



Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Ohio FSA State Newsletter - April 8, 2025

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A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office

Spring has arrived, field work is in progress, and our county office staff is busy creating acreage reporting maps, our farm loan staff continue to diligently process farm loan applications and FSA continues accepting enrollments and elections for the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#) for 2025 **to April 15**.

Ohio FSA County offices continue accepting applications for the [Emergency Commodity Assistance Program \(ECAP\)](#), a program designed to help producers mitigate the impacts of rising input costs and declining commodity prices. The program **runs through August 15, 2025**. Additional information about ECAP is available in our April newsletter and producers can visit the ECAP webpage at: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/ecap>.

With the recent storms moving through Ohio, we want to mention FSA's Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP). EFRP provides payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land to enable them to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster.

In order to meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and be sustainable for growing trees. The land must also be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the

land. The natural disaster must have resulted in damage that if untreated would impair or endanger the natural resources on the land and/or materially affect future use of the land.

Eligible forest restoration practices include debris removal, such as down or damaged trees, in order to establish a new stand or provide natural regeneration; site preparation, planting materials and labor to replant forest land; restoration of forestland roads, fire lanes, fuel breaks or erosion control structures; fencing, tree shelters and tree tubes to protect trees from wildlife damage; and wildlife enhancement to provide cover openings and wildlife habitat.

After applications are received, local FSA county committees determine land eligibility using on-site damage inspections that assess the type and extent of damage and approve applications. Owners should check with their [County FSA office](#) about EFRP after a natural disaster has occurred.

The USDA FSA also offers the [Emergency Conservation Program \(ECP\)](#) which provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to repair and restore farmland affected by natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and other calamities. ECP helps farmers and producers implement emergency conservation measures to rehabilitate damaged land, restore agricultural production, and prevent further environmental degradation. For more information about ECP, producers should contact their [FSA County office](#) for additional details.

Also, FSA has other emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county and farmers play a vital role in this process.

If producers have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster, you may submit a request to your County FSA office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the County FSA office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

The key thing to remember for FSA program assistance is to contact your USDA Service Center sooner rather than later to report losses and learn more about program options available. They will do their best to help you understand the programs and what is needed for eligibility and to apply.

Lastly, we are asking for your help so our staff can continue to provide the best service to you. If you have changed your home phone number, cell phone number or email address be sure to provide your [FSA County office](#) with the updated contact information. This will allow our staff an opportunity to keep producers informed of program announcement and deadlines, reporting requirements and other important updates. Our staff can send short SMS messages and emails to producers, to keep you updated on programs. To subscribe, visit farmers.gov/subscribe to sign-up and receive emails and text messages. Producers can also ask our staff for assistance to subscribe for these services.

Please remember to call ahead to schedule an in-person or phone appointment, so staff can be most effective with your time. Our staff can also work with producers via phone, email and through Box and OneSpan, our electronic options for sharing and signing FSA forms. To conduct business, please contact your [FSA County office](#).

Additional program details and more in-depth information is provided in our newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact your [County FSA office](#) for questions about our programs, loans and information that is included in this newsletter edition.

Producers Can Enroll in ARC and PLC

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting enrollments and elections for the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#) for 2025 to **April 15**. ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms. The American Relief Act, 2025 extended many Farm Bill-authorized programs for another year, including ARC and PLC.

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual (ARC-IC), which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2025 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm it will continue for 2025 unless an election change is made.

If producers do not submit their election revision by the April 15 deadline, their election remains the same as their 2024 election for commodities on the farm from the prior year. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the cropland.

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 grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

USDA also reminds producers that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products including Supplemental Coverage Option, Enhanced Coverage Option and, for cotton producers, the Stacked Income Protection Plan (commonly referred to as STAX).

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact their [County USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Makes Grants Available for Farmers and Ag Producers to Expand Market Opportunities and Generate More Revenue

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting applications for the 2025 Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) program designed to help rural small businesses, agricultural

producers, farmers, and ranchers generate new products, create marketing opportunities, and increase their incomes through value-added activities.

Applications will be awarded through a competitive national process. Eligible applicants include independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

The program expects to make approximately \$30 million available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Awards of up to \$75,000 are available for planning activities or up to \$250,000 for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product.

