

March 12, 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [Monday, March 16 Is the Last Day to Schedule an Appointment with Your FSA Office For Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Enrollment](#)
- [USDA's Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup Begins March 16](#)
- [Florida Citrus Recovery Block Grant Program Deadline is March 27, 2020](#)
- [Citrus Tree and Fruit Growers Need to Make Insurance Decisions Soon](#)
- [USDA Announces Updates for Honeybee Producers](#)
- [Mediation is a Free Option to Help Resolve Farm-Related Disputes](#)
- [Loan Servicing](#)
- [Farm Loan Graduation Reminder](#)
- [USDA Offers New Hurricane Insurance Endorsement for Crop Year 2020](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

Florida FSA Newsletter

Florida Farm Service Agency

4500 NW 27th Avenue
Bldg D-1
Gainesville, FL 32606

Phone: 352-379-4500

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/fl>

State Committee:

Michelle Williamson (Chair)
Mike Adams
Jimmy LeFils
Mack Glass
Mark Sadders

State Executive Director:

Sherry McCorkle

Monday, March 16 Is the Last Day to Schedule an Appointment with Your FSA Office For Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Enrollment

Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their 2019 crop year elections for and enrollment in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must schedule an appointment to do so with their local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) by Monday, March 16.

To date, more than 1.4 million contracts have been signed for the 2019 crop year. This represents 89 percent of expected enrollment with less than a week left for producers to get on FSA's appointment books.

Producers who do not contact FSA for an appointment by close of business local time on Monday, March 16 will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2019 crop year and will be ineligible to receive a payment should one trigger for an eligible crop.

Division Chiefs:

ARC and PLC provide income support to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

Administrative Officer

Mark Cotrell

Farm Program

Tom Hockett

Farm Loans

Christy Marshall

The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

More Information

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our [program fact sheet](#) or our [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#). Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find location and contact information for the nearest FSA county office.

USDA's Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup Begins March 16

Farmers and ranchers may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands signup beginning March 16. The signup runs through May 15.

Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds.

Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is either 10 or 15 years. FSA will rank applications using a number of factors including existence of expiring CRP land, threat of conversion or development, existing grassland, and predominance of native species cover, and cost.

The 2018 Farm Bill set aside 2 million acres for CRP Grassland enrollment. CRP is one of the largest conservation programs at USDA. CRP marks its 35-year anniversary in 2020 with 22 million acres currently enrolled.

For more information or to enroll in CRP Grasslands, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Florida Citrus Recovery Block Grant Program Deadline is March 27, 2020

The last day for Florida citrus grove owners and operators to sign up for the Citrus Recovery Block Grant Program (CRBG) is March 27, 2020.

Citrus Tree and Fruit Growers Need to Make Insurance Decisions Soon

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Florida citrus tree and fruit growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage for the 2021 crop year is April 15. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the April 15 sales closing date to do so.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy. Coverage is available for avocado trees and mango trees in Miami-Dade County; carambola trees in Lee and Miami-Dade counties; lemon trees in Collier, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Indian River, Martin, Polk, and St. Lucie counties; lime trees in Lee and Miami-Dade counties; and grapefruit trees, orange trees, and all other citrus trees (murcott, tangelo, and tangerine) in select Florida counties.

Coverage is also available for grapefruit, mandarins, oranges, tangelos, tangerines, and tangors in select Florida counties; lemons in Collier, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Indian River, Martin, Polk, and St. Lucie counties; and limes in Lee and Miami-Dade counties. Please contact your insurance agent to see if your county is covered.

Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2021 crop year. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available online using the RMA Agent Locator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

USDA Announces Updates for Honeybee Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced updates to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). These updates include changes required by the 2018 Farm Bill as well as discretionary changes intended to improve the administration of the program and clarify existing program requirements. ELAP was previously administered based on FSA's fiscal year but will now run according to the calendar year. Producers are still required to submit an application for payment within 30 calendar days of the end of the program year. This is not a policy change but will affect the deadline. The signup deadline for calendar year 2020 losses is January 30, 2021.

Starting in 2020, producers will have 15 days from when the loss is first apparent, instead of 30 days, to file a honeybee notice of loss. This change provides consistency between ELAP and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which also has a 15-day notice of loss period for honey. For other covered losses, including livestock feed, grazing and farm-raised fish losses, the notice of loss deadline for ELAP will remain 30 days from when the loss is first apparent to the producer.

Program participants who were paid for the loss of a honeybee colony or hive in either or both of the previous two years will be required to provide additional documentation to substantiate how current year inventory was acquired.

If the honeybee colony loss incurred was because of Colony Collapse Disorder, program participants must provide a producer certification that the loss was a direct result of at least three of the five symptoms of Colony Collapse Disorder, which include:

- the loss of live queen and/or drone bee populations inside the hives;
- rapid decline of adult worker bee population outside the hives, leaving brood poorly or completely unattended;
- absence of dead adult bees inside the hive and outside the entrance of the hive;
- absence of robbing collapsed colonies; and
- at the time of collapse, varroa mite and Nosema populations are not at levels known to cause economic injury or population decline.

For honeybees, ELAP covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses (the physical structure) and honeybee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.

ELAP also provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock and farm-raised fish including for feed and grazing losses. It covers losses because of eligible adverse weather or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires on federally managed lands. ELAP also covers losses resulting from the cost of transporting water to livestock due to an eligible drought.

For more information on ELAP visit farmers.gov/recover or contact your FSA County Office. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Mediation is a Free Option to Help Resolve Farm-Related Disputes

Florida farmers can now mediate a wide range of disputes at no cost through the Florida Agricultural Mediation Program (FAMP). Mediation is designed to resolve disputes quickly and confidentially while saving the parties' time, money, and stress by avoiding hearings or litigation. The 2018 Farm Bill enables the FAMP to mediate agricultural issues involving leases, farm transitions/successions, organic certification, neighbor complaints, and more. To request free mediation or for more information, please call (800) 616-7863 or go online at www.agmediation.org. All calls are confidential.

Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency 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 the options available to you.

Farm Loan Graduation Reminder

FSA Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

FSA periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower's ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower's financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer's operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower's potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower's name, loan type, balance sheet and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower's loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders that are interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA farm loan office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, FSA's intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

USDA Offers New Hurricane Insurance Endorsement for Crop Year 2020

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) today announced a new crop insurance endorsement, Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index (HIP-WI). HIP-WI covers a portion of the deductible of the underlying crop insurance policy when a county, or county adjacent, is within the area of sustained hurricane-force winds. The coverage provided by HIP-WI can be combined with the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and the Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX) when acreage is also insured by a companion policy.

HIP-WI provides coverage for 70 different crops and is available in counties in the vicinity of the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic, as well as Hawaii. The deadline to purchase HIP-WI coverage for the 2020 crop year is April 30, 2020.

An administrative fee and premium for the crop covered by each HIP-WI Endorsement will be due in addition to any administrative fee and/or premium for the underlying policy. However, the HIP-WI administrative fee may be waived if the producer qualifies as a limited resource farmer, a Beginning Farmer Rancher (BFR) or a Veteran Farmer Rancher (VFR).

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available on the RMA website by using the [RMA Agent Locator](#).

Dates to Remember

March 16 - Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year

March 16 - Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands sign-up begins

March 27 - Florida Citrus Recovery Block Grant Program Deadline

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).