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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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West Virginia FSA Newsletter

**West Virginia
Farm Service Agency**

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**From the Desk of Roger D. Dahmer, WV
State Executive Director**

Greetings!

We know farmers are resilient and the Farm Service Agency in West Virginia will continue to deliver the disaster assistance, safety net, farm loan and conservation programs that keep American agriculture in business today and long into the future.

On April 17, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). This \$19 billion immediate relief program will provide critical support to farmers and ranchers and maintain the integrity of our food supply chain, and ensure every American continues to receive and have access to the food they need. CFAP will use the funding and authorities provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and other USDA existing authorities. The program includes two major elements to achieve these goals, including

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

direct support to farmers and ranchers and USDA purchase and distribution. [Learn more.](#)

Further details regarding eligibility, rates, and other implementation will be released at a later date.

For the latest updates on the CFAP, and other Frequently Asked Questions, visit usda.gov/coronavirus.

Our USDA Service Centers in West Virginia will continue to be open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the Farm Service Agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment.

I also encourage you to visit farmers.gov/coronavirus to keep up-to-date on temporary program flexibilities available as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Roger

Take Steps Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Assistance

Details and Signup for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Announced Soon

In April, USDA announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). CFAP will provide direct support based on losses for agriculture producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted and will assist eligible producers facing additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

CFAP will provide assistance to most farms that have experienced at least a five percent loss and will be available to farms regardless of size. We are still working on the final details of the actual payment rates and those details will be determined and included as part of the rulemaking process. Once the rule making process is complete, the application period will be open and subject to the eligibility and payment limit criteria described in the rule.

As part of applying for the program, you'll need to contact the Farm Service Agency county office to schedule an appointment. Your local FSA staff will work with you to apply for the program, and through forms asking for this type of information:

- Contact
- Personal, including your Tax Identification Number
- Farming operating structure
- Adjusted Gross Income to ensure eligibility
- Direct deposit to enable payment

Please do not send any personal information to USDA without first initiating contact through a phone call. We take your privacy and security of your information very seriously.

If you are an existing customer, this information is likely on file at your local Service Center.

What Can You Do Now?

While the application process has not started, you can start gathering/understanding your farm's recent sales and inventory.

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.

How Will USDA Accept Applications?

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only. Once the application period opens, please call your FSA county office to schedule an appointment.

Our staff is working with our agricultural producers by phone and using email, fax, mail, and online tools like Box to accept applications.

Information on CFAP can be found at farmers.gov/CFAP.

USDA's Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup

Farmers and ranchers may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands signup. The signup runs through May 15.

Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds.

Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is either 10 or 15 years. FSA will rank applications using a number of factors including existence of expiring CRP land, threat of conversion or development, existing grassland, and predominance of native species cover, and cost.

The 2018 Farm Bill set aside 2 million acres for CRP Grassland enrollment. CRP is one of the largest conservation programs at USDA. CRP marks its 35-year anniversary in 2020 with 22 million acres currently enrolled.

For more information or to enroll in CRP Grasslands, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

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.

Producers interested in enrolling for 2020 should contact their FSA county office. Producers must enroll by June 30 and make their one-time update to PLC payment yields by September 30.

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.

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.

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. To locate the nearest USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA Reminds West Virginia Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in West Virginia 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 West Virginia:

- July 15, 2020 All other crops, perennial forage, and CRP/CREP

- August 15, 2020 Hemp

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 West Virginia will provide maps to producers through with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete, producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet immediately.

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.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and provide 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 by the acreage reporting deadline.

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.

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 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).