Planning activities may include conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans. Working capital expenses may include costs associated with processing, marketing, advertising, inventory and salaries.

Electronic applications will be accepted via the VAPG APPLICATION PORTAL until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on **April 17, 2025**. Information on how to use the application portal is available using our convenient Grant Application Portal User Guide.

For more information about the Value-Added Producer Grant program in Ohio, contact Rural Development Business Program Specialist Danielle Frye at danielle.frye@usda.gov or go to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

USDA Expediting \$10 Billion in Direct Economic Assistance to Agricultural Producers

Administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), ECAP will help agricultural producers mitigate the impacts of increased input costs and falling commodity prices.

Authorized by the American Relief Act, 2025, these economic relief payments are based on planted and prevented planted crop acres for eligible commodities for the 2024 crop year. To streamline and simplify the delivery of ECAP, FSA will begin sending pre-filled applications to producers who submitted acreage reports to FSA for 2024 eligible ECAP commodities soon after the signup period opened on March 19, 2025. Producers do not have to wait for their pre-filled ECAP application to apply. They can visit fsa.usda.gov/ecap to apply using a login.gov account or contact their local FSA office to request an application once the signup period opens.

Eligible Commodities and Payment Rates

The commodities below are eligible for these per-acre payment rates:

Wheat - \$30.69

Eligible oilseeds:

Corn - \$42.91

Canola – \$31.83

Sorghum - \$42.52

Crambe – \$19.08

Barley - \$21.67	Flax - \$20.97
Oats - \$77.66	Mustard - \$11.36
Upland cotton & Extra-long staple cotton - \$84.74	Rapeseed - \$23.63
Long & medium grain rice - \$76.94	Safflower - \$26.32
Peanuts - \$75.51	Sesame - \$16.83
Soybeans - \$29.76	Sunflower – \$27.23
Dry peas - \$16.02	
Lentils - \$19.30	
Small Chickpeas - \$31.45	
Large Chickpeas - \$24.02	

Producer Eligibility

Eligible producers must report 2024 crop year planted and prevented planted acres to FSA on an FSA-578, *Report of Acreage* form. Producers who have not previously reported 2024 crop year acreage or filed a notice of loss for prevented planted crops must submit an acreage report by the Aug. 15, 2025, deadline. Eligible producers can visit fsa.usda.gov/ecap for eligibility and payment details.

Applying for ECAP

Producers must submit ECAP applications to their local FSA county office by Aug. 15, 2025. Only one application is required for all ECAP eligible commodities nationwide. ECAP applications can be submitted to FSA in-person, electronically using [Box and One-Span](#), by fax or by applying online at fsa.usda.gov/ecap utilizing a secure login.gov account.

If not already on file for the 2024 crop year, producers must have the following forms on file with FSA:

- [Form AD-2047](#), *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- [Form CCC-901](#), *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- [Form CCC-902](#), *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- [Form CCC 943](#), *75 percent of Average Gross Income from Farming, Ranching, or Forestry Certification* (if applicable).
- [AD-1026](#), *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*.
- [SF-3881](#), *Direct Deposit*.

Except for the new CCC-943, most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, likely have these forms on file. However, those who are uncertain and want to confirm the status of their forms or need to submit the new Form-943, can contact their [local FSA county office](#).

If a producer does not receive a pre-filled ECAP application, and they planted or were prevented from planting ECAP eligible commodities in 2024, they should contact their [local FSA office](#).

ECAP Payments and Calculator

ECAP payments will be issued as applications are approved. Initial ECAP payments will be factored by 85% to ensure that total program payments do not exceed available funding. If additional funds remain, FSA may issue a second payment.

ECAP assistance will be calculated using a flat payment rate for the eligible commodity multiplied by the eligible reported acres. Payments are based on acreage and not production. For acres reported as prevented plant, ECAP assistance will be calculated at 50%.

For ECAP payment estimates, producers are encouraged to visit fsa.usda.gov/ecap to use the ECAP online calculator.

2025 Acreage Reporting Dates

To comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to contact their FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Ohio:

May 31, 2025 --- Report Nursery Crop Acreage.

July 15, 2025 --- Report all your Burley Tobacco, Cabbage (Planted 3/19/25-5/31/25), Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hybrid Corn Seed, Spring Oats, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Tomatoes and all other crops. Report Perennial Forage Crops. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

Aug. 15, 2025 --- Report Cabbage (Planted 6/1/25-7/20/25).

