USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their crop acreage reports after spring planting should make an appointment with the Lincoln County Farm Service Agency (FSA) before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Lincoln County:

- **7/15/22: Spring Alfalfa Seed, all other crops, Perennial Forage**
- **11/15/22: Apiculture, Fall-Seeded Small Grains**

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 the Lincoln County FSA office to set up an in-person or phone appointment.

To file a crop acreage report, you will need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

Acreage Reporting Details
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.

More Information

For questions, please contact the Washakie-Hot Springs County FSA office at 307-886-9001 ext. 2.

USDA to Provide $6 billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2020 and 2021 Natural Disasters

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2020 and 2021 will soon begin receiving emergency relief payments totaling approximately $6 billion through the Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) new Emergency Relief Program (ERP) to offset crop yield and value losses.

Background

On September 30, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 117-43), which includes $10 billion in assistance to agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms, and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021. FSA recently made payments to ranchers impacted by drought and wildfire through the first phase of the Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP). ERP is another relief component of the Act.

For impacted producers, existing Federal Crop Insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data is the basis for calculating initial payments. USDA estimates that phase one ERP benefits will reach more than 220,000 producers who received indemnities for losses covered by federal crop insurance and more than 4,000 producers who obtained NAP coverage for 2020 and 2021 crop losses.

ERP Eligibility – Phase One

ERP covers losses to crops, trees, bushes, and vines due to a qualifying natural disaster event in calendar years 2020 and 2021. Eligible crops include all crops for which crop insurance or NAP coverage was available, except for crops intended for grazing. Qualifying natural disaster events include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions.

For drought, ERP assistance is available if any area within the county in which the loss occurred was rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a:

- D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks; or
- D3 (extreme drought) or higher level of drought intensity.

Lists of 2020 and 2021 drought counties eligible for ERP is available on the emergency relief website.
To streamline and simplify the delivery of ERP phase one benefits, FSA will send pre-filled application forms to producers where crop insurance and NAP data are already on file. This form includes eligibility requirements, outlines the application process and provides ERP payment calculations. Producers will receive a separate application form for each program year in which an eligible loss occurred. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP phase one payment.

Additionally, producers must have the following forms on file with FSA within 60 days of the ERP phase one deadline, which will later be announced by FSA’s Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs:

- Form AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet.
- Form CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, Member Information for Legal Entities (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, Request for an Exception to the $125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, if applicable, for the 2021 program year.
- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm the status of their forms can contact their local FSA county office.

**ERP Payment Calculations – Phase One**

For crops covered by crop insurance, the ERP phase one payment calculation for a crop and unit will depend on the type and level of coverage obtained by the producer. Each calculation will use an ERP factor based on the producer’s level of crop insurance or NAP coverage.

- **Crop Insurance** – the ERP factor is 75% to 95% depending on the level of coverage ranging from catastrophic to at least 80% coverage.
- **NAP** – the ERP factor is 75% to 95% depending on the level of coverage ranging from catastrophic to 65% coverage.

Full ERP payment calculation factor tables are available on the emergency relief website and in the program fact sheet.

Applying ERP factors ensures that payments to producers do not exceed available funding and that cumulative payments do not exceed 90% of losses for all producers as required by the Act.

Also, there will be certain payment calculation considerations for area plans under crop insurance policies.

The ERP payment percentage for historically underserved producers, including beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and ranchers will be increased by 15% of the calculated payment for crops having insurance coverage or NAP.

To qualify for the higher payment percentage, eligible producers must have a CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, form on file with FSA for the 2021 program year.

Because the amount of loss due to a qualifying disaster event in calendar years 202 and 2021 cannot be separated from the amount of loss caused by other eligible causes of loss as defined by the applicable crop insurance or NAP policy, the ERP phase one payment will be calculated based on the producer’s loss due to all eligible causes of loss.

**Future Insurance Coverage Requirements**
All producers who receive ERP phase one payments, including those receiving a payment based on crop, tree, bush, or vine insurance policies, are statutorily required to purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, for the next two available crop years, as determined by the Secretary. Participants must obtain crop insurance or NAP, as may be applicable:

- At a coverage level equal to or greater than 60% for insurable crops; or
- At the catastrophic level or higher for NAP crops.

Coverage requirements will be determined from the date a producer receives an ERP payment and may vary depending on the timing and availability of crop insurance or NAP for a producer’s particular crops. The final crop year to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage to meet the second year of coverage for this requirement is the 2026 crop year.

**Emergency Relief – Phase Two (Crop and Livestock Producers)**

Today’s announcement is only phase one of relief for commodity and specialty crop producers. Making the initial payments using existing safety net and risk management data will both speed implementation and further encourage participation in these permanent programs, such as Federal crop insurance, as Congress intended. The second phase of both ERP and ELRP programs will fill gaps and cover producers who did not participate in or receive payments through the existing programs that are being leveraged for phase one implementation. When phase one payment processing is complete, the remaining funds will be used to cover gaps identified under phase two.

