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A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office

Though farmers have been able to make some planting progress, Mother Nature has limited fieldwork for many producers around our state. As a reminder, acreage reporting is required to establish or maintain FSA program eligibility, so we need you to reach out to your local FSA County office soon after you finish planting to timely report by the mid-July deadline.

Your county FSA office will work with you to complete your acreage reporting. Please note we also need to know about any acres you are unable to plant due to weather circumstances. Updated records will also help this process run smoothly. Please contact your office as soon as possible, if you have had changes in your farming operation, such as renting new acreage for 2024, dropping farms, ownership changes, breaking out new land, and changes to your operation. Updated farm records are important to maintain the accuracy and integrity of programs administered by FSA. Please remember to follow the acreage reporting process outlined by your county FSA office and get in touch with them as soon as you finish planting.

A key update from the national level; [FarmRaise, Inc.](#), under a cooperation agreement with FSA, has created an online, [educational hub](#) -- called [Farm Service Agency 101](#) -- comprised of videos, and resources that enable cooperators and the agricultural producers they serve to learn about and access major FSA programs.

In addition to a new [LIP Decision tool](#) discussed in this month's newsletter, the FarmRaise educational hub offers several, easily navigated farm loan programs how-to videos designed to introduce producers to FSA's many farm loan program options and guide them through the application process. More farm programs resources and tools are being developed. Cooperators and agricultural producers are encouraged to visit the FarmRaise educational hub often to access all available resources.

Some counties in Ohio have been impacted by the recent storms and tornadoes that occurred in March and April of 2024. Below is a current list of each natural disaster declaration.

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated [28 Ohio counties](#) as Natural Disaster Areas due to tornadoes that occurred on March 14, 2024.
- Five Indiana counties were declared a Natural Disaster area caused by a tornado, high winds, hail and excessive rain that occurred on March 14, 2024, as [Darke county](#) is also eligible as a contiguous county.
- Thirty-seven Kentucky counties were declared a Natural Disaster area caused by a tornado and high winds that occurred on April 2, 2024, as [Brown and Clermont counties](#) are eligible as contiguous counties.

As a reminder, FSA offers [several disaster programs](#) that may assist in offsetting some of the costs associated with a natural disaster. Contact your [County FSA office](#) to discuss program and loan options and what is needed for eligibility and to apply.

Lastly, one of our Farm Loan Managers had an opportunity to highlight FSA's Youth Loan program in "[Ask the Expert](#)" blog. Check out this cool story that helps youth become more engaged in agriculture, with the help of FSA's Youth Loan program. If you're interested in learning more about the Youth Loan program, reach out to your County FSA office to schedule an appointment with your Farm Loan team.

Additional program details and more in-depth information is provided in our newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact your [County FSA office](#) for questions about our programs, loans and information that is included in this newsletter edition.

Opportunity to Request a Referendum: Soybean Promotion, Research, and Information Program

Dates to Request Referendum: May 6, 2024, and ending May 31, 2024.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announces that soybean producers may request a referendum to determine whether producers want the Secretary to conduct a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act). Participation in the request for referendum is voluntary. Producers should participate only if they wish to request a referendum on the program.

If at least 10 percent, not to exceed $\frac{1}{5}$ of producers from any one State, of the 515,008 eligible producers determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) participate in the request for referendum, a referendum will be held within one year from that determination. If results of the request for referendum indicate that a referendum is not supported, a referendum will not be conducted. The results of the request for referendum will be published in a notice in the Federal Register.

To Request Referendum:

Soybean producers may request a referendum during the 4-week period beginning May 6, 2024, and **ending May 31, 2024**.

To be eligible to participate in the request for referendum, producers must certify that they or the producer entity they are authorized to represent paid an assessment at any time between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023.

Form LS-51-1, Soybean Promotion and Research Order Request for Referendum, can be obtained from May 6, 2024, to May 31, 2024, by mail, FAX, or in person from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Offices, or can be downloaded from <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/soybean>.

Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate FSA County Office:

- By FAX or in person no later than COB on May 31, 2024.
- By mail postmarked by midnight on May 31, 2024, and must be received in the FSA County Office by COB on June 7, 2024.