Sept. 30, 2025 --- Report Aquaculture.

Dec. 15, 2025 ---- Report Fall-Seeded 2026 crops, Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above 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 above 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.

If you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary documentation to FSA immediately upon receipt from the certifying agent.

FSA offers continuous certification for perennial forage. This means after perennial forage is reported once and the producer elects continuous certification, the certification remains in effect until a change is made. Check with your FSA office for more information on continuous certification.

New Option to View, Print and Label Maps on Farmers.gov

Producers with a login.gov account (formerly eAuth) linked to their USDA customer record can now access their FSA farm records, maps and common land units by logging into farmers.gov. A new feature will allow producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries. This will allow producers to view, print and label their own maps for acreage reporting purposes.

Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via form FSA-211 Power of Attorney, Business Partner Signature Authority, along with other signature types, or as a member of a business can now access information in the farmers.gov portal.

Producers can learn how to use the farmers.gov Farm Records Mapping functionality with this [fact sheet](#) and these [video tutorials](#).

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your [County FSA office](#).

USDA Farm Loan Program Changes Now in Effect

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) updates to the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Loan Programs are officially in effect. These changes, part of the [Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule](#), are designed to increase financial flexibility for agricultural producers, allowing them to grow their operations, boost profitability, and build long-term savings.

These program updates reflect USDA's ongoing commitment to supporting the financial success and resilience of farmers and ranchers nationwide, offering critical tools to help borrowers manage their finances more effectively.

What the new rules mean for you:

- Low-interest installment set-aside program: Financially distressed borrowers can now defer up to one annual loan payment at a reduced interest rate. This simplified option helps ease financial pressure while keeping farming operations running smoothly.
- Flexible repayment terms: New repayment options give borrowers the ability to increase their cash flow and build working capital reserves, allowing for long-term financial planning that includes saving for retirement, education, and other future needs.
- Reduced collateral requirements: FSA has lowered the amount of additional loan security needed for direct farm loans, making it easier for borrowers to leverage their existing equity without putting their personal residence at risk.

These new rules provide more financial freedom to borrowers. By giving farmers and ranchers better tools to manage their operations, we're helping them build long-term financial stability. It's all about making sure they can keep their land, grow their business, and invest in the future.

If you're an FSA borrower or considering applying for a loan, now is the time to take advantage of these new policies. We encourage you to reach out to your local FSA farm loan staff to ensure you fully understand the wide range of loan making and servicing options available to assist with starting, expanding, or maintaining your agricultural operation.

To conduct business with FSA, please contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Specialty Crop Growers can Apply for 2025 On-Farm Food Safety Certification Expenses

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds specialty crop producers that the application period for the [Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops \(FSCSC\) program](#) for program year 2025 opened Jan. 1, 2025, and runs through Jan. 31, 2026. The program has been expanded to include medium-sized businesses in addition to small businesses. Eligible specialty crop growers can apply for assistance for expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification.

Program Details

FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing its on-farm food safety certification, as well as a portion of related expenses.

Eligible FSCSC applicants must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small or medium-size business and have paid eligible expenses related to certification.

- A small business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops sold by the applicant during the three-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$500,000.

- A medium size business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the three-year period preceding the program year of at least \$500,001 but no more than \$1,000,000.

Specialty crop operations can receive the following cost assistance:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
- Training

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each eligible cost category. Details about payment rates and limitations are available at farmers.gov/food-safety.

Applying for Assistance

For program year 2025, the application period began Jan. 1, 2025, and runs through Jan. 31, 2026. FSA will issue 50% of the calculated payment for program year 2025 following application approval, with the remaining amount to be paid after the application deadline. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Specialty crop producers can apply by completing the [FSA-888-1](#), *Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) for Program Years 2024 and 2025* application. The application, along with the [AD-2047](#), *Customer Data Worksheet* and [SF-3881](#), *ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form*, if not already on file with FSA, can be submitted to the FSA county office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Producers with an eAuthentication account can apply for FSCSC [online](#). Producers interested in creating an eAuthentication account should visit farmers.gov/sign-in.

Visit farmers.gov/food-safety for additional program details, eligibility information and application forms.

