

## In This Issue:

- [Just Around the Corner](#)
- [CRP and CREP Updates for Michigan](#)
- [Pandemic Cover Crop Program Deadline Update](#)
- [RMA Strengthens Insurance Policies Including Dry Beans, Dry Peas and Wheat](#)
- [It's Time to Update Your Records](#)
- [Updated Eligibility and Deadline for Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program](#)
- [MAL and LDP Policy](#)
- [Maintaining Good Credit History](#)
- [April 2022 Lending Rates](#)

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## Just Around the Corner

### Conservation

**May 13** is the deadline to apply for the [Grasslands Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#)

### Cover Crops

**May 31** is the acreage reporting deadline for cover crops planted after March 15, 2022, to be counted for PCCP.

### Grains & Oilseeds

**May 31** is [Marketing Assistance Loan \(MAL\)](#) application deadline for prior year harvested corn, soybeans and other oilseeds, rice, grain sorghum, and pulse crops

### Hogs

**Apr. 29** is the new deadline to apply for the [Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program \(SMHPP\)](#).

### Nurseries

**May 31** is the crop reporting deadline for June 2022 to May 2023 nursery crops

**May 31** is the deadline to sign up for June 2022 to May 2023 [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) coverage for nursery crops.

### More Information

This information is for general awareness. Program deadlines may change or vary by county. Be sure to verify program deadlines for your land or operation by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).



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# CRP and CREP Updates for Michigan

Michigan farmers, ranchers and agricultural landowners can use several USDA conservation programs available now through FSA. These include the Grasslands Conservation Reserve Program, Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement, and Michigan Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.



## Grasslands Conservation Reserve Program

USDA encourages producers and landowners to enroll in the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by May 13, 2022.

### Grasslands CRP Contract Information

[Grassland CRP](#) provides a unique opportunity for farmers, ranchers, and agricultural landowners to keep land in agricultural production and supplement their income while improving their soils and permanent grass cover. It is a federally funded voluntary working lands program.

Through the program, FSA provides annual rental payments to landowners to maintain and conserve grasslands while allowing producers to graze, hay, and produce seed on that land. FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. The annual rental rate varies by county with a national minimum rental rate of \$13 per acre for this signup. Contract duration is 10 or 15 years.

### Grasslands CRP Environmental Benefits

Maintaining the existing permanent cover provides several benefits, including reducing erosion, providing wildlife habitat and migration corridors, and capturing and maintaining carbon in the soil and cover.

## Continuous CRP

Under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#), environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

### Continuous CRP Conservation Practice Options

There are many conservation practices available under the Continuous CRP to match landowner objectives and to address a variety of environmental concerns.

Popular practices in Michigan include grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, windbreaks, wetland restorations, and more.

### Continuous CRP Environmental Benefits

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

## State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement

Continuous CRP sign-up in Michigan also includes two State Acres for Wildlife Habitat Enhancement (SAFE) focused efforts that are available in certain counties. The two CRP SAFE efforts are the Monarch and Pheasant Recovery and Native Pollinator Habitat Planting.

## **CRP SAFE Eligible Areas in Michigan**

For the CRP SAFE Monarch and Pheasant Recovery effort, agricultural land in the following counties may be eligible: Allegan, Arenac, Barry, Bay, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Chippewa, Clare, Clinton, Delta, Dickinson, Eaton, Genesee, Gladwin, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Ionia, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Mackinac, Mecosta, Menominee, Midland, Monroe, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, St. Joseph, Tuscola, Van Buren, and Washtenaw counties.

For the CRP SAFE Native Pollinator Habitat Planting effort, agricultural land in the following counties may be eligible: Allegan, Antrim, Barry, Benzie, Berrien, Cass, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa, Van Buren, and Wexford counties.

## **Michigan Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

USDA and the State of Michigan have a partnership through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to assist Michigan farmers, ranchers and agricultural landowners in improving water quality and conserving other natural resources.

### **CREP Eligible Watersheds in Michigan**

The Michigan CREP, offered by USDA and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), expands the voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs available to Michigan agricultural producers and focuses on the Lake Macatawa, Saginaw Bay, and Western Lake Erie Basin watersheds. Enrollment for the Michigan CREP opens today.

### **CREP Contract Information**

Through the Michigan CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14-to-15-year contracts.

Practices include of permanent introduced grasses and legumes, establishment of native grasses, field windbreak establishment, filter strips, riparian buffer, wetland restoration, non-floodplain wetland restoration, and sediment retention control structure.

Eligible farmers and growers can qualify for enhanced annual rental payments, a 50 percent cost share for installing the approved conservation practices, and additional incentive payments for certain practices. In addition, MDARD will provide eligible participants with 50 percent cost-share payment for practice installation cost and offer payments to participants for the enrollment and maintenance and management of land enrolled in CRP through the Michigan CREP.