Contact:

Notice of the Request for Referendum was published in the February 2, 2024, Federal Register. For more information, contact Jeana Harbison, Research and Promotion Division; Livestock and Poultry Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0249 - Room 2092-S; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, D.C. 20250-0249; tel. (202) 720-5705; or via the Internet at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/soybean>.

USDA Improves Crop Insurance to Better Support Conservation, Climate-Smart Practices

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating the Federal crop insurance program to affirm the use of USDA conservation practices as Good Farming Practices for crop insurance. Recently, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) recently updated the [Good Farming Practices Handbook](#), as part of the agency's broader efforts to support conservation and climate-smart activities as well as to improve crop insurance for agricultural producers.

The updated handbook recognizes all [conservation practices](#) offered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as Good Farming Practices for crop insurance. Essentially, appropriate use of NRCS conservation practices will have no impact on crop insurance coverage, which affirms how the rules have worked on the ground for years.

Additionally, in the handbook, NRCS is recognized as an agricultural expert resource for cover crop management systems.

This updated handbook builds on similar efforts, including RMA's [designation of planting cover crops](#) as a Good Farming Practice in 2019.

2024 Acreage Reporting Dates

To comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to contact their FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for:

May 31, 2024 --- Report Nursery Crop Acreage.

July 15, 2024 --- Report all your Burley Tobacco, Cabbage (Planted 3/19/24-5/31/24), Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hybrid Corn Seed, Spring Oats, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Tomatoes and all other crops. Report Perennial Forage Crops. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

Aug. 15, 2024 --- Report Cabbage (Planted 6/1/24-7/20/24).

Sept. 30, 2024 --- Report Aquaculture.

Dec. 15, 2024 --- Report Fall-Seeded 2025 crops, Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above 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 above 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.

If you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary documentation to FSA immediately upon receipt from the certifying agent.

FSA offers continuous certification for perennial forage. This means after perennial forage is reported once and the producer elects continuous certification, the certification remains in effect until a change is made. Check with your FSA office for more information on continuous certification.

New Option to View, Print and Label Maps on Farmers.gov

Producers with an eAuth account linked to their USDA customer record can now access their FSA farm records, maps and common land units by logging into farmers.gov. A new feature will allow producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries. This will allow producers to view, print and label their own maps for acreage reporting purposes.

Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via form FSA-211 Power of Attorney, Business Partner Signature Authority, along with other signature types, or as a member of a business can now access information in the farmers.gov portal.

Producers can learn how to use the farmers.gov Farm Records Mapping functionality with this [fact sheet](#) and these [video tutorials](#).

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your [County FSA office](#).

USDA Seeks Members for Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

Nominations open from May 7, 2024 to July 7, 2024

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking nominations for four positions on the [Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production](#). USDA will accept nominations from May 7, 2024, to July 7, 2024. The 12-member Committee, which first convened in March 2022, is part of USDA's efforts to increase support for urban agriculture and innovative production. Members of the Committee provide input on policy development and help identify barriers to urban agriculture as USDA works to promote urban farming and the economic opportunities it provides in cities across the country.

Members of the Committee include representative from urban and innovative agricultural production, higher education or extension programs, non-profits, business and economic development, supply chain, and financing. Last year, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack [appointed four new members](#) to the Committee to replace members whose terms expired. The Committee's last [public meeting](#) was held in April 2024.

Nominations

USDA is seeking nominations for individuals representing a broad spectrum of expertise. Four positions are open for nominations including:

- One individual who is an agricultural producer or farmer using innovative technology.
- One individual representing an institution of higher education or extension program.
- One individual with supply chain experience, which may include a food aggregator, wholesale food distributor, food hub, or an individual who has direct-to-consumer market experience.
- One individual representing related experience in urban, indoor and other emerging agriculture production practices.

Individuals who wish to be considered for membership must submit a nomination package including the following:

- A completed [background disclosure form \(Form AD-755\)](#) signed by the nominee.
- A brief summary explaining the nominee's interest in one or more open vacancies including any unique qualifications that address the membership composition and criteria described above.
- A resume providing the nominee's background, experience, and educational qualifications.
- Recent publications by the nominee relative to extending support for urban agriculture or innovative production (optional).
- Letter(s) of endorsement (optional).