More Information

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Offers Disaster Assistance for Producers Facing Inclement Weather

Severe weather events create significant challenges and often result in catastrophic loss for agricultural producers. Despite every attempt to mitigate risk, your operation may suffer losses. USDA offers several programs to help with recovery.

Risk Management

For producers with coverage through the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP), we want to remind you to report crop damage to your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. You will need to file a Notice of Loss (also called Form CCC-576) within 15 days of loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

If you have [Federal Crop Insurance](#), contact your crop insurance agent within 72 hours of discovering damage and be sure to follow up in writing within 15 days.

Disaster Assistance

USDA also offers disaster assistance programs, which is especially important to livestock, fruit and vegetable, specialty and perennial crop producers who have fewer [risk management options](#).

First, the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) and [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that died as a result of a qualifying natural disaster event or for loss of grazing acres, feed and forage. And, the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) provides assistance to producers of grazed forage crop acres that have suffered crop loss due to a qualifying drought. Livestock producers suffering the impacts of drought can also request [Emergency Haying and Grazing](#) on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres.

Next, the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate and replant tree, vines or shrubs loss experienced by orchards and nurseries. This complements NAP or crop insurance coverage, which cover the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases.

For LIP and ELAP, you will need to file a Notice of Loss for livestock and grazing or feed losses by the application deadline for each program. For TAP, you will need to file a program application within 90 days.

Documentation

It's critical to keep accurate records to document all losses following this devastating cold weather event. Livestock producers are advised to document beginning livestock numbers by taking time and date-stamped video or pictures prior to after the loss.

Other common documentation options include:

- Purchase records
- Production records
- Vaccination records
- Bank or other loan documents

- Third-party certification

Other Programs

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore damaged farmland or forests.

Additionally, FSA offers a variety of loans available including emergency loans that are triggered by disaster declarations and operating loans that can assist producers with credit needs. You can use these loans to replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, or refinance farm-related debts, and other needs.

Meanwhile, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial resources through its [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) to help with immediate needs and long-term support to help recover from natural disasters and conserve water resources. Assistance may also be available for emergency animal mortality disposal from natural disasters and other causes.

Additional Resources

Additional details – including payment calculations – can be found on our [NAP](#), [ELAP](#), [LIP](#), and [TAP](#) fact sheets. On [farmers.gov](#), the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help you determine program or loan options.

FSA's Customer Kiosks now available nationwide

The new customer kiosks from USDA's Farm Service Agency are now available at every county office nationwide. These kiosks help to streamline your visit to your local county office and easily access a variety of features such as signing FSA documents, utilizing the Loan Assistance Tool, browsing USDA programs, accessing the internet, accessing necessary personal information, and signing up for a Login.gov account, which provides access to [farmers.gov](#) level two features and other USDA and U.S. Government web resources. Future kiosk functionality enhancements include a customer check-in application, self-service option for FSA program applications and documents, financial inquiries and more.



Learn more about how FSA is modernizing our customer experience. [Link to Blog Post](#)

April Loan and Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans, Direct	-- 5.375%
Farm Ownership Loans, Direct	-- 5.750%
Limited Resource Loans	-- 5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment	-- 1.750%
Farm Ownership – Joint Financing	-- 3.750%
Emergency Loans	-- 3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year	-- 4.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year	-- 4.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year	-- 4.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year	-- 4.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year	-- 4.375%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year	-- 4.500%
Commodity Loans	-- 5.125%

Dates to Remember

April 15 ---- Deadline to make election and enrollment decisions for 2025 ARC/PLC.

May 26 ----- Memorial Day Holiday. **USDA Service Centers Closed.**

May 31 ----- **Deadline** to apply for 2024 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.

June 15 --- County Committee Nomination Period begins.

June 19 --- Juneteenth National Independence Day. **USDA Service Center Closed.**

July 4 ----- Independence Day Holiday. **USDA Service Center Closed.**

July 15 ---- End of primary nesting season for CRP program purposes.

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. Report perennial forage crops. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

July 15 ----- Final Date to Report Production for the preceding Crop Year for Farms Enrolled in ARC-IC.

August 1 --- **Last day** to file County Committee Nomination forms.

August 1 --- **Deadline** to Request farm reconstitutions and transfers for 2024.

August 15 – **Deadline** for producers to submit applications for ECAP.

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