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USDA Reminds Farmers and Ranchers of Nov. 1 Deadline to Submit Your RTCP Receipts

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) signup ended on September 3, 2021. This program covered transportation expenses incurred from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. If you applied for the RTCP program and have not turned all your receipts into the FSA office, now is the time to do so. Applicants will have until COB on Nov. 1, 2021, to provide supporting documentation. If you have any questions, contact your local FSA office.

For more information on RTCP, farmers and ranchers in the eligible areas can visit their FSA county office or the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA Expands Farmers.gov to Include Farm Records

Producers with farmers.gov accounts can now access farm records and maps online, the latest self-service feature added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website.

You can quickly and easily access your land information in real time by desktop computer, tablet or phone. Capabilities include:

- View, print and export detailed farm records such as cropland, base acres, yields, CRP acres, land ownership details, and much more;
- View, print and export farm/tract maps that can be provided to lenders, chemical or fertilizer providers, and FSA for reporting acreage and crop insurance agents; and
- Export common land unit (field) boundaries as ESRI shapefiles.

The ability to access these records on demand without a visit to the service center saves you time and money.

[Farmers.gov](#) now includes the most popular functionalities from FSAFarm+, the FSA portal for producers, while providing enhanced functionality and an improved user experience. A new enhancement expands the scope of accessibility to include farmers and ranchers who are members of an entity, as well as people with a power of attorney form (FSA-211) on file with FSA.

Managing USDA Business Online

Using farmers.gov, producers, entities and those acting on their behalf can also:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign conservation documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices, plans and contracts.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View farm loan and interest information (producers only).

Future plans include adding the ability to import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture planting boundaries.

To access your information, you'll will need a [USDA eAuth account](#) to login to farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit [farmers.gov](#) and sign into the site's authenticated portal via the [Sign In/Sign Up link](#) at the top right of the

website. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.

In addition to the self-service features available by logging into farmers.gov, the website also has ample information on USDA programs, including pandemic assistance, farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs and crop insurance. Recently, USDA updated the navigation and organization of the site as well as added some new webpages, including "[Get Involved](#)," "[Common Forms](#)," and "[Translations](#)." [Learn more about these changes](#).

USDA to Provide Relief to Small Producers, Processors, Distributors, Farmers Markets Impacted by COVID-19

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Agricultural Marketing Service](#) (AMS) announced it will soon publish Requests for Applications (RFAs) for the Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grants program to support agricultural stakeholders who haven't yet received substantial federal financial assistance in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. This grant program will provide assistance to small businesses in certain commodity areas, including small scale specialty crop producers, food processors, manufacturers, distributors and farmers markets.

A [grant forecast](#) is now available to help potential applicants determine their eligibility and to prepare to apply for funding. Eligible entities should visit the PRS grant portal at [usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov](#) for complete information on the program, including how to obtain a free of charge DUNS Number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) **BEFORE** applying for this program. On September 23, USDA will issue another announcement indicating that entities may submit their applications through the grant portal; entities will need their DUNS number to submit an application.

Visit [usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov](#) or the [AMS website](#) to learn more.

USDA Accepts 2.8 Million Acres for the Conservation Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has accepted 2.8 million acres in offers from agricultural producers and private landowners for enrollment into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 2021. This year, almost 1.9 million acres in offers have been accepted through the General CRP Signup, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has accepted over 897,000 acres for enrollment through the Continuous Signup. The Continuous Signup remains open and CRP Grasslands Signup closed last week, so USDA expects to enroll more acres into all of CRP than the 3 million acres that are expiring.

The 4-million-acre shortfall in CRP would have had the following impacts:

- More than 359,000 acres less annual forage under CRP Grasslands;
- A loss of 1,500,000 acres of quality wildlife and pollinator less habitat for wildlife;
- 20% fewer apiaries in major production regions meeting critical forage thresholds;
- A loss of more than 4 million upland game and other grassland birds;
- About 90 million pounds of nitrogen entering waterways;
- Over 30 million tons of soil eroded, leading to increased pollution and sedimentation in streams and rivers; and
- Foregone sequestration of more than 3 million metric tons of CO₂.

Like other USDA conservation programs, CRP is a voluntary program that has a variety of options that can be tailored to the specific conservation issues of a state or region and desires of the landowner. The options run the gamut from working lands such as CRP Grasslands to partnerships with states and private entities to target a specific joint concern such as water quality or quantity.

Continuous CRP Signup

Continuous CRP allows USDA to target the most sensitive land like highly erodible land, the most environmentally beneficial land like wetlands and buffers along streams and rivers, or locally identified critical habitat like State Acres For Wildlife. This targeted approach also reduces the whole-farm type enrollment in CRP that was more common when it first began and helps meet the conservation goals while maintaining the majority of the land in production agriculture. FSA has accepted offers from over 37,000 producers to enroll more than 897,000 acres through the Continuous Signup. This is double the enrollment from last year and three times the enrollment from 2018 and 2019. FSA expects this process to be completed by the end of September so contracts may start on October 1, 2021.

