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Reporting Organic Crops

If you want to use the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) organic price and selected the "organic" option on your NAP application, you must report your crops as organic.

When certifying organic acres, the buffer zone acreage must be included in the organic acreage.

You must also provide a current organic plan, organic certificate or documentation from a certifying agent indicating an organic plan is in effect. Documentation must include:

- name of certified individuals
- address
- telephone number
- effective date of certification
- certificate number
- list of commodities certified
- name and address of certifying agent
- a map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, including the
- buffer zone acreage

Certification exemptions are available for producers whose annual gross agricultural income from organic sales totals \$5,000 or less. Although exempt growers are not required to provide

a written certificate, they are still required to provide a map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, transitional and buffer zone acreage.

For questions about reporting organic crops, contact your [local County USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Announces New Initiative to Quantify Climate Benefits of Conservation Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced an initiative to quantify the climate benefits of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. This multi-year effort will enable USDA to better target CRP toward climate outcomes and improve existing models and conservation planning tools while supporting USDA's goal of putting American agriculture and forestry at the center of climate-smart solutions to address climate change.

CRP Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation Projects

FSA has historically worked with partners to identify [Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation \(MAE\)](#) projects to quantify CRP environmental benefits to water quality and quantity, wildlife and rural economies. The agency will now invest \$10 million through this program to measure and monitor the soil carbon sequestration and other climate and environmental benefits of conservation practices over the life of CRP contracts.

This effort will allow USDA to better target climate outcomes through CRP while gaining critical data to calibrate, validate and further improve quantification methods within existing models and tools. One model of focus is the Daily Century Model, or DayCent, which simulates the movement of carbon and nitrogen through agricultural systems and informs the [National Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#). Data will also be used to strengthen the [COMET-Farm](#) and [COMET-Planner](#) tools, which enable producers to evaluate potential carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emission reductions based on specific management scenarios.

Request for Proposals

USDA is seeking proposals for projects to survey, sample and measure the climate benefits of land enrolled in the following CRP practice types over time:

1. Predominately Perennial grass with legumes and shrubs, depending on the practice
2. Tree
3. Wetland, including both mineral and organic soils and both floodplain and non-floodplain wetlands

A project can cover one or more of the above practice types and should be for a three- to five-year term, with the potential for renewal. Projects should be a minimum of \$1 million and not exceed \$9 million.

Applications are welcome from all types of organizations, including public, private and nonprofit institutions. Project proposals can be from a single entity or from a group of partners who coordinate efforts. Applications from or in partnership with Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU), Tribal Colleges & Universities (TCU) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) or organizations will be considered as part of the selection process.

The deadline for proposals is July 2, 2021. Visit the [request for proposals](#) for more information on requirements, project deliverables, evaluation criteria and how to submit your proposal. Visit [FSA's Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation page](#) for additional information on CRP MAEs.

Conservation Reserve Program

CRP is one of the world's largest voluntary conservation programs with an established track record of preserving topsoil, sequestering carbon, reducing nitrogen runoff and providing healthy habitat for wildlife.

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, agricultural producers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Land is enrolled in CRP for 10 to 15 years, with the option of re-enrollment. [FSA offers multiple CRP signups](#), including the general signup and continuous signup – both currently open – as well as CRP Grasslands and pilot programs focused on soil health and clean water.

In April, [USDA announced updates to CRP](#) including higher payment rates, new incentives for environmental practices and a more targeted focus on the program's role in climate change mitigation. This included a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive for CRP general and continuous signups that aims to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate-Smart CRP practices include establishment of trees and permanent grasses, development of wildlife habitat and wetland restoration. [Download our "What's New" fact sheet](#) to learn more about program updates.

USDA Expands Aquaculture Disaster Assistance in Connecticut to Include Fish Raised for Food

In response to catastrophic aquaculture losses due to major winter storms that hit states along the U.S. Gulf Coast including Connecticut in February, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced a policy change that makes food fish and other aquatic species eligible for the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#). Previously, only farm-raised game and bait fish were eligible for death loss ELAP benefits. Beginning June 1, eligible aquaculture producers can request ELAP assistance for 2021 losses. This policy change is for the 2021 and subsequent program years.

ELAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary.

To be eligible, losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2021. For farm-raised fish and other aquatic species death losses only that occurred prior to June 1, 2021, FSA is waiving the requirement to file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. An aquaculture producer will still need to be able to provide contemporaneous records upon request to document the eligible loss event and demonstrate the beginning and ending inventory. The deadline to file an application for payment for the 2021 program year is Jan. 31, 2022.

Producers must provide acreage reports for the surface acres of water where their aquatic species are raised. Acreage reports for 2021 must be filed by Sept. 30, 2022.

More Information

USDA offers a comprehensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs. On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine all program or loan options available for disaster recovery assistance. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre-authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful if you use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines. Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a "filter" on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three

payment rejections within a three-month period, the preauthorized debit agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

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

FSA Offers Loan Servicing Options

There are options for Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about your options.

Report Banking Changes to FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to receive timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for any reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2019 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2020. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

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