### **CREP Environmental Benefits**

Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. This will improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrients, nitrogen and other pollutants from entering streams and rivers, and enhance wildlife habitat in the project area. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

## **More Information on CRP**

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program. Additionally, fact sheets and other resources are available at [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp).

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## Pandemic Cover Crop Program Deadline Update

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is issuing a deadline update for the Pandemic Cover Crop Program (PCCP) regulation to address the issue of qualifying cover crops that are planted after the original March 15 reporting deadline, such as cover crops interplanted with sugar beets. For qualifying cover crops planted after March 15, producers now have through May 31, 2022 to report those cover crop acres.



PCCP, part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, helps farmers maintain their cover crop systems, despite the financial challenges posed by the pandemic.

Agricultural producers who have coverage under most crop insurance policies are eligible for a premium benefit from the USDA if they planted cover crops during the 2022 crop year.

To receive the benefit for this program, producers must have filed a Report of Acreage form (FSA-578) for cover crops with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) by March 15, or as stated above, by May 31 for qualifying cover crops that are planted after March 15. The cover crop fields reported on the Report of Acreage form must match what the producer reported to their insurance company for crop insurance policies. To file the form, producers must contact and make an appointment with their local USDA Service Center.

The updated Rule can be viewed in the Federal Register. More information, including the PCCP Fact Sheet and frequently asked questions, can be found at <https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Topics/Cover-Crops>.

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## RMA Strengthens Insurance Policies Including Dry Beans, Dry Peas and Wheat

USDA is making improvements to crop insurance to better enable agricultural producers to manage risk on their operations. Specifically, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is adding new options for producers of dry beans, dry peas, and small grains, such as wheat, as well as making other adjustments that make crop insurance more accessible for organic producers and veteran farm families.



### Dry Beans and Dry Peas

Beginning in 2022, the [Dry Beans and Dry Peas regulation](#) will:

- Allow enterprise and optional units by type for dry beans and dry peas, preventing a gain on one type of crop from impacting an indemnity for a loss on another type. Enterprise units by type allow a producer to insure all acres of a type in a county as one unit, as opposed to basic and optional units which may base insurance on a portion of the acreage. Enterprise units are attractive to producers due to additional premium discounts provided given risk is diversified across the county.
- Also, allow enterprise and optional units for dry beans to be insured by written agreement, which is consistent with current provisions for dry peas.
- Clarify that if no insurable fall planted acreage exists, the later spring sales closing date would apply in counties that have offers for both the fall and spring-planted types.

## Small Grains

Beginning in 2022, the [Small Grains regulation](#) will:

- Allow enterprise units by type for wheat. Similar to dry beans and dry peas, this change will prevent a gain on one type of crop from impacting an indemnity for a loss on another type.
- Allow optional units for Khorasan type wheat. Currently, optional units by type are available for all types insured, except for Khorasan.

## Other Amendments

RMA gathered feedback on the Area Risk Protection Insurance (ARPI) Regulations and Common Crop Insurance Policy (CCIP) Basic Provisions in 2020. Based on input, RMA issued a [regulation](#) to update the ARPI Regulations and CCIP Basic Provisions, beginning in 2022, that will:

- Revise the definition of “veteran farmer or rancher” to allow a married couple to be considered a veteran farmer or rancher, even if one spouse is not a veteran. (ARPI Regulations and CCIP Basic Provisions)
- Allow a producer to report acreage as certified organic, or as acreage in transition to organic, when the producer certifies that they have requested, in writing, a written certification or other written documentation from a certifying agent on or before the acreage reporting date. RMA allowed this flexibility during the pandemic, but certification is a challenge in normal years. Adding relief to the policy provides permanent flexibility. (CCIP Basic Provisions)

## Public Comments

RMA is accepting comments for 60 days each on these changes on all three rules: Dry Beans and Dry Peas, Small Grains, and ARPI Regulations and CCIP Basic Provisions. Additionally, on the Small Grains Regulation, RMA is inviting comments on whether to allow replanting payments in situations where damage occurs prior to the fall final planting date in counties where winter and spring small grains coverage is available. Comments can be made through [regulations.gov](#) or by mail.

## More Information

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at [rma.usda.gov](#).

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## It's Time to Update Your Records

FSA is "spring-cleaning" our producer record database, and we need your help!

### Please Report:

- changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address
- incorrect name or business name on file to our office
- changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase
- changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC or other legal entity

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their *Farm Operating Plan* on form CCC-902.





