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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

*GovDelivery*

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## FSA News - Lone Star State Edition

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To find contact information for  
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<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tx>

### From the State Executive Director

It's been a busy spring for the Farm Service Agency and the farmers and ranchers we serve. With the majority of the spring crops planted, it's time to focus on upcoming deadlines. We have many program deadlines approaching this summer along with a new program signup recently announced. As our offices continue to take phone and virtual appointments, we encourage you to prepare and complete as much business as you can during your appointment.

Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) opened May 26 and closes **Aug. 28, 2020**. The program provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. Producers can visit [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap) to use the CFAP payment calculator to populate the application form or to download the application form to complete manually. Producers can print, sign, and mail the CFAP application to their local FSA office. A CFAP Call Center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

While you're applying for CFAP, be sure to enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs for the 2020 crop year if you haven't already. Producers have until **June 30** to enroll.

Enrollment is ongoing for the Wildfire and Hurricanes Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+), which helps producers recover from losses related to 2018 and 2019 natural disasters. Producers can apply for eligible losses of drought (D3 or above) and excess moisture. Assistance is also available to sugar beet producers.

If you're done planting, be sure to complete your crop acreage reports. Deadlines vary by crop and by county.

Dairy producers who purchased the appropriate level of coverage through the Dairy Margin Coverage Program will receive their first payment of 2020. The March 2020 income over feed cost margin was \$9.15 per hundredweight (cwt.).

**As a reminder, our FSA offices are open for business by phone appointment only.** You can find contact information for your local FSA office at [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

Gary L. Six  
State Executive Director  
Farm Service Agency – Texas

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## Farmers and Ranchers in Texas Can Now Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

### *Online Tools and Toll-Free Number Available to Assist Producers*

Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

We also want to remind producers that the program is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply.

In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap). Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments.

Additionally, producers in search of one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a good first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

### **Applying for Assistance**

Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print off a pre-filled CFAP application, sign, and submit to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap).

Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested after the application is filed. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

### **Additional Commodities**

USDA is also establishing a process for the public to identify additional commodities for potential inclusion in CFAP. Specifically, USDA is looking for data on agricultural commodities, that are not currently eligible for CFAP, that the public believes to have either:

1. suffered a five percent-or-greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. shipped but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channel, or
3. not left the farm or remained unharvested as mature crops.

More information about this process is available on [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap).

### **More Information**

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap) or call 877-508-8364.

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. 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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## **FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19**

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

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 aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the

[farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

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. 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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## March Margin Triggers Dairy Margin Coverage Program Payment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced this week that the March 2020 income over feed cost margin was \$9.15 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the first payment of 2020 for dairy producers who purchased the appropriate level of coverage under the [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program.

Current projections indicate that a DMC payment is likely to trigger every month for the remainder of 2020, a different expectation from last July when some market models had forecast no program payments for 18 months.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. Over 13,000 operations enrolled in the program for the 2020 calendar year.

Although DMC enrollment for 2020 coverage has closed, dairy producers should look for FSA to open sign up for 2021 coverage in July.

USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone 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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

For more information, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) [DMC webpage](#) or contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

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## USDA Reports Record Enrollment in Key Farm Safety-Net Programs

Producers signed a record 1.77 million contracts for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2019 crop year, which is more than 107 percent of the total contracts signed compared with a 5-year average. USDA also reminds producers that June 30 is the deadline to enroll in ARC and PLC for the 2020 crop year.

FSA attributes the significant participation in the 2019 crop year ARC and PLC programs to increased producer interest in the programs under the 2018 Farm Bill and to an increase in eligible

farms because of the selling and buying of farms and new opportunities for beginning farmers and military veterans with farms having 10 or fewer base acres. Enrollment for 2019 ended March 16.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff here in Texas stand ready to help you obtain credit for spring farm operating needs, service loans or sign up for programs, including the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2020.

As of April 20, FSA records in Texas show 43,824 farms out of an expected 87,593 farms have completed ARC or PLC enrollment for the 2020 crop year. Although we are well on our way to another successful enrollment, we have many producers to assist between now and June 30.

