

September 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Oklahoma FSA Newsletter

Oklahoma Farm Service Agency **Message from the SED**

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State Executive Director

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Hours: Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

State Committee Members:
Sarah Dorsey, Bixby

Early Fall is shaping up to be full of activity in our county offices. The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) signup ended on September 11, but there are still several active program and loan opportunities in Oklahoma. Check with your county office for your eligibility in the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) program. WHIP+ is open to agricultural producers who suffered eligible losses because of drought or excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Signup for these causes of loss opened March 23, and producers who suffered losses from drought (in counties designated D3 or above), excess moisture, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires can still apply for assistance through WHIP+.

To be eligible for WHIP+, producers must have suffered losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential

Karen Eifert Jones, Waukomis
Don Allen Parsons, Idabel
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Please contact your local FSA
Office for questions specific to
your operation or county. FSA
Office contact information can
be located on our [online
Directory](#)

Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary county may be eligible if a producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event.

In addition, Emergency loans and the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) are active in many areas of the state. Again, please consult with your county office staff for availability.

Have a blessed and prosperous Fall.

-Scott Biggs, Oklahoma State Executive Director

Learn about USDA's Disaster Assistance Programs

When disaster strikes, USDA is here to help. From hurricanes to wildfire, and from flooding to drought, USDA offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers and livestock producers recover.

To better assist producers, USDA has published a new brochure, [Disaster Assistance Programs At A Glance](#). The brochure is a quick reference guide to available Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Risk Management Agency disaster assistance programs.

The brochure gives a short description of each program and lets you quickly identify which program(s) are available for each natural disaster event.

Also, on [farmers.gov](#), you can learn about USDA disaster assistance programs that might be right for you. With the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), you answer five questions about the natural disasters that have impacted your operation to find out which USDA programs offer assistance.

The Disaster Assistance Programs At A Glance brochure can be [downloaded here](#) and is located on farmers.gov/recover. To learn how to apply for disaster programs, contact your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

AskFSA to Transition to Ask USDA on September 21

AskFSA, the tool for FSA customers to ask questions about FSA programs and services, will transition to Ask USDA on September 21. This is part of USDA's ongoing effort to improve and streamline customer service.

Ask USDA, available at <https://ask.usda.gov> is similar to AskFSA, but provides information for all USDA programs. Moving to Ask USDA will allow all USDA customers to search for and read answers about FSA programs and services in the same location as they read about other USDA programs and services.

Customers will still be able to submit questions if they need more information. In addition to email, Ask USDA offers the ability to ask questions through phone or online chat. This improved customer service approach further builds on Secretary Sonny Perdue's OneUSDA vision and provides the customer a one-stop shopping experience that covers all of USDA's many programs.

USDA Reminds Farmers of Sept. 30 Deadline to Update Safety-Net Program Crop Yields

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farm owners that they have a one-time opportunity to update Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program yields for covered commodities on the farm. The deadline is September 30, 2020, to update yields, which are used to calculate the PLC payments for 2020 through 2023. Additionally, producers who elected Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) should also consider updating their yields.

Updating yields requires the signature of one owner on a farm and not all owners. If a yield update is not made, no action is required to maintain the existing base crop yield on file with FSA.

For program payments, updated yields will apply beginning with the 2020 crop year which, should payments trigger, will be paid out in October of 2021.

Determining Yield Updates

The updated yield will be equal to 90% of the average yield per planted acre in crop years 2013-2017. That excludes any year where the applicable covered commodity was not planted and is subject to the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for the covered commodity.

The chart below provides the ratio obtained by this calculation.

Covered Commodity National Yield Factor

Barley	0.9437
Canola	0.9643

Chickpeas, Large	1.0000
Chickpeas, Small	0.9760
Corn	0.9000
Crambe	1.0000
Flaxseed	1.0000
Grain Sorghum	0.9077
Lentils	1.0000
Mustard Seed	0.9460
Oats	0.9524
Peanuts	0.9273
Peas, Dry	0.9988
Rapeseed	1.0000
Rice, Long	0.9330
Rice, Medium	0.9887
Rice, Temp Japonica	0.9591
Safflower	1.0000
Seed Cotton	0.9000
Sesame Seed	0.9673
Soybeans	0.9000
Sunflower Seed	0.9396
Wheat	0.9545

If the reported yield in any year is less than 75 percent of the 2013-2017 average county yield, the yield will be substituted with 75 percent of the county average yield.

More information

PLC yields may be updated on a covered commodity-by-covered commodity basis by submitting FSA form CCC-867 to include a farm owner's signature.

For more information, reference resources, and decision tools, visit farmers.gov/arc-plc. Contact your local FSA county office for assistance at farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Farm Service Agency Inventory Property for Sale to Beginning Farmers or Socially Underserved Applicants

The Farm Service Agency has a number of properties priced to sell and up for auction. The property descriptions are as follows.

