



- [Staci's Corner](#)
- [Agricultural Producers Have Until March 15 to Enroll in USDA's Key Commodity Safety Net Programs](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation](#)
- [USDA Offers Expanded Conservation Program Opportunities to Support Climate Smart Agriculture in 2022](#)

Staci's Corner

Hello Crook County producers!

Mother Nature seems to be throwing around a lot of varying temperature these days. Remember as you enter calving and lambing season, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides benefits to eligible livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions, including eligible adverse weather, eligible disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. You must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is first apparent.



We are working diligently to get your disaster program payments out to each and everyone of you. We had almost every program activated due to the drought conditions last summer and with office restrictions and staffing shortage, we are doing the best we can.

You can help us by making sure we have your documentation and signature(s) by the deadline and that your information here with us is accurate and up-to-date. These items include but are not limited to, current eligibility forms, including Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and correct banking information.

With the staffing and long-term projections, the Crook County FSA office is hiring a Temporary Program Technician in the Sundance office. This position would be a full time, Monday – Friday, 8am-430pm office position. Starting wage is \$15 per hour or DOE. Please contact the office for an application.

DEADLINES:

March 15th – ARC/PLC Contracts signed

April 1st – Deadline to ADD Spring Planted crops to your NAP policy

April 4th – May 11th – Grassland CRP signups – questions about this, please call the office

July 15th – 2022 Crop Acreage Reporting Due

If you have any questions about programs, or anything really, please contact our office. We are in the office Monday through Friday and available from 8am to 4:30pm.

Very sincerely,

Staci L. Green-Steiner

Agricultural Producers Have Until March 15 to Enroll in USDA's Key Commodity Safety Net Programs

Agricultural producers who have not yet enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2022 crop year have until March 15, 2022, to sign a contract. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers these two safety net programs to provide vital income support to farmers experiencing substantial declines in crop prices or revenues.



Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County or PLC, which are both crop-by-crop, or ARC-Individual, 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 March 15, 2022, deadline, 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 crop.

Producers have completed 976,249 contracts to date, representing 54% of the more than 1.8 million expected contracts.

Producers who do not complete enrollment by the deadline will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2022 crop year and will not receive a payment if triggered.

Producers are eligible to enroll farms with base acres for the following commodities: 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.

Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, two web-based decision tools are available to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations:

- [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 that allows producers to estimate payments and yield updates and expected payments for 2022.

Crop Insurance Considerations and Decision Deadline

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.

Producers should contact their crop insurance agent to make certain that the election and enrollment made at FSA follows their intention to participate in STAX or SCO coverage. Producers have until March 15, 2022, to make the appropriate changes or cancel their ARC or PLC contract.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact their local USDA Service Center. In those service centers where COVID cases exceed safety levels, staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email and other digital tools. Producers with [level 2 eauthentication access](#) can electronically sign contracts or may make arrangements to drop off signed contracts at the FSA county office. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors.

Maintaining ARC/PLC Acreage

If you're enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, you must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. By signing ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts, you agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If you fail to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on your farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate your contract for the program year.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies, it's important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.

Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans. Contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.



Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.



Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool/#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact Rob Weppner at the Campbell County USDA Service Center at 307-682-8843 ext. 2 or visit farmers.gov.

USDA Offers Expanded Conservation Program Opportunities to Support Climate Smart Agriculture in 2022

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing several new and expanded opportunities for climate smart agriculture in 2022. Updates include nationwide availability of the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) Conservation Incentive Contracts option, a new and streamlined EQIP Cover Crop Initiative, and added flexibilities for producers to easily re-enroll in the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP). These improvements to NRCS’ working lands conservation programs, combined with continued [program opportunities in all states](#), are part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s broader effort to support climate-smart agriculture.



New Partnership Announced NRCS is announcing a new partnership with Farmers For Soil Health, an initiative of the United Soybean Board, National Corn Growers Association and National Pork Board. Farmers For Soil Health works to advance use of soil health practices – especially cover crops – on corn and soybean farms. The initiative has a goal of doubling the number of corn and soybean acres using cover crops to 30 million acres by 2030. Other partners include the National Association of Conservation Districts, Soil Health Institute, and The Sustainability Consortium.

EQIP Cover Crop Initiative

To complement the new partnership, NRCS is investing \$38 million through the new targeted Cover Crop Initiative in 11 states to help agricultural producers mitigate climate change through the widespread adoption of cover crops. States include Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and South Dakota. States were selected for this initial pilot based on their demonstrated demand for additional support for the cover crop practice.

Sign-up dates will be determined at the state-level, and applications will be selected for funding by Feb. 11, 2022. The initiative is aimed at improving soil health through a targeted, rapid, and streamlined application and contract

approval process. NRCS will continue to build on this framework and streamlined application process to support farmers and ranchers across the country.

Cover crops offer agricultural producers a natural and inexpensive climate solution through their ability to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide into soils. Cover crops can provide an accelerated, positive impact on natural resource concerns. In fiscal 2021, NRCS provided technical and financial assistance to help producers plant 2.3 million acres of cover crops through EQIP.

EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts

Conservation Incentive Contracts address priority resource concerns, including sequestering carbon and improving soil health in high-priority areas. Through these contracts, NRCS works with producers to strengthen the quality and condition of natural resources on their operations using management practices, such as irrigation water management, drainage water management, feed management and residue and tillage management that target resource concerns, including degraded soil and water quality, available water and soil erosion.

Conservation Incentive Contracts offer producers annual incentive payments to implement management practices as well as conservation evaluation and monitoring activities to help manage, maintain and improve priority natural resource concerns within state high-priority areas and build on existing conservation efforts. [Download our "Conservation Incentive Contracts" fact sheet](#) for a list of practices.

CSP Re-Enrollment Option

NRCS updated CSP to allow an agricultural producer to immediately re-enroll in the program following an unfunded application to renew an existing contract. Previously, if a CSP participant did not re-enroll the year their contract expired, they were ineligible for the program for two years.

This ineligibility was imposed on CSP participants even if their failure to sign a renewal contract was due to the unavailability of funds, which is beyond their control. USDA is now waiving this two-year ineligibility restriction for all CSP applications.

This year, producers renewed 2,600 CSP contracts covering 3.4 million acres. Applicants with unfunded fiscal 2022 CSP renewals will receive letters this month, notifying them they are automatically eligible to apply for future CSP funding opportunities, rather than needing to wait two years to reapply.

How to Apply

NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs – including EQIP and CSP – year-round, however you should apply by [state-specific, signup dates](#) to be considered for each year's funding. To apply, you should contact your closest USDA service center.



Crook County

USDA Service Center

117 South 21st Street
P.O. Box 1070
Sundance, WY 82729

Phone: 307-283-3442
Fax: 855-415-3442

County Executive Director:

Staci Steiner

Staci.steiner@usda.gov

FSA Program Technicians:

Pam Schurman

pamela.schurman@usda.gov

Tiffany Volkman

tiffany.volkman@usda.gov

NRCS 307-283-2870 Ex. 3

Keela Deaton keela.deaton@usda.gov

Jason Nehl jason.nehl@usda.gov

Sherry Burr sherry.burr@usda.gov

Chris Campton christopher.campton@usda.gov

Farm Loan Manager:

Rob Weppner

307-682-8843 ext. 2 rob.weppner@usda.gov

County Committee:

Jeanne Habeck

Alan Ista

Matt Wood

CCNRD 307-283-2870 Ex. 4

Sarah Anderson

anderson.ccnrd@gmail.com

Bridget Helms

crockcountynrd@gmail.com