Producers simply need to enroll in the ARC or PLC program – their 2019 crop year program election applies to 2020 – by the June 30 deadline. If you fail to enroll, you will be ineligible to receive a payment for the 2020 crop year should one trigger.

Give us a call today. We will send the ARC/PLC contract for signature via mail or email, depending on your preference. You can find the phone number for your local FSA county office at [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone 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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

For more information on ARC and PLC, download the [program fact sheet](#) or the [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#). Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc). To locate the nearest USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

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## USDA Reminds Texas Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in Texas 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.

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your local FSA office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

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 Texas are providing maps to producers through mail or email with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete, producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet by mail or email.

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.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- 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.
- 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](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

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## USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of \$900,000 for local governments to host a Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot project for fiscal year (FY) 2020. The cooperative agreements will support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans. The agreements are offered through USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.

USDA will accept applications on [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) until midnight June 26, 2020. Projects should span two years with a start date of October 1, 2020 and completion date of September 29, 2022.

Cooperative agreements support projects led by local governments that: 1) generate compost; 2) increase access to compost for agricultural producers; 3) reduce reliance on, and limit the use of, fertilizer; 4) improve soil quality; 5) encourage waste management and permaculture business development; 6) increase rainwater absorption; 7) reduce municipal food waste; and 8) divert food waste from landfills. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide assistance for conservation related activities.

Priority will be given to projects that anticipate or demonstrate economic benefits; incorporate plans to make compost easily accessible to farmers, including community gardeners; integrate other food waste strategies, including food recovery efforts; and collaborate with multiple partners.

A webinar, which will be held on June 4, 2020, from 2 to 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, will provide an overview of the cooperative agreements' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application. Information on [how to register and participate in the webinar](#), or listen to the recording, will be posted at [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban)

### More Information

Comments can be sent to [UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov) within 90 days, with the subject line "Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction Project."

Questions about this cooperative agreement opportunity can be sent to [UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov).

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It includes representatives from many USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Agricultural Marketing Service, and is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. More information is available at [farmers.gov/urban](http://farmers.gov/urban).

Additional resources that may be of interest to urban agriculture entities include [AMS grants](#) to improve domestic and international opportunities for U.S. growers and producers and [FSA loans](#).

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## Webinars on USDA Opportunities for Urban Agriculture Grants and Cooperative Agreements

USDA is hosting webinars to explain the purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for applying for recent opportunities from the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.

**June 3, 2 p.m.- 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time-** [Register and view the webinar for Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production](#). \$3 million is available for competitive grants to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **July 6, 2020** through Grants.gov.

**June 4, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time --** [Register and view the webinar for Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction](#). \$900,000 is available for local governments to host a Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot project for fiscal year (FY) 2020. The cooperative agreements will support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **June 26, 2020** through Grants.gov.

Recordings of the webinars will be posted at [farmers.gov/urban](http://farmers.gov/urban).

More information, including frequently asked questions, can be found at [www.farmers.gov/urban](http://www.farmers.gov/urban).

Questions about grant and cooperative agreement opportunities can be sent to [UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov)

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## FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has started making payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) to agricultural producers who suffered eligible losses because of drought or excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Signup for these causes of loss opened March 23, and producers who suffered losses from drought (in counties designated D3 or above), excess moisture, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires can still apply for assistance through WHIP+.

To be eligible for WHIP+, producers must have suffered losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary

county may be eligible if a producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event.

For losses due to drought, a producer is eligible if any area of the county in which the loss occurred was rated D3, or extreme drought, or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor during calendar years 2018 or 2019. Producers who suffered losses should contact their FSA county office.

In addition to the recently added eligible losses of drought and excess moisture, FSA will implement a WHIP+ provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops damaged by eligible disaster events. To ensure an effective program for all impacted farmers, the Agency is currently gathering information on the extent of quality loss from producers and stakeholder organizations.

USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone 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 on Service Centers can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus), and more information on WHIP+ can be found at [farmers.gov/whip-plus](https://farmers.gov/whip-plus).

