



In This Issue:

- [USDA Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports](#)
- [USDA Expands Disaster Assistance to Include Fish Raised for Food](#)
- [USDA Announces New Initiative to Quantify Climate Benefits of Conservation Reserve Program](#)
- [USDA to Begin Loan Payments to Socially Disadvantaged Borrowers under American Rescue Plan Act Section 1005](#)
- [CFAP 2 Signup is Ongoing](#)
- [Emergency Loan Applications Due June 3, 2021](#)

USDA Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

While USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in New Jersey are currently open to a limited number of in person appointments we continue to offer phone and virtual appointments and are still working 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. Those interested in in-person appointment **must** contact their local office to make an appointment.



The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in New Jersey:

- **May 31** - 2022 nursery crops
- **July 15** - corn, soybeans, spring feed grains, forage, CRP, hemp & most other crops
- **August 15** - processing beans
- **September 30** - 2022 Value Loss (i.e. Christmas trees, cut flowers, turf grass/sod, aquaculture).

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 or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Acreage reporting deadlines for 2021 Nursery, 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 or crop residue is still in the field.

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.

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.

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

USDA Expands Disaster Assistance 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 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 \(ELAP\)](#) nationwide. 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](#).

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:

- Predominately Perennial grass with legumes and shrubs, depending on the practice
- Tree
- 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.

USDA to Begin Loan Payments to Socially Disadvantaged Borrowers under American Rescue Plan Act Section 1005



The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) [published the first notice of funding availability \(NOFA\)](#) (PDF, 242 KB) announcing loan payments for eligible borrowers with qualifying direct farm loans under the American Rescue Plan Act Section 1005. The official NOFA will be published in the Federal Register early this week and USDA expects payments to begin in early June and continue on a rolling basis. A subsequent notice addressing guaranteed loan balances and direct loans that

no longer have collateral and have been previously referred to the Department of Treasury for debt collection for offset, will be published within 120 days.

Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) provides funding and authorization for USDA FSA to pay up to 120 percent of direct and guaranteed loan outstanding balances as of January 1, 2021, for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as defined in Section 2501(a) of the Food, Agriculture Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(a)). Section 2501(a) defines a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher as a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group, which is further defined as a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Qualifying loans as part of today's announcement are certain direct loans under the Farm Loan Programs (FLP) and Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL).

For much of the history of the USDA, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have faced discrimination—sometimes overt and sometimes through deeply embedded rules and policies—that have prevented them from achieving as much as their counterparts who do not face these documented acts of discrimination. Over the past 30 years, several major civil rights lawsuits have compensated farmers for specific acts of discrimination—including Pigford I and Pigford II, Keepseagle, and the Garcia cases. However, those settlements and other related actions did not address the systemic and cumulative impacts of discrimination over a number of decades that the American Rescue Plan now begins to address.

Sections 1005 and 1006 of ARPA provide USDA with new tools to address longstanding inequities for socially disadvantaged borrowers. Section 1006 of ARPA provides additional funding to begin long-term racial equity work within USDA, including to address heirs property claims and to stand up an Equity Commission to identify barriers to access USDA programming.

To learn more about the loan payments to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, visit www.farmers.gov/americanrescueplan.

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.

CFAP 2 Signup is Ongoing

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that signup has reopened for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. The initial CFAP 2 signup ended on Dec. 11, 2020, but USDA has reopened sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning April 5, 2021, for producers to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.

CFAP 2 provides direct financial relief to producers due to market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. **Producers did not have to have a loss to qualify for a payment.** CFAP 2 payments will be made for three categories of commodities – Price Trigger Commodities, Flat-rate Crops and Sales Commodities. Visit farmers.gov/cfap/commodities for a full list of eligible commodities for each category.

Price Trigger Commodities Price trigger commodities are major commodities that meet a minimum 5-percent price decline over a specified period of time. Eligible price trigger crops include barley, corn, sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers, upland cotton, and all classes of wheat. Payments will be based on 2020 planted acres of the crop, excluding prevented planting and experimental acres.

