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USDA will continue to accept offers as it takes this opportunity for the incoming Administration to evaluate ways to increase enrollment. Under the previous Administration, incentives and rental payment rates were reduced resulting in an enrollment shortfall of over 4 million acres. The program, administered by USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides annual rental payments for 10 to 15 years for land devoted to conservation purposes, as well as other types of payments. Before the General CRP Signup period ends, producers will have the opportunity to adjust or resubmit their offers to take advantage of planned improvements to the program.    This signup for CRP gives producers an opportunity to enroll land for the first time or re-enroll land under existing contracts that will be expiring Sept. 30, 2021. All interested producers, including those on Indian reservations and with trust lands, are encouraged to contact their local [USDA Service Center](https://www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator) for more information. |   **Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation**  Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmgers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.  USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.  USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.  **How the Tool Works**  Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.  Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.  Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](https://www.farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.  **About Farmers.gov**  In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.  The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.  USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](https://www.farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.  For more information, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit [farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov/).    **Know your Final Planting Dates**   |  | | --- | | All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on the final planting date for specific crops. The final planting dates vary by crop, planting period and county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific planting deadlines. The timely planting of a crop, by the final planting date, may prevent loss of program benefits. |   **Communication is Key in Lending**   |  | | --- | | Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be successful. FSA staff will provide guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower’s graduation to commercial credit. While it is FSA’s commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower’s responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:   * Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation * Any significant changes to family income or expenses * The development of problem situations * Any losses or proposed significant changes in security   If a farm loan borrower can’t make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.  For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your  County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/). |   **Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction**  The USDA Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/farm-ownership-loans/index) are a resource to 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](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index) option for smaller financial needs up to $50,000.  Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities, and to make improvements essential to an operation.  Applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.  Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. If applying for a direct loan to finance a construction project, the applicant must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.  A surety bond is required when a contract exceeds $100,000. An authorized agency official determines that a surety bond appears advisable to protect the borrower against default of the contractor or a contract provides for partial payments in excess of the amount of 60 percent of the value of the work in place.  Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant’s farming operation or work schedule.  Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.  For more eligibility requirements and information about FSA Loan programs, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/).    **USDA Encourages Completion of Cash Rents and Leases Survey**   |  | | --- | | You may have received a *Cash Rents and Leases* survey from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). This survey provides the basis for estimates of the current year’s cash rents paid for irrigated cropland, non-irrigated cropland, and permanent pasture. Please complete your Cash Rents and Leases survey by June 21. This survey can be completed and returned by mail, over the phone, or at agcounts.usda.gov.  Information from this survey is used in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as an alternative soil rental rate prior to finalizing new rates each year. Survey responses from as many localities as possible help calculate more accurate rental rates. Completion of the survey ensures cash rental rates accurately represent your locality. Survey results will also give you a useful tool in negotiating your rental agreements, and financial planning for your agricultural operation.  In accordance with federal law, survey responses are kept confidential. Survey results will be available in aggregate form only to ensure that no individual producer or operation can be identified. NASS will publish the survey results on August 27 at [quickstats.nass.usda.gov/.](https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/)  If you have any questions about this survey, please call 888-424-7828, or visit: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide\_to\_NASS\_Surveys/Cash\_Rents\_by\_County/index.php.](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Cash_Rents_by_County/index.php) | | |  | | **Maine / FSA State Office**  967 Illinois Ave Bangor, ME  04401  Phone: 207-990-9140 Fax: 855-589-1056   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Name Block One**  FNAME LNAME ###-###-#### fname.lname@usda.gov | **Name Block Three**  FNAME LNAME ###-###-#### fname.lname@usda.gov | | **Name Block Two**  FNAME LNAME ###-###-#### fname.lname@usda.gov | **Name Block Three**  FNAME LNAME ###-###-#### fname.lname@usda.gov | | **Content Block One** | **Content Block Three** | | **Content Block Two** | **Content Block Four** | | | | |

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