

May 2015



Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes](#)
- [When Weather Prevents or Damages Crops](#)
- [Youth Loans Available](#)
- [CRP Participants – Think Twice before Mowing](#)
- [Livestock Indemnity Program Available](#)
- [USDA Ohio Rural Development Agency Seeks applicants for the Rural Energy for America Program](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

Ohio FSA State News and Updates

Ohio Farm Service Agency State Office

200 North High St. Room
540
Columbus, OH, 43215
Phone: 614-255-2441
FAX: 855-832-5100

State Executive Director:
Steven Maurer

Administrative Officer:
Mimi Garringer

Conservation Chief:
Brandi Koehler

Farm Loan Chief:
David Drake

Price Support Chief:
Carletha Fasching

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

Changes mandated through the 2014 Farm Bill require producers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file.

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 form must be on file with the FSA. Since many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) programs have this requirement, most producers should already have an AD-1026 on file. If producers have not filed, they must do so **by June 1, 2015.**

When a farmer completes the AD-1026, FSA and NRCS staff will outline any additional actions that may be required for compliance with the provisions. The Risk Management Agency, through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation

**Production Adjustment,
Compliance and Risk
Management Chief:**
Matt Kleski

State Committee:
Bob Boggs, Chairperson
Bob Cole, member
Bruce Long, member
Jim Rex, member
Jim Zumbrink, member

Visit Ohio FSA website for
additional information at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

Please contact your [FSA
County Office](#) for questions
specific to your operation.

provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues the requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA and NRCS. This includes the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs.

FSA recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at USDA Service Centers and [online](#). **NOTE:** There is **no** requirement to file a new revised AD-1026 form if the existing AD-1026 form on file is valid, as long as the answers to the questions on existing AD-1026 do **not** change and the producer does **not** violate HELC or WC provisions. USDA will publish a rule later this year that will provide details outlining the connection of conservation compliance with crop insurance premium support.

Producers should contact their County FSA office for additional information.

When Weather Prevents or Damages Crops

When bad weather prevents planting or damages crops, the FSA would like to remind producers to report the acreage to the FSA office within 15 days of the final planting date of the crop. This applies to all crops, whether covered by crop insurance, not covered by insurance, or covered by FSA's Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP). Final planting dates vary among counties and crop types.

Producers who have their crops insured through a private crop insurance company should contact the insurance agent immediately and advise them of the damaged crops. Additionally, a CCC-576, Notice of Loss Application, must be completed in person at the FSA office, and the prevented and/or failed acres reported.

For those crops covered under FSA's NAP, producers should immediately contact the FSA office to report the acres and file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss Application. "Producers with NAP coverage should report their losses within 15 calendar days of crop damage from natural disaster, so the loss can be appraised and production counted before the crop is put into another use, abandoned or destroyed," said Steven Maurer, State Executive Director for Ohio FSA.

Crops not covered with a private insurance or NAP policy should still be reported to the local FSA office. This will provide FSA with a historical record of your crop should disaster assistance become available.

For more information about reporting prevented planting or failed acres, contact or stop in the FSA office.

Youth Loans Available

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youths to establish and operate 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 \$5000.

Applicants Must:

- 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
- Must obtain a written recommendation and consent from a parent or guardian if the applicant has not reached the age of majority under state law
- 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 project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

To find out more about the FSA Youth loan program, contact your local FSA county office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official.

CRP Participants – Think Twice before Mowing

In the past, mowing of CRP grass cover was a widely accepted practice by many participants, if for no other purpose than aesthetics. Today with more research and understanding, it has been shown that undisturbed grass cover will reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and is more beneficial to wildlife than annually mowed grass covers.

Undisturbed CRP covers could appear unattractive to those that do not understand its value. Wildlife, especially grassland birds including pheasants and quail, and pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, view undisturbed CRP cover as a source of food and habitat suitable to raise their young. Wildlife will not be attracted to CRP cover if plants are not allowed to mature. Game birds and bees are disappearing because of habitat loss.

