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Dates to Remember

November 11, 2021: USDA Service Centers closed in Observance of Veterans Day

November 15, 2021: [Acreage Reporting](#) deadline for 2021 Fall-seeded Small Grains and Fall Mint

November 20, 2021: [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance \(NAP\)](#) deadline for 2022 crop year for Apples, Aronia, Asparagus, Blueberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Currants, Grapes, Honey, Hops, Maple Syrup, Pears, Plums, and Strawberries

November 20, 2021: Crop Insurance Local Sales Closing Date for 2022 crop year for Apples and Cranberries - <https://rma.usda.gov/en/RMALocal/Wisconsin>

November 25, 2021: USDA Service Centers closed in Observance of Thanksgiving Day

December 24, 2021: USDA Service Centers closed in Observance of Christmas Day.

December 31, 2021: [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance \(NAP\)](#) deadline for 2022 crop year for Honey and Maple Sap

USDA Expands Farmers.gov to Include Farm Records

Producers with farmers.gov accounts can now access farm records and maps online, the latest self-service feature added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website.

You can quickly and easily access your land information in real time by desktop computer, tablet or phone. Capabilities include:

- View, print and export detailed farm records such as cropland, base acres, yields, CRP acres, land ownership details, and much more;
- View, print and export farm/tract maps that can be provided to lenders, chemical or fertilizer providers, and FSA for reporting acreage and crop insurance agents; and
- Export common land unit (field) boundaries as ESRI shapefiles.

The ability to access these records on demand without a visit to the service center saves you time and money.

[Farmers.gov](#) now includes the most popular functionalities from FSAFarm+, the FSA portal for producers, while providing enhanced functionality and an improved user experience. A new enhancement expands the scope of accessibility to include farmers and ranchers who are members of an entity, as well as people with a power of attorney form (FSA-211) on file with FSA.

Managing USDA Business Online

Using farmers.gov, producers, entities and those acting on their behalf can also:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign conservation documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices, plans and contracts.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View farm loan and interest information (producers only).

Future plans include adding the ability to import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture planting boundaries.

To access your information, you'll will need a [USDA eAuth account](#) to login to farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit [farmers.gov](#) and sign into the site's authenticated portal via the [Sign In/Sign Up link](#) at the top right of the website. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.

In addition to the self-service features available by logging into farmers.gov, the website also has ample information on USDA programs, including pandemic assistance, farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs and crop insurance. Recently, USDA updated the

navigation and organization of the site as well as added some new webpages, including [“Get Involved,”](#) [“Common Forms,”](#) and [“Translations.”](#) [Learn more about these changes.](#)

USDA Provides \$1.8 Billion to Offset Market Fluctuations

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is in the process of issuing \$1.8 billion in payments to agricultural producers who enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2020 crop year. These payments provide critical support to help mitigate fluctuations in either revenue or prices for certain crops. These two USDA safety-net programs help producers of certain crops build back better after facing the impacts of COVID-19 and other challenges.

In addition, USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) is encouraging producers to contact their local USDA Service Centers to make or change elections and to enroll for 2022 ARC or PLC, providing future protections against market fluctuations. The election and enrollment period opened on Oct. 18, 2021 and runs through March 15, 2022.

2020 Payments and Contracts

ARC and PLC payments for a given crop year are paid out the following fall to allow actual county yields and the Market Year Average prices to be finalized. This month, FSA processed payments to producers enrolled in 2020 ARC-County (ARC-CO), ARC-Individual (ARC-IC) and PLC for covered commodities that triggered for the crop year.

For ARC-CO, view the [2020 ARC-CO Benchmark Yields and Revenues online database](#) for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity.

For PLC, payments have triggered for barley, canola, chickpeas (large and small), dry peas, flaxseed, lentils, peanuts, seed cotton and wheat. More information on rice payments will be announced later this fall and in early 2022.

For ARC-IC, producers should contact their local FSA office for additional information pertaining to 2020 payment information, which relies on producer-specific yields for the crop and farm to determine benchmark yields and actual year yields when calculating revenues.

By the Numbers

More than 1.7 million contracts were signed in 2019. In 2020, producers signed nearly 1.8 million ARC or PLC contracts, and 251 million out of 273 million base acres were enrolled in the programs. In 2021, signed contracts surpassed 1.8 million.

Since the ARC and PLC were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and reauthorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, these safety-net programs have paid out more than \$32.5 billion to producers of covered commodities.

2022 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-CO or PLC, which are both crop-by-crop, or ARC-IC, which is for the entire farm. Although election changes for 2022 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2022, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2022, the election remains the same as the 2021 election for crops on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed, and wheat.