- 157.65 acres located three miles northeast of Asher, Oklahoma in Pottawatomie County. This property has 48.65 acres of woodland, 109 acres of pasture, and three older barns. **Priced to sell at \$268,000**
- 40 acres in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma will be auctioned off by the FSA on September 22, 2020 at 10: a.m. This property has a 2400 sq. foot home with 4 bedrooms and 2.5 baths. There will be an open house on September 18, 1:00-4:00 p.m. at 6401 Lovers Lane, Henryetta, Ok. **Property will be auctioned off to the highest bidder at the property location, 6401 Lovers Lane, Henryetta, Oklahoma.**
- The FSA will auction five tracts southeast of Spiro, Oklahoma in LeFlore County. This auction will be held at the LeFlore County Fairgrounds, intersection of CR E 1340 Rd and CR N 4760 Rd, south of Poteau, Ok. **Property will be auctioned off to the highest bidder.**
 - Tract 1- Lot 3 (NW4SW4) & NE4SW4 30-9N-26E (80 ac) + barns
 - Tract 2- Lot 2 (NW4NE4) & SW4NE4 6-8N -26E (65 acres, 46 are in a flood zone)
 - Tract 3- W2SE4& E2E2NW4 & W2NE432-9N-26E + barn (195 acres, 144 are in a flood zone, 105 acres wooded, 90 acres pasture)
 - Tract 4- S2SE4 21-9N-26E (20 acres wooded, 60 acres pasture, all in a flood zone)
 - Tract 5- 60 acres in 28-9N-26E (15 acres wooded, 45 acres pasture, all in a flood zone)

Applications will be accepted from operations of not larger than a family size farm which meet the Farm Service Agency eligibility requirements for a beginning farmer or rancher or for a socially underserved applicant.

A complete application must be received in the Pontotoc County FSA by September 25, 2020. This property is being sold subject to the redemption rights according to Oklahoma State Statutes- the Government reserves the right to cancel the sale at any time and to reject any or all bids.

A beginning farmer or rancher or socially underserved applicant will be given priority consideration for the purchase of this property. Qualified beginning farmers, ranchers, or socially underserved applicants must need FSA credit assistance.

Auction sales will be by cash only. The successful bidder must furnish a 10% deposit the day of the sale with the remaining balance due at closing within 30 days.

Due to COVID-19, social distancing will be required, and the use of a face mask is highly recommended.

USDA Launches New Farmers.gov Features to Help Farmers Hire Workers

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced new features on the farmers.gov website designed to help facilitate the employment of H-2A workers.

USDA's goal is to help farmers navigate the complex H-2A program that is administered by Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, and the State Department so hiring a farm worker is an easier process.

The primary new H-2A features on Farmers.gov include:

- A real-time dashboard that enables farmers to track the status of their eligible employer application and visa applications for temporary nonimmigrant workers;
- Streamlining the login information so if a farmer has an existing login.gov account they can save multiple applications tracking numbers for quick look-up at any time;
- Enables easy access to the Department of Labor's (DOL) Foreign Labor Application Gateway (FLAG);
- Allows farmers to track time-sensitive actions taken in the course of Office of Foreign Labor Certification's (OFLC) adjudication of temporary labor certification applications;
- Allowing for farmers to access all application forms on-line.

All information can be found at www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a.

In 2018, [Secretary Perdue unveiled farmers.gov](#), a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where customers can apply for programs, process transactions and manage accounts. With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America's agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs for Organic Certification

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that organic producers and handlers can apply for federal funds to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP). Applications for eligible certification expenses paid between Oct. 1, 2019, and Sept. 30, 2020, are due Oct. 31, 2020.

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Eligible expenses for cost-share reimbursement include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Changes in Reimbursement

Due to expected participation levels for fiscal year 2020, FSA revised the reimbursement amount through fiscal year 2023. Certified producers and handlers are now eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 50 percent of the certified organic operation's eligible expenses, up to a maximum of \$500 per scope.

This change is due to the limited amount of funding available and will allow a larger number of certified organic operations to receive assistance. If additional funding is authorized later, FSA may provide additional assistance to certified operations that have applied for OCCSP, not to exceed 75 percent of their eligible costs, up to \$750 per scope.

The changes to the payment calculation and maximum payment amount are applicable to all certified organic operations, regardless of whether they apply through an FSA county office or a participating state agency. State agencies that are interested in overseeing reimbursements to producers and handlers in their states must establish new agreements with FSA for fiscal 2020.

Opportunities for State Agencies

Today's announcement also includes the opportunity for state agencies to apply for grant agreements to administer the OCCSP program in fiscal 2020. State agencies that establish agreements for fiscal 2020 may be able to extend their agreements and receive additional funds to administer the program in future years.

FSA has not yet determined whether an additional application period will be announced for later years for state agencies that choose not to participate in fiscal 2020. States that would like to administer OCCSP for future years are encouraged to establish an agreement for 2020 to ensure that they will be able to continue to participate.

FSA will accept applications from state agencies for fiscal year 2020 funding for cost-share assistance from Aug. 10, 2020 through Sept. 9, 2020.

State Agencies must submit the Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form 424 and 424B) electronically via Grants.gov, the Federal grants website, at <http://www.grants.gov>.

More Information

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit the [OCCSP webpage](#), view the [notice of funds availability on the Federal Register](#), or contact the [FSA county office](#) at your local USDA Service Center.

To learn more about USDA support for organic agriculture, visit usda.gov/organic.

Borrower Training for Farm Loan Customers

Borrower training is available for all Farm Service Agency (FSA) customers. This training is required for all direct loan applicants, unless the applicant has a waiver issued by the agency.

Borrower training includes instruction in production and financial management. The purpose is to help the applicants develop and improve skills that are necessary to successfully operate a farm and build equity in the operation. It aims to help the producer become financially successful. Borrower training is provided, for a fee, by agency approved vendors. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager for a list of approved vendors.

Applying for FSA Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain, or strengthen their farm or ranch. Direct loans are processed, approved and serviced by FSA loan officers.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for direct farm ownership loans is \$600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is \$400,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).



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