including canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sunflower seed, and sesame seed. Seed cotton and sugar are not eligible.

About MALs

Placing commodities under loan provides producers interim financing to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low and allows producers to store production for more orderly marketing of commodities throughout the year.

These loans are considered nonrecourse because the commodity is pledged as loan collateral, and producers have the option of delivering the pledged collateral to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for repayment of the outstanding loan at maturity.

MAL Repayment

Under the new maturity provisions, producers can still repay the loan as they would have before the extension:

- repay the MAL on or before the maturity date;
- upon maturity by delivering or forfeiting the commodity to CCC as loan repayment; or
- after maturity and before CCC acquires the farm-stored commodity by repaying the outstanding MAL principle and interest.

Marketing Loan Gains

A Marketing Loan Gain occurs when a MAL is repaid at less than the loan principal. If market gain is applicable during the now-extended loan period, producers can receive a gain on the repayment made before the loan matures.

For more information on MALs, contact the nearest FSA county office. USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA Announces June 1, 2020 Application Cutoff for CSP

The next deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications is June 1, 2020. While USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) accepts applications throughout the year, you must apply by the date to be considered for 2020 funding.

CSP offers additional opportunities to expand on existing conservation efforts by offering conservation practices, enhancements, bundles, and other conservation activities.

If you decide to enroll in CSP, your local NRCS conservation planner will have a one-on-one consultation with you to evaluate your current management system and the natural resources on your land. Then, the NRCS conservation planner will present a variety of CSP conservation activities for you to consider implementing on your land in order for you to address additional natural resource concerns.

Once you choose the conservation activities that best fit your operation, CSP offers annual payments for installing these activities on your land and operating and maintaining your current conservation efforts.

To apply, contact your [NRCS field office](#) for an appointment.

Getting Acreage Reporting Right

You have a lot at stake in making sure your crop insurance acreage reporting is accurate and on time. If you fail to report on time, you may not be protected. If you report too much acreage, you may pay too much premium. If you report too little acreage, you may recover less when you file a claim.

Crop insurance agents often say that mistakes in acreage reporting are the easiest way for producers to have an unsatisfactory experience with crop insurance. Don't depend on your agent to do this important job for you. Your signature on the bottom of the acreage reporting form makes it, legally, your responsibility. Double-check it for yourself.

Remember - acreage reporting is your responsibility. Doing it right will save you money. Always get a copy of your report immediately after signing and filing it with your agent and keep it with your records. Remember, it is your responsibility to report crop damage to your agent within 72 hours of discovery. Never put damaged acreage to another use without prior written consent of the insurance adjuster. You don't want to destroy any evidence of a possible claim.

Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- ♣ Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- ♣ Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- ♣ Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- ♣ Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit fsa.usda.gov.

May 2020 Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans

Farm Operating Loans - Direct	1.750 %
Farm Operating Loans - Microloan	1.750 %

Farm Ownership Loans

Direct	2.625 %
Microloan	2.625 %
Joint Financing	2.500 %
Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500 %

Emergency Loans	2.750 %
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Farm Storage Facility Loans

Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 Year Term)	0.250 %
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 Year Term)	0.375 %
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 Year Term)	0.625 %
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 Year Term)	0.750 %
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 Year Term)	0.750 %

Commodity Loans	1.125 %
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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).

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