Nomination packages must be submitted by email to:

UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov or postmarked by July 7, 2024. If sending by mail, packages should be addressed to USDA NRCS, Attn: Brian Guse, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4083, Washington, DC 20250.

Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals for membership, including self-nominations. For special accommodations, contact Markus Holliday at: UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov. Additional details are available in the [Federal Register notice](#).

USDA Partners with FarmRaise to Offer Educational Tools and Resources to Promote Financial Access and Equity for Agricultural Producers

The new LIP tool and the farm loan informational video resources were developed in partnership with FarmRaise and FSA.

The USDA recently unveiled a new, online Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Decision Tool and farm loan resources available to agricultural producers and cooperators who help producers access USDA disaster assistance, farm loans and other federal farm programs. The new LIP tool and the farm loan informational video resources were developed in partnership with FarmRaise and USDA's FSA. These tools are now available at www.farmraise.com/usda-fsa.

Current FarmRaise Tools and Resources

[FarmRaise, Inc.](#) has created an online, [educational hub](#) -- called [Farm Service Agency 101](#) -- comprised of videos, and resources that enable cooperators and the agricultural producers they serve to learn about and access major FSA programs.

The newly launched LIP Decision Tool assists livestock producers who suffered losses from eligible adverse weather events and other causes of loss as well as cooperators who are helping disaster-impacted livestock producers navigate available federal disaster assistance programs. The optional decision tool gives producers guidance on what is needed to gather

and submit required loss documentation, reducing the amount of time needed to complete applications and enabling FSA county office staff to deliver much-needed assistance faster. Using this tool, however, is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility.

Through use of the LIP tool, livestock producers can provide supporting documentation, inventory numbers, and loss numbers to FSA county offices. Doing so, in advance of the initial county office visit, will help FSA staff serve customers more effectively and efficiently. Producers will also need to complete an application for LIP assistance and, upon request, may be asked to provide additional supporting documentation.

[LIP](#) offers payments to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by qualifying adverse weather events. LIP also covers losses due to eligible diseases and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. This includes attacks by wolves and predatory birds.

In addition to the new [LIP Decision Tool](#), the FarmRaise educational hub offers several, easily navigated farm loan programs how-to videos designed to introduce producers to FSA's many farm loan programs options and guide them through the application process.

More FSA program resources and tools will soon be added to the FarmRaise educational hub. Cooperators and agricultural producers are encouraged to visit the FarmRaise educational hub often to access all available resources.

About the Partnership

USDA cooperators are organizations on the frontlines of access and often are the first point of contact connecting farmers to USDA programs. The partnership between FarmRaise, Inc. and FSA, through a cooperative agreement, aims to improve producer participation and customer experience in USDA programs through education and technical assistance to young, beginning, and small-scale to mid-sized producers, producers with disabilities, and veterans.

By developing a digital educational hub that delivers free, user-friendly, producer and cooperator-tested resources USDA and FarmRaise, Inc. will help FSA expedite program delivery to agricultural producers. The hub offers how-to videos and visual aids that educate producers about FSA programs and prepares them for submitting applications for program participation.

More Information

For more information about FSA farm and farm loan programs, contact your local [County FSA office](#). To learn more about FarmRaise, visit [Farmraise.com](#).

Foreign Investors Must Report U.S. Agricultural Land Holdings

File with your county office within 90 days of land transactions

The USDA Ohio FSA reminds foreign investors with an interest in agricultural land in the United States that they are required to report their land holdings and transactions to USDA.

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires foreign investors who buy, sell or hold an interest in U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings and transactions to

the USDA. Foreign investors must file AFIDA Report Form FSA-153 with the FSA county office in the county where the land is located. Large or complex filings may be handled by AFIDA headquarters staff in Washington, D.C.

According to CFR Title 7 Part 781, any foreign person who holds an interest in U.S. agricultural land is required to report their holdings