Through proactive communication and outreach, USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as program details are made available. More information on ERP can be found in the [Notice of Funding Availability](#).

**Additional Commodity Loss Assistance**

The Milk Loss Program and On-Farm Stored Commodity Loss Program are also funded through the [Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act](#) and will be announced in a future rule in the Federal Register.

**More Information**

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#). For FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#).

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**USDA Commits to Big Game Conservation Partnership with the State of Wyoming: Initial Investments Forthcoming**

USDA announced a new partnership that uses diverse Farm Bill investments to support voluntary conservation of private working lands and migratory big game populations in Wyoming. Using lessons learned from this pilot, USDA seeks to scale up this model across the West as part of President Biden’s commitment to support voluntary, locally-led conservation efforts to reach the administration’s national conservation goals.

USDA participated in extensive engagement and listening sessions with stakeholders throughout Wyoming and developed this pilot in response to their feedback. Those listening sessions helped guide the project’s concepts and principles: recognition of the large scale of this issue in key landscapes, coordination with state agencies, consistency with state policy and direction and support of existing partnerships wherever possible.

The pilot will take a systems approach to voluntary conservation and draw on several USDA programs, including the [Grassland Conservation Reserve Program](#) (Grassland CRP), [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP) and the [Agricultural Conservation Easements Program](#) (ACEP) to provide financial and technical assistance for landowners who want to participate. USDA is
committing an initial $15 million in investment through EQIP and ACEP for Wyoming, in addition to the rental payments that will go to producers who enroll in Grasslands CRP. There are three distinct conservation areas that USDA will invest in using these voluntary and incentive-based programs. All are designed to help willing landowners and their partners conserve private lands for the benefit of migratory big game populations. They include:

- **Agricultural Land Protection** – Preventing the conversion of private working lands that provide habitat and other values for migratory big game populations to alternative land uses not compatible with big game migrations. Specifically, this would include preventing actions like residential subdivision, mining and development of commercial wind and solar facilities on private lands. Additional resources will be provided to Wyoming for Agricultural Land Easements through the ACEP (ACEP-ALE) for this effort, as well as prioritization of big game conservation through RCPP.

- **Restoration, Enhancement and Management** – Restoring and managing working lands to provide a variety of healthy habitats migrating animals need to meet their life history requirements. Habitat quality can be improved in many ways including but not limited to the control of invasive species, restoration of degraded aspens, removal of encroached woodlands and restoration of wet meadows. Ensuring compatibility with fences used for managing working lands and migrating animals is also a top priority. Today, USDA is announcing an additional $5 million in FY22 resources through the EQIP for Wyoming to specifically support these needs. These resources are a significant addition to the State’s current FY22 EQIP allocation of over $16 million.

- **Conservation Leases** - Managing working lands in a way that ensures the resiliency of the desired habitat conditions is extremely important to migrating big game as they rely upon healthy lands to meet their diverse seasonal habitat needs. Providing annual financial incentives to landowners through a conservation lease can help encourage the long-term management that results in resiliency. The 10- to 15-year contracts through the Grassland CRP are being used to fulfill this need. To date, USDA has committed $32.3 million ($2.3 million paid to landowners annually) to conserve over 170,000 acres through Grassland CRP in Wyoming with additional enrollments to be announced from this year’s signup in the coming weeks. For this year’s signup, USDA piloted policy changes to make it easier for producers to access multiple programs. USDA will continue to work with partners to tailor the program to meet the state’s needs before next year’s signup.

For more information, landowners can contact USDA at their local USDA Service Center. On farmers.gov, landowners can create a secure account, apply for NRCS programs, electronically sign documents and manage their conservation contracts.

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**FSA Offers Drought Assistance for Livestock Producers Through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)**

If you’ve suffered above normal expenses for hauling feed or water to livestock or hauling livestock to forage/grazing acres due to the impacts of drought, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

For eligible producers in qualifying counties, ELAP provides financial assistance for:

- the transportation of water to livestock;
- the above normal cost of mileage for transporting feed to livestock;
- the above normal cost of transporting livestock to forage/grazing acres.*

*Hauling livestock one-way, one haul per animal reimbursement and no payment for “empty miles.”

Eligible livestock include cattle, buffalo, goats and sheep, among others, that are maintained for commercial use and located in a county where the qualifying drought conditions occur. A county must have had D2 severe drought intensity on the U.S. Drought Monitor for eight consecutive weeks during the normal grazing period, or D3 or D4
drought intensity at any time during the normal grazing period. Producers must have risk in both eligible livestock and eligible grazing land in an eligible county to qualify for ELAP assistance.