The growth in the targeted enrollment through Continuous Signup is due to a recommitment of USDA to incentives and partnerships that brought in nearly 1.4 million acres in 2016 and 2017. These efforts have also included the expansion of the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rives Initiative 30-year (CLEAR30) from two regions to nationwide as well as moving State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) practices from the General to the Continuous signup. This year, offers for 20,000 acres have been submitted for CLEAR30 and 296,000 acres in SAFE practices.

General CRP Signup

FSA opened the General CRP Signup 56 in January 2021 and extended the original deadline to July 23, 2021, to enable producers to consider FSA's new improvements to the program, which included higher rental payments and more incentivized environmental practices.

Additionally, FSA introduced a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This incentive provides a 3%, 5% or 10% incentive payment based on the predominate vegetation type for the practices enrolled – from grasses to trees to wetland restoration.

Through CRP, producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. In addition to the other well-documented benefits, lands enrolled in CRP is playing a key role in mitigating impacts from climate change.

A full list of changes to CRP, including those to the Continuous and General Signups, can be found in our “What’s New with CRP” [fact sheet](#).

More Information

In April, [USDA announced several changes](#) to CRP to increase participation while improving climate-related and other environmental benefits. CRP sequesters carbon while preserving topsoil, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, reducing nitrogen runoff, and providing healthy habitat for wildlife.

The 2018 Farm Bill established a nationwide acreage limit for CRP, with the total number of acres that may be enrolled capped at 25 million acres in 2021 and growing to 27 million by 2023.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our nation’s lands, biodiversity, and natural resources, including our soil, air, and water. Through conservation practices, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers, and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including state, local, and tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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 USDA 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, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021, are due Nov. 1, 2021.

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. Producers can be reimbursed for expenses including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

For 2021, OCCSP will reimburse 50 percent of a certified operation's allowable certification costs, up to a maximum of \$500 for each of the following categories or "scopes:"

- crops
- wild crops

- livestock
- processing/handling
- State organic program fees.

Organic farmers and ranchers may apply through an FSA county office or a participating state agency.

More Information

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit the [OCCSP webpage](#) visit usda.gov/organic, or contact your [local USDA Service Center](#)

USDA Extends Deadline to Apply for Pandemic Assistance to Livestock Producers with Animal Losses

Farm Service Agency Reminds Producers of Upcoming Pandemic Program Deadlines

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing additional time for livestock and poultry producers to apply for the [Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (PLIP). Producers who suffered losses during the pandemic due to insufficient access to processing may now apply for assistance for those losses and the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animals through Oct. 12, 2021, rather than the original deadline of Sept. 17, 2021. PLIP is part of USDA's [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) initiative.

PLIP provides payments to producers for losses of livestock or poultry depopulated from March 1, 2020 through Dec. 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. Payments are based on 80% of the fair market value of the livestock and poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animal. Eligible livestock and poultry include swine, chickens and turkeys.

PLIP Program Details

PLIP payments are calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible livestock or poultry by the payment rate per head, and then subtracting the amount of any payments the eligible livestock or poultry owner has received for disposal of the livestock or poultry under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or a state program. The payments will also be reduced by any Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 1 and 2) payments paid on the same inventory of swine that were depopulated.

Eligible livestock and poultry producers can apply for PLIP through the Oct. 12, 2021 deadline by completing the FSA-620, Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program application, and submitting it to any Farm Service Agency county office. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/plip more information on how to apply.

Additional Pandemic Assistance

Other programs within the Pandemic Assistance for Producer initiative with upcoming deadlines include:

- Oct. 12 - [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2](#), which provides critical support to agricultural producers impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions.
- Oct. 15 – [Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers](#), which provides financial relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that experienced losses in 2020 due to COVID-19.

To learn more about USDA's commitment to delivery of financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers and businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions, visit farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance.

USDA Announces Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to \$200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

Program Details

To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business where 50% or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant's gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80%. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or \$2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.

The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is \$125,000.

Applying for Assistance

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH beginning on July 22 by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying their gross revenue for 2019 and 2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/pathh for 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 a local FSA office, loggers and truckers can visit farmers.gov/service-locator. They can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) can help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000. Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is \$600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about farm loans, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings and/or events should contact the Northern County FSA Service Center, at (907) 895-4242, ext. 150, Southern County FSA Service Center, at (907) 761-7754 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

Alaska State Farm Service Agency

800 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy., Suite 216
Palmer, AK 99645

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Northern County FSA Service Center

PO Box 585

Delta Junction, AK 99737

Phone: 907-895-4242 ext. 150

Fax: 855-711-9095

Hours:

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

www.fsa.usda.gov/ak

Southern County FSA Service Center

800 E Palmer-Wasilla Hwy. Ste 216

Palmer, AK 99645

Phone: 907-761-7754

Fax: 907-761-7789

County Committee Meetings

Northern Co TBA

Southern Co November 9, 10 a.m.

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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