



Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

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Visit our website at

www.fsa.usda.gov/nj

Deadlines Visit our state website and click on [Program Deadlines](#) or download the latest version of our program calendar [here](#).

USDA Reminds New Jersey Farmers of the July 15 Acreage Reporting Deadline

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in New Jersey are currently open to phone and virtual appointments only but can still work with producers on timely filing crop acreage reports. FSA staff can provide assistance over the phone, by email and through virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in New Jersey:

- **July 15** - Corn, Soybeans, Spring Feed Grains, Forage, CRP, & Most Other Crops
- **August 15** - Processing beans and Hemp

Acreage reporting deadlines for 2020 value loss crops, small grains, honey, apples, blueberries, cranberries, peaches, grapes, and strawberries have already passed. Late acreage reports can be filed for up to one year after the prior year's reporting deadline provided the crop residue is still in the field or in some cases if there is proof of the crop's existence (i.e. seed receipts) and disposition (i.e. sales receipts). Visit our state website and click on [Program Deadlines](#) to see a complete list of acreage reporting deadlines as well as other program deadlines.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline. FSA staff are able to assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps.

FSA county offices in New Jersey will be happy to provide maps to producers through mail, email or local pick-up with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete, producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet as directed by their local office.

FSA offices are using Microsoft Teams software to virtually meet with producers to review maps and documents for certification. Producers who want to schedule a virtual appointment can download the Microsoft Teams app on their smart phones and call the FSA office for an appointment. You can also use Microsoft Teams from your personal computer without downloading software.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and provide producers the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office by the reporting deadline above.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions, please contact your local FSA office. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone, and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Farmers Can Now Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)

Online Tools and Toll-Free Number Available to Assist Producers

Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

We also want to remind producers that the program is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply.

In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap. Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments.

Additionally, producers in search of one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a good first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

Applying for Assistance

Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print off a pre-filled CFAP application, sign, and submit to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/cfap.

Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested after the application is filed. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

More Information

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364.

Want Additional Crops to be Included in CFAP? Comments Due June 22

USDA has also established a process for the public to identify additional commodities for potential inclusion in CFAP. Specifically, USDA is looking for data on agricultural commodities, that are not currently eligible for CFAP, that the public believes to have either:

1. suffered a five percent-or-greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. shipped but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channel, or
3. not left the farm or remained unharvested as mature crops.

Those interested in making comments, especially to request additional crops be added to the program should go to the Federal Rulemaking Portal at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) by clicking here: [Docket ID FSA-2020-0004](https://www.regulations.gov/docketID/FSA-2020-0004) Follow the instructions for submitting comments. [The USDA is specifically looking for information for Aquaculture, Nursery, and Cut Flowers.](#)

Comments must be received by June 22, 2020

Farm Storage Facility Loan Rates as Low as 0.25%

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

- 3 year loan – 0.250%
- 5 year loan – 0.375%
- 7 year loan – 0.500%
- 10 year loan – 0.625%
- 12 year loan – 0.750%

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement. Loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your local FSA county office. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Farm Service Agency County Committee Nominations Open June 15

#LeadYourFSA and be the Voice of Farmers in Your Community

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin accepting nominations for county committee members on Monday, June 15, 2020. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally.

All nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2020.

"I encourage America's farmers, ranchers and forest stewards to nominate candidates to lead, serve and represent their community on their county committee," FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce said. "There's an increasing need for diverse representation, including underserved producers, which includes beginning, women and minority farmers and ranchers."

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others, and organizations, including those representing beginning, women and minority producers, also may nominate candidates.

Information for elections in your county office are available on the New Jersey FSA Website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj> and clicking on "Local Election Information" or by clicking [here](#).

Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made of three to 11 members and typically meet once a month. Members serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to find out how to get involved in their county's election. Check with your local USDA service center to see if your LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 2, 2020. Read more to learn about [important election dates](#).

USDA to Measure Quarterly Colony Loss

HARRISBURG, PA - In July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be collecting information about colony loss in the honey industry throughout the United States. The Quarterly Colony Loss survey will be conducted over the period of June 2020 through July 2020. This survey collects information about colony inventory and loss from more than 400 producers with honey bee colonies in the Northeastern Region of the United States.