Web-Based Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), a tool available through the University of Illinois allows producers to estimate payments for farms and counties for ARC-CO and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), a tool available through Texas A&M allows producers to estimate payments and yield updates and expected payments for 2022.

Crop Insurance Considerations

ARC and PLC are part of a broader safety net provided by USDA, which also includes crop insurance and marketing assistance loans.

Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products.

Producers on farms with a PLC election have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider; however, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres for that farm.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

Current loan rates as of November 1, 2021

Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	1.750%
Farm Operating - Microloan	1.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct	2.875%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	2.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	2.500%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	2.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):

3-year FSFL	0.625%
5-year FSFL	1.000%
7-year FSFL	1.375%
10-year FSFL	1.500%
12-year FSFL	1.625%

Please visit the [Farm Loan Program](#) webpage for more information.

Higher Loan Limit Now Available for USDA Guaranteed Farm Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a higher loan limit will be available for borrowers seeking a guaranteed farm loan starting Oct. 1, 2021, from \$1.776 million to \$1.825 million.

FSA farm loans offer access to funding for a wide range of producer needs, from securing land to financing the purchase of equipment. Guaranteed loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. FSA provides up to a 95% guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

In fiscal year 2021, FSA saw continued strong demand for guaranteed loans. FSA obligated more than \$3.4 billion in guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans. This includes nearly \$1.2 billion for beginning farmers. The number of guaranteed borrowers has grown by 10% to more than 38,750 farmers and ranchers over the last decade. FSA expects the increasing demand for farm loans to continue into fiscal year 2022.

Disaster Set-Aside Extension

USDA has additional support available to producers given the recent outbreaks of the COVID-19 Delta variant and has extended the availability of COVID-19 Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) for installments due through Jan. 31, 2022. In addition, FSA will permit a second DSA for COVID-19 and a second DSA for natural disasters for those who had an initial COVID-19 DSA. Requests for a COVID-19 DSA or a second DSA must be received before a loan becomes 90 days delinquent, and no later than May 1, 2022.

Last year, FSA broadened the use of the DSA. Normally used in the wake of natural disasters, the DSA can now allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19 and determined to be eligible, to have their next payment set aside. 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 will improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

More Information

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. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

NRCS Announces EQIP Signup for 2022 Funding, Apply by November 19, 2021

Angela Biggs, [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) State Conservationist in Wisconsin, announced farmers and forest landowners interested in [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) or [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) producer contracts need to apply by Nov. 19, 2021, for funding in fiscal year 2022.

EQIP and RCPP are the primary programs available to farmers and landowners for farm and woodland conservation work, offering payments for more than 120 basic conservation practices. Last year, Wisconsin NRCS invested \$33 million in conservation practices through EQIP and RCPP practices.

Sign up for several special initiatives focusing on conservation efforts.

Special sign-up opportunities are also now open for Farmstead, Local Work Group, On-Farm Energy, Organic, Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry, and Source Water Protection, as well as several landscape-based initiatives. Special initiatives are also available for Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged and other historically underserved producers at increased payment rates.

Farmstead: NRCS helps livestock producers improve nutrient handling and clean water separation by implementing practices supporting manure storage, feedlot and barnyard runoff and clean water diversion. This special opportunity also provides technical and financial assistance for roofs and covers placed over, for example, open cattle lots.

Local Work Group: Wisconsin has 17 Local Work Groups (LWG). Each LWG has a fund pool for cropland, forest and wildlife, and pasture. LWGs collect local stakeholder input and use the feedback to focus on their own local resource concern priorities for each fund pool, making each LWG fund pool unique and locally relevant.

On-Farm Energy: NRCS and producers develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. Audit data is used to plan, develop and implement energy conservation recommendations.

Organic: NRCS helps certified organic growers and producers, working to achieve organic certification, install conservation practices to address resource concerns on organic operations.

Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry: A sub-set of practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon and ultimately mitigating the impacts of climate change. The benefits are two-fold: producers improve the health, productivity, resiliency and profitability of their operations while mitigating the impacts of climate change for our entire nation.

Working Lands for Wildlife – Monarch: Through Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW), USDA uses a win-win approach to systematically target conservation efforts to improve agricultural and forest productivity which enhance wildlife habitat on working landscapes. Target species are used as barometers for success because their habitat needs are representative of healthy, functioning ecosystems where conservation efforts benefit a much broader suite of species.