**WATER TRANSPORTATION**

For ELAP water transportation assistance, a producer must be transporting water to eligible livestock on eligible grazing land where the producer had adequate livestock watering systems or facilities in place before the drought occurred and where they do not normally require the transportation of water. Payments are for costs associated with personal labor, equipment, hired labor, equipment, and/or contracted water transportation fees. Cost of the water itself is not covered. The ELAP payment formula uses a national average price per gallon.

**ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING FEED**

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who incur above normal expenses for transporting feed to livestock during drought. The payment formula excludes the first 25 miles and any mileage over 1,000 miles. The reimbursement rate is 60% of the costs above what would normally have been incurred during the same time period in a normal (non-drought) year. **ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING LIVESTOCK TO FORAGE/GRAZING ACRES**

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who are hauling livestock to a new location for feed resources due to insufficient feed and/or grazing in drought-impacted areas. Assistance for Livestock transportation is retroactive to 2021 and available for 2022 and subsequent years. **For those interested in this provision for 2021, the deadline to apply for assistance is June 30, 2022. Please contact your county FSA office for additional details.**

For calendar year 2022 forward, producers must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent; producers should contact their county FSA office as soon as the loss of water resources or feed resources are known. For ELAP eligibility, documentation of expenses is critical. Producers should maintain records and receipts associated with the costs of transporting water to eligible livestock, the costs of transporting feed to eligible livestock, and the costs of transporting eligible livestock to forage/grazing acres.

ELAP also offers assistance to producers impacted by wildfire. Contact your county FSA office for more information on ELAP resources for wildfire losses. In addition, beekeepers also can benefit from ELAP provisions and should contact their county FSA office within 15 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent. For more information regarding ELAP, contact your Lincoln County USDA Service Center at 307-886-9001 ext 2 or visit [fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://fsa.usda.gov/disaster).

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**Ask the Expert: A Farm Operating Loan Q&A with Jack Carlile**

In this Ask the Expert, Jack Carlile, Farm Loan Manager for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), answers questions about farm operating loans and when producers should apply in order to secure funds for the current crop year.

As the Farm Loan Manager for the Cherokee County Service Center, Jack is responsible for managing the loan making and loan servicing activities for five counties in northeast Oklahoma. His office provides services for over 650 farm loan customers. Jack was raised on a cross bred cow/calf operation that his grandparents started. Over the years, each generation has added to the operation by purchasing additional pasture. The operation also grows and bales their own hay. Jack’s agriculture background and degree in agriculture economics from Oklahoma State University help him better understand the financing needs of his producers.

**Who can apply for FSA Farm Loans?**

Anyone can apply for FSA’s loan programs. Applications will be considered on basic eligibility requirements. To apply for a loan, you must meet the following general eligibility requirements including:
• Be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien.
• Operator of a family farm or ranch.
• Have a satisfactory credit history.
• Unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms to meet actual needs.
• Not be delinquent on any federal debts.

What can I purchase with operating loans?

Farm Operating Loans are traditionally used for purchasing capital items such as farm machinery, equipment, or livestock. Loan funds can also be used to help pay typical operating expenses for farming and ranching operations. For example, a rancher may use an operating loan to purchase forage for his cattle to feed them through the winter or a row crop producer may use an operating loan for paying for inputs like seed or fertilizer.

What is the maximum loan amount and terms?

The maximum loan amount for a Direct Farm Operating Loan is $400,000. Direct loans are made and serviced by FSA.

Producers can also apply for Guaranteed Operating Loans that are made by your commercial lender, and guaranteed against loss by FSA. The maximum loan amount for a Guaranteed Farm Operating Loan is $1,825,000. Loan terms for operating loans range from one to seven years.

How do I apply?

If you’re interested in applying for a farm loan, you can pick up an application by visiting your local FSA office. Visit farmers.gov to find the USDA Service Center nearest you.

When applying for a loan, you will need a business plan, which must include:

• Your mission, vision, and goals for your farm or ranch.
• Your current assets and liabilities.
• Marketing Plan (what your operation will produce and where you will market and sell your products.)
• Whether the amount of income your operation generates will be enough to pay your business and family living expenses.

When should I apply for an operating loan?

I would recommend beginning the application process a few months in advance of needing the funds to allow time for the request to be processed, and for any necessary security checks and searches to be completed. That allows time for the funds to be available for your use when most needed.

Where can I find more information?

To learn more about FSA loans visit farmers.gov/loans or fsa.usda.gov/farmloans. Fact sheets and application packages are also available at your USDA Service Center. To learn more about other types of FSA loans or to find the right loan for your operation, use the Farm Loan Discovery Tool by visiting farmers.gov/loans/farm-loan-discovery-tool.
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Next County Committee Meeting: TBD