For broilers and eggs, payments will be based on 75 percent of the producers' 2019 production.

Dairy (cow's milk) payments will be based on actual milk production from April 1 to Aug. 31, 2020. The milk production for Sept. 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2020, will be estimated by FSA.

Eligible beef cattle, hogs and pigs, and lambs and sheep payments will be based on the maximum owned inventory of eligible livestock, excluding breeding stock, on a date selected by the producer, between April 16, 2020, and Aug. 31, 2020.

Flat-rate Crops Crops that either do not meet the 5-percent price decline trigger or do not have data available to calculate a price change will have payments calculated based on eligible 2020 acres multiplied by \$15 per acre. These crops include alfalfa, extra long staple (ELS) cotton, oats, peanuts, rice, hemp, millet, mustard, safflower, sesame, triticale, rapeseed, and several others.

Sales Commodities Sales commodities include specialty crops; aquaculture; nursery crops and floriculture; other commodities not included in the price trigger and flat-rate categories, turfgrass sod; pullets; goat milk; mink (including pelts); mohair; wool; and other livestock (excluding breeding stock), not included under the price trigger category that were grown for food, fiber, fur, or feathers. Payment calculations will use a sales-based approach, where producers are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales, and crop insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) payments for crop year 2019.

Applying for CFAP 2

Visit farmers.gov/cfap for details on all eligible commodities, producer eligibility, payment limitations and structure and additional program resources.

Producers have multiple options to apply for CFAP 2, including through an online application portal and by working directly with the FSA office. Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

Additional CFAP Payments for Beef and Row-Crop Producers

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized an increase in CFAP 1 payment rates for cattle. Cattle producers with approved CFAP 1 applications automatically received these payments and do not need to submit a new application since payments are based on previously approved CFAP 1 applications. Producers may be asked for additional information depending on how they filed the original application. Information on the additional payment rates for cattle can be found on farmers.gov/cfap.

This act also authorized additional CFAP assistance of \$20 per acre for producers of eligible CFAP 2 flat-rate or price trigger commodities. FSA automatically issued payments to eligible producers based on the eligible acres included on their CFAP 2 applications. Eligible producers do not need to submit a new CFAP 2 application.

Additional CFAP Actions FSA has also begun payment processing applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance program in the following categories:

- Applications filed for pullets and turfgrass sod;
- A formula correction for row-crop producer applications to allow producers with a non-Actual Production History (APH) insurance policy to use 100% of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield in the calculation; and
- Sales commodity applications revised to include insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments, and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus payments.

Additional payments for swine producers and contract growers under CFAP Additional Assistance remain on hold and are likely to require modifications to the regulation as part of the broader evaluation and future assistance; however, FSA will continue to accept applications from interested producers.

Emergency Loan Applications Due June 3, 2021

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or product quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

The follow disaster declaration has an application deadline on June 3, 2021:

- Presidential Disaster Designation #M4567 is due to Tropical Storm Isaias
 - Incident Period of August 4, 2020 - August 4, 2020
 - Primary County New Jersey: None
 - Contiguous Counties in New Jersey: Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, Monmouth Passaic, Union
 - **Application Deadline: close of business June 3, 2021**

Additional New Jersey disaster declarations can be found on our state website at https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/New-Jersey/index#disaster_declaration

For more information about emergency loans, contact your local county USDA Service Center at or visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/emergency-farm-loans/index>.



New Jersey

Farm Service Agency

State Executive Director (acting)

Lindsay Caragher 609-587-0104 Lindsay.Caragher@usda.gov

FSA Communications Coordinator

Gabi Grunstein 732-569-1156 Gabor.Grunstein@usda.gov

Natural Resource Conservation

Service State Conservationist

Julie Hawkins 732-537-6041 Julie.Hawkins@usda.gov

NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

Lauren Finnegan 732-537-6044 Lauren.Finnegan@usda.gov