USDA Announces Dates for Conservation Reserve Program General and Grasslands Signups

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FSA CED Comments- Random Thoughts, Upcoming Deadlines, and a Joke

The Acreage Reporting deadline is quickly approaching! The deadline is **July 15, 2021**. Come on in to the office and we will get you set up. Avoid the late fees and report timely!

July 15th also ends the Primary Nesting Season. If you wish to graze or hay CRP acreage, please contact the office and we will get the paperwork started. No grazing or haying may begin before July 15th. It takes us a few days to get everything together so please plan accordingly before you plan to turn the cows out.

Producers with NAP- If you have any conditions that you feel have affected your NAP covered crops, please contact the office so we can get a Notice of Loss filed. Just like your car insurance, if you don’t let us know that there was damage, we cannot begin the process of filing a claim.

The County Committee seat that is up for election this year is LAA 3. This LAA includes all ground south of Township 24. All nomination forms are due to the office by August 2, 2021. If you are unsure which LAA you are in, please contact the office.

We are closely watching the drought monitor. There are multiple ways to contribute your observations to the USDM process:

1. **Talk to your state climatologist** - Find the current list at the [American Association of State Climatologists](https://www.aasc.cornell.edu) website.
2. **Email** - Emails sent to droughtmonitor@unl.edu inform the USDM authors.
3. **Become a CoCoRaHS observer** - Submit drought reports along with daily precipitation observations to the [Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network](https://www.coerahs.org).
4. **Submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)** - [go.unl.edu/CMOR](https://go.unl.edu/CMOR).
5. **Use the drought.gov contact form** - Contact us online at [www.drought.gov/drought/contact-us](http://www.drought.gov/drought/contact-us).

Thank you for all of the hours you put in, stress you live with, and hard work you do to continue to feed America and the World.

**Joke** How do you taunt a German butcher? Do your wurst.

**Upcoming Deadlines**

- **July 14** - CRP Grasslands Sign-Up Begins
- **July 15** - Spring Crop Reporting Deadline & End of Primary Nesting Season
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has set a July 23, 2021, deadline for agricultural producers and landowners to apply for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup. Additionally, USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will accept applications for CRP Grasslands from July 12 to August 20. This year, USDA updated both signup options to provide greater incentives for producers and increase its conservation benefits, including reducing the impacts of climate change.

Both signups are competitive and will provide for annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

“Bottom line, CRP now makes more financial sense for producers while also providing a bigger return on investment in terms of natural resource benefits. The General and Grasslands signups are part of a broader suite of tools available through CRP to integrate key conservation practices on our nation’s working lands.”

General Signup

Through CRP, producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Lands enrolled in CRP also play a key role in mitigating impacts from climate change, and FSA has added a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive for practices that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

FSA is also adding a one-time “inflationary” adjustment for payment rates, as well as having more flexibility on adjusting soil rental rates.

FSA opened the General Signup in January 2021 and extended the original deadline to July 23, 2021, to enable producers to consider FSA’s new improvements to the program.

Grasslands Signup

CRP Grasslands helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and improves environmental quality.

FSA has updated the Grasslands Signup to establish a minimum rental rate of $15 per acre, as well as new National Grassland Priority Zones.

How to Sign Up

To enroll in the CRP General signup, producers and landowners should contact their local USDA Service Center by the July 23 deadline. To enroll in the CRP Grasslands signup, they should contact USDA by the August 20 deadline. While USDA offices may have limited visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To work with FSA, producers and landowners should contact their local USDA Service Center. Contact information can be found at farmers.gov/service-locator.

More Information on CRP

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by
taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. The program marked its 35-year anniversary this past December.

**Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for County Committee Members**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) began accepting nominations for county committee members on June 15. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 2, 2021.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in a USDA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote, and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serving on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. This may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

**Applying for Youth Loans**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5,000.

**Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:**

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA’s general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

For help preparing the application forms, contact the Platte County USDA Service Center at 307-322-4050 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).
**Conservation at Work Video Series**

A new video series from NRCS and farmers.gov, *Conservation at Work*, presents short and easy to understand videos about popular conservation practices. These videos feature producers explaining how an individual practice helps their land and why they are using it.

The videos shine the spotlight on farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners from across the U.S. who explain why they’ve implemented the conservation practices and how they work on their land. They also provide insight into how each practice is helping them protect and improve resources and save time and money.

The first 15 videos cover:

- Brush Management
- Cover Crop
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Grade Stabilization
- Grassed Waterway
- High Tunnel
- No Till
- Nutrient Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Pumping Station
- Sprinkler System
- Trails and Walkways
- Waste Storage
- Water & Sediment Control Basin
- Wetland Restoration

The *Conservation at Work* video series can be found at [farmers.gov/conserve/conservationatwork](http://farmers.gov/conserve/conservationatwork).

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**USDA Continues Conservation Planning and Programs- NRCS Services Available by Phone Appointment Only**

All USDA Service Centers, including Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) field offices, are not currently accessible to customers in person.

NRCS staff are working with customers through phone, mail and online communications, and field work continues with appropriate social distancing to help producers with conservation planning and financial assistance through Farm Bill programs. If you need information on a Farm Bill program deadline, please call your local NRCS field office.

Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the farmers.gov portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and payments and view and track certain USDA program applications and payments. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](http://farmers.gov/sign-in). Online NRCS services are available to customers through the Conservation Client Gateway link which can be found at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov). Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents.
For the most current updates on available services and Service Center contact information, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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