Undisturbed grass cover does not include noxious weeds such as thistle and teasel or woody species like trees and multiflora rose. These noxious weeds must be controlled by spot mowing affected areas or spot spraying of an approved herbicide. These treatments will have a minimal effect on the CRP practice cover's ability to meet the purposes of erosion control, water quality, and wildlife habitat. Spot mowing is less expensive than mowing the whole practice. Aesthetic beauty should not replace good land stewardship and economics.

Unnecessary disturbance of CRP cover is considered a violation of the terms and conditions of the CRP contract and conservation plan. Violations could potentially result in hefty penalties including contract termination and refund of all contract related payments.

Properly maintained CRP cover can be very attractive if noxious weeds and invasive species are controlled and grasses and wildflowers are allowed to mature. Please scout your CRP fields before weeds go to seed. Contact your local FSA office for permission to spot treat your CRP grass cover during Ohio's primary nesting season (**March 1st – July 15th**). Plan to have your CRP cover assessed for the need of mid-contract management activities that are designed to enhance your CRP cover for wildlife. Mid-contract management is a contractual obligation that is outlined in your CRP-1 Appendix and conservation plan.

Contact the FSA office for more information on proper maintenance and management of CRP practice cover. Remember, beauty is in the eye of the conservationist.

Livestock Indemnity Program Available

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2015, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2015, and before December 31, 2015. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year for which benefits are requested:

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2015 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or by January 30, 2016
- An application for payment by January 30, 2016.

Additional information about LIP is available at your FSA county office or read the [LIP fact sheet](#).

USDA Ohio Rural Development Agency Seeks applicants for the Rural Energy for America Program

Agricultural Producers and Rural Small Businesses Encouraged to Apply for Grants and Loan Guarantees

USDA Ohio Rural Development (RD) Agency is seeking applications from eligible rural small businesses and agricultural producers for funding to make energy efficiency improvements or to install renewable energy systems. The funding is made available through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) which can provide grants and loan guarantees for the installation of these projects. Small rural businesses and agricultural producers located in Ohio who are interested in applying for these funds must submit their complete application to the Ohio Rural Development State Office. **Applications must be received by 4:30 p.m. on June 30, 2015.**

Renewable energy systems can include solar electric, solar thermal, wind, geothermal, biomass, and anaerobic digestion systems. Energy efficiency improvement systems can include lighting improvements, insulation, electric motor replacements and other energy efficiency improvement projects as outlined in an energy audit. Grants are available on a competitive basis for up to twenty-five percent of the eligible project costs with a maximum grant of \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvement projects. Loan guarantees are also available for up to seventy-five percent of the eligible project costs with a maximum loan guarantee in

the amount of \$25,000,000. Combination grant and loan guarantee applications cannot exceed seventy-five percent of eligible project costs. Residential renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements are not eligible for assistance through this program.

Nationally, funding available in Fiscal Year 2015 will be used to support REAP grants totaling approximately \$60,000,000 and loan guarantees totaling \$200,000,000.

If you are interested in pursuing a grant or loan guarantee for the Rural Energy for America Program, please contact the following Rural Development staff with questions or to request application documents.

- Christie Hooks, Business Program Specialist, 614-255-2397, Christie.hooks@oh.usda.gov;
- Randy Monhemius, Business Program Specialist, 614-255-2424, Randy.Monhemius@oh.usda.gov.
- Jennifer Brown, Business Program Specialist, 614-255-2423, Jennifer.Brown@oh.usda.gov
- Jeremy Laws, Business Program Specialist, 614-255-2426, Jeremy.Laws@oh.usda.gov

Dates to Remember

May 25 ----- Memorial Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

June 1 ----- **Deadline to** apply for 2014 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.

June 15 --- County Committee Nomination Period begins.

July 3 ----- Independence Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

July 15 ---- Final certification date to report burley tobacco; cabbage planted through May 31; corn, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, spring oats, potatoes, popcorn, sugar beets, tomatoes and other crops.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).