Source Water Protection: Source water refers to ground water aquifers, rivers or lakes that provide water to public drinking supplies. Areas in Wisconsin with high concentrations of public water systems experiencing elevated nitrate levels have been identified for eligibility. Specific practices identified as improving nitrate levels are eligible to receive 90% payment rate, such as Nutrient Management, Filter Strips, and Forage and Biomass Planting. To see which watersheds are eligible and practices that can receive the 90% payment rate, visit the Source Water Protection section of the Wisconsin NRCS website [here](#).

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: Through the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (GLRI), NRCS offers financial assistance to agricultural producers for implementing practices that improve water quality and benefit wildlife in selected watersheds. Eligible watersheds include Door-Kewaunee Rivers, Lower Fox River, Manitowoc-Sheboygan, Milwaukee River, Oconto River, Pesticide River, Pensauckee River, Upper Fox River, Wolf River and Lake Winnebago watersheds.

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative: The overall goals of the [Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative](#) (MRBI) are to improve water quality by minimizing contributions of phosphorus and nitrogen to the surface waters in the basin and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico. Within the larger Rush River watershed, five sub watersheds are eligible for MRBI funding: Town of Martell-Rush River, Goose Creek-Trimbelle River, Spring Creek-Trimbelle River, Little Trimbelle River and Crystal Springs Coulee-Rush River.

National Water Quality Initiative: The [National Water Quality Initiative](#) (NWQI) is designed to help individual agricultural producers take actions to reduce the runoff of sediment, nutrients and pathogens into waterways where water quality is a critical concern. The goal is to implement conservation practices in focused watersheds in a concentrated area so that agriculture no longer contributes to the impairment of water bodies within these priority watersheds. Eligible watersheds include Bear Lake-Little Wolf River in Waupaca County, La Prairie Township & City of Beloit Lower Rock River East in Rock County and North Branch Little River in Oconto County.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program: The [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. Current active projects for water quality improvement are located within the Oconomowoc River, Baraboo River and Milwaukee River watersheds. RCPP funding is also available in the Driftless Area to improve fish and wildlife habitat, stream and riparian habitat, select counties in Northern Wisconsin to improve Golden-winged and Kirtland's warblers' habitats, and select areas of Southern Wisconsin to improve soil health and protect agriculturally productive farmland.

Landowners interested in applying for EQIP or RCPP funding should contact their local NRCS office at the [USDA Service Center](#) for their county. For more information, visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.

Application Period Opens for Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a [Request for Applications](#) (RFA) for the new Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grant program and encourages eligible entities to apply now for funds. Applications must be submitted electronically through the grant portal at <https://usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov/usda> by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, November 22, 2021. Approximately \$650 million in funding is available for the PRS grants, which are funded by the Pandemic Assistance provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

The PRS Grant program will assist small businesses in certain commodity areas, including specialty crop producers, shellfish farming, finfish farming, aquaculture, and apiculture; specialty crop, meat, and other processors; distributors; and farmers markets. Small businesses and nonprofits in these industries can apply for a grant to cover COVID-related expenses such as workplace safety measures (e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), retrofitting facilities for worker and consumer safety, shifting to online sales platforms,

transportation, worker housing, and medical costs. The minimum funding request is \$1,500 and the maximum funding request is \$20,000.

The [RFA](#) and the [PRS Grant Portal](#) provide more details about eligibility for the grant. Eligible entities are required to obtain a free DUNS Number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) BEFORE applying for this program. USDA has created a custom PRS DUNS number portal at <https://support.dnb.com/PandemicResponse>.

Application resources including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), tip sheets in English and Spanish on applying for a DUNS Number, videos on “How to Apply” and more are available on the [PRS Grant Portal](#).

Check your eligibility, obtain a DUNS number, and learn more about the application process at the [PRS Grant Portal](#).

USDA Supports Military Veteran’s Transition to Farming

Are you a military veteran interested in farming? USDA offers resources to help you:

- **Fund Your Operation:** USDA’s Farm Service Agency offers a variety of [funding opportunities](#) to help agricultural producers finance their businesses. Certain funds are targeted for veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- **Conserve Natural Resources:** USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service offers [conservation programs and expert one-on-one technical assistance](#) to strengthen agricultural operations now and into the future. Veterans may be eligible for a cost share of up to 90 percent and advance payments of up to 50 percent to cover certain conservation practices.
- **Manage Risks:** USDA is here to help you prepare for and recover from the unexpected. Veterans who are beginning farmers may be eligible for reduced premiums, application fee waivers, increased insurance coverage, and other incentives for multiple [USDA programs that support risk management](#).

USDA wants to ensure that veterans transitioning to agriculture have the resources needed to succeed. While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Additionally, more information related to USDA’s response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus. If you’re a new farmer, you can also reach out to your [state Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinator](#).



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