If you participate in both FSA programs and RMA federal crop insurance, please verify that the participation and operation records on file at your local FSA office and your crop insurance agency match each other. This extra verification step ensures that shared compliance standards are met for your operation.

To update and verify your records, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

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## Updated Eligibility and Deadline for Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has clarified the definition of a spot market sale and hog eligibility under the [Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program](#) (SMHPP), which assists producers who sold hogs through a spot market sale from April 16, 2020, through Sept. 1, 2020. Hog producers will also now be required to submit documentation to support information provided on their SMHPP application. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will accept applications through April 29, 2022, which is an extension of the April 15, 2022, deadline previously set for the program.



USDA is offering the SMHPP in response to a reduction in packer production due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in fewer negotiated hogs being procured and subsequent lower market prices. The program is part of USDA's broader [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) initiative and addresses gaps in previous assistance for hog producers.

### SMHPP Program Updates

When the pandemic disrupted normal marketing channels, including access to packers, producers sold their hogs through cash sales to local processors or butchers, direct sales to individuals and third-party intermediaries, including sale barns or brokers. The use of third-party intermediaries was the only available marketing alternative for many producers and are now included in SMHPP. The only direct to packer sales that are eligible for SMHPP are those through a negotiated sale. Hogs sold through a contract that includes a premium above the spot-market price or other formula such as the wholesale cut-out price remain ineligible. Hogs must be suitable and intended for slaughter to be eligible. Immature swine (pigs) are ineligible.

FSA will now require documentation to support the accuracy of information provided on the FSA-940 Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program application, including the number of hogs reported on the application that were sold through a spot market sale and how the price was determined for the sale.

SMHPP payments will be calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible hogs, not to exceed 10,000 head, by the payment rate of \$54 per head. To ensure SMHPP funding availability is disbursed equitably to all eligible producers, FSA will now issue payments after the application period ends. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be factored.

### Applying for Assistance

Eligible hog producers can apply for SMHPP by April 29, 2022, by completing the FSA-940, Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program application, along with required supporting documentation. Producers can visit [farmers.gov/smhpp](https://farmers.gov/smhpp) for examples of supporting documentation, information on applicant eligibility and more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. To find their local FSA office, producers should [visit farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). Hog producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

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## MAL and LDP Policy

The 2018 Farm Bill extended loan authority through 2023 for Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, wool and honey. MALs provide you with interim financing after harvest to help you meet cash flow needs without having to sell your commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar.



FSA is now accepting requests for MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest. Requests for loans and LDPs shall be made on or before the final availability date for the respective commodities.

Commodity certificates are available to loan holders who have outstanding nonrecourse loans for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, large and small chickpeas), wool, soybeans and designated minor oilseeds. These certificates can be purchased at the posted county price (or adjusted world price or national posted price) for the quantity of commodity under loan, and must be immediately exchanged for the collateral, satisfying the loan. MALs redeemed with commodity certificates are not subject to Adjusted Gross Income provisions.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, you must have form CCC-633EZ, page 1, on file at your local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested. You can find this and other USDA forms online at [forms.sc.egov.usda.gov](https://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov) or at your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Marketing loan gains (MLGs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are no longer subject to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant rules.

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## Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans require applicants to have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, see if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information on your credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.



There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score:

- Make sure to pay bills on time
  - Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt

- Keep your credit card balances low
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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## April 2022 Lending Rates

USDA announced loan interest rates for April 2022, which are effective April 1, 2022. FSA loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment and storage structures or meet cash flow needs.



### Operating, Ownership and Emergency Loans

FSA offers farm ownership and operating loans with favorable interest rates and terms to help eligible agricultural producers, whether multi-generational, long-time or new to the industry, obtain financing needed to start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. FSA also offers emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters or quarantine. For many loan options, FSA sets aside funding for historically underserved producers, including veterans, beginning, women, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic farmers and ranchers

Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for April 2022 are as follows:

- [Farm Operating Loans](#) (Direct): 2.750%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct): 3.250 %
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct, Joint Financing): 2.500%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Down Payment): 1.500%
- [Emergency Loan](#) (Amount of Actual Loss): 3.750%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. You can find out which USDA loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) (also available in Spanish).

### Commodity and Storage Facility Loans

Additionally, FSA provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade on-farm storage facilities and purchase handling equipment and loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low. Funds for these loans are provided through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and are administered by FSA.

- [Commodity Loans](#) (less than one year disbursed): 2.125%
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#):
  - Three-year loan terms: 1.875%
  - Five-year loan terms: 1.875%
  - Seven-year loan terms: 2.000%
  - Ten-year loan terms: 2.000%
  - Twelve-year loan terms: 2.125%



- [Sugar Storage Facility Loans](#) (15 years): 2.250%

### More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov) or by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).

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