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## USDA Accepting Proposals for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Initiative

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is now accepting new or modified proposals from state governments for its State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative. Through SAFE, vital habitat is restored to meet high-priority state wildlife conservation goals. The deadline to submit proposals is June 19.

SAFE practices must be used to restore animal habitats for the following categories:

- rare, threatened and endangered species
- species that have suffered a significant population decline
- species that provide significant social or economic value to the community.

SAFE grass and tree practices were moved to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup in 2019 and competed against other offers, while buffer and wetland practices remain under continuous CRP signup.

When submitted, proposals must include an overview of the project accomplishments, a list of all practices planned, the commitment of the state and participants and the planned outreach efforts.

For more information about SAFE and submitting a proposal, contact your FSA state office at 979-680-5209.

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## MAL and LDP Policy

The 2018 Farm Bill extends loan authority through 2023 for Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan,



but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar and extra-long staple cotton.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2019 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest. Requests for loans and LDPs shall be made on or before the final availability date for the respective commodities.

Commodity certificates are available to loan holders who have outstanding nonrecourse loans for wheat, upland cotton, rice, feed grains, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, large and small chickpeas), peanuts, wool, soybeans and designated minor oilseeds. These certificates can be purchased at the posted county price (or adjusted world price or national posted price) for the quantity of commodity under loan, and must be immediately exchanged for the collateral, satisfying the loan. MALs redeemed with commodity certificates are not subject to Adjusted Gross Income provisions.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, producers must have form [CCC-633EZ, Page 1](#) on file at their local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested.

Marketing loan gains (MLGs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are no longer subject to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant rules.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions state that a producer whose total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds \$900,000 is not eligible to receive an MLG or LDP. Producers must have a valid CCC-941 on file to earn a market gain of LDP. The AGI does not apply to MALs redeemed with commodity certificate exchange.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, please contact your USDA Service Center or FSA's website [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

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## 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.

Depending on the applicant's needs, 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.

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

To do this, 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. An applicant for a direct loan to

finance a construction project 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.

In Texas, the borrower method can only be used if the property is considered non-homestead property under Texas state laws.

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, contact your local FSA office or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov). To find your local FSA office, visit [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov).

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## NRCS Reminders

### [USDA NRCS Offers Final Year of Funding for Monarch Initiative](#)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will offer a final year of funding for conservation efforts that help farmers and ranchers in Texas provide food and habitat for Monarch butterflies. This targeted effort will invest \$183,825 through the Conservation Stewardship Program in 2020 to help combat the species' decline. The deadline to apply for this round of funding is June 5, 2020.

### [USDA NRCS Invests in Five New Projects in Texas to Spur Innovation](#)

NRCS will invest nearly \$375,000 for five new projects that will drive public and private sector innovation in conserving natural resources in Texas. The competitive [Conservation Innovation Grants](#) (CIG) program helps spur development and adoption of new conservation approaches and technologies.

### [Farmers and Private Landowners Help Wetlands Thrive in Texas](#)

May is American Wetlands Month, a time to celebrate one of nature's most productive ecosystems and the wonderful ways wetlands enrich the environment and our lives.

Farmers, ranchers and private landowners in Texas have worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to create, restore and enhance wetlands for decades. They have incorporated wetlands into their operations for the benefits to the environment and their land. To help realize these benefits they have worked with USDA for assistance through its programs and services.

### [NRCS Offers Funding for Texas Ag Producers with Failed Commodity Crops to Improve Soil Health, Prevent Wind Erosion](#)

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas has announced financial assistance for multi- species cover crops through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for producers in the Panhandle and South Plains, Big Bend, and the Hill Country areas of the state who have experienced a commodity crop failure due to naturally occurring and weather-related events. Soils in these areas of Texas are highly susceptible to wind erosion after soils are left exposed when a crop has failed during the growing season.

The initial application deadline for funding is June 22, 2020. If applications are received after this date, NRCS will batch and fund applications on a bimonthly basis. Applications are accepted year-round for NRCS programs, but deadlines are announced to rank and fund eligible conservation projects.

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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).