"The information from these surveys directly impacts our region's beekeepers and honey producers," said Kevin Pautler, deputy director of the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office. "Beekeepers and producers can use the survey results when making business plans and marketing decisions. Cooperative Extensions use the data to provide needed outreach and education and State Departments and Agencies of Agriculture use the information to set insurance values," added Pautler.

In this survey, NASS asks participants to answer a variety of questions about their colonies. To ensure all survey participants have an opportunity to respond, NASS interviewers will contact producers who do not respond by mail or online to conduct interviews.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

Survey results will be published in the *Honey Bee Colonies* report to be released on August 3, 2020. These and all NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/. For more information, call the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office at (800) 498-1518.

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Buy/Lease Farmland and Improve Property

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy, lease, or improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office.

FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has started making payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) 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 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.

For losses due to drought, a producer is eligible if any area of the county in which the loss occurred was rated D3, or extreme drought, or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor during calendar years 2018 or 2019. Producers who suffered losses should contact their FSA county office.

In addition to the recently added eligible losses of drought and excess moisture, FSA will implement a WHIP+ provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops damaged by eligible disaster events. To ensure an effective program for all impacted farmers, the Agency is currently gathering information on the extent of quality loss from producers and stakeholder organizations.

USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information on Service Centers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus, and more information on WHIP+ can be found at farmers.gov/whip-plus.

Farmers, Ranchers and Private Forest Landowners Use Conservation to Protect Pollinator Habitat, Boost Crop Production

The next time you snack on almonds, add blueberries to your smoothie or eat pumpkin pie, thank a pollinator and thank farmers, ranchers and private forestland owners who work hard to create and maintain their habitat.

Pollinators, such as honeybees, bumblebees, butterflies, birds, bats, flies and many others, play a critical role in crop production. Without pollinators, we wouldn't have many crops.

During the week of June 22-28, the nation will celebrate these iconic and crucial pollinators during National Pollinator Week. This year's theme is "Pollinators, Plants, People and Planet." Thirteen years ago, the U.S. Senate unanimously designated the third week in June as National Pollinator Week to increase awareness about the importance of pollinators and the challenges many of them face, including serious population declines and habitat losses, often due to land use changes and excessive or improper pesticide use. Nearly 200 species of pollinators are considered threatened or extinct.

Pollination occurs when pollen grains are moved between two flowers of the same species, or within a single flower by wind or insects and animals. Successful pollination results in healthy fruit and fertile seeds, allowing the plants to reproduce.

The extensive and critical world of crop pollinators is a \$20 billion a year industry. About 75 percent of crop plants are pollinated by billions of animals and insects every year

Many federal, state and local government agencies, non-government organizations and universities have launched extensive efforts to protect pollinators, especially honeybees and the Monarch butterfly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) works closely with farmers, forest landowners and other private landowners to increase pollinator habitat in targeted areas nationwide.

The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), through USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS), offers financial incentives to agricultural producers and private forest landowners who enhance pollinator habitat by voluntarily implementing conservation practices such as cover crops, wildflower and native plantings in buffers and areas not in production.

The [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) also can be used to enhance habitat to protect pollinators. Administered by USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA), CRP is a land conservation program in which

enrolled landowners remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality.

As owners and stewards of the land, many farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners manage their natural resources to work to achieve their production goals, they are protecting the rich and diverse ecology on or near their operations.

When we protect pollinators, we protect our ability to grow food. We thank our farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners for who offer a safe haven for pollinators and grow the products we enjoy.

Whether you are a large commodity producer, a small and diverse organic producer or even a suburban homeowner, you can have an important role in saving pollinators in New Jersey

Do your part to help protect pollinators. By taking action to diversify and beautify your operation or property, you could ensure that many fruits and vegetables are available and plentiful for future generations for many years to come.

For more information about pollinators and what you can do in New Jersey, please contact your local [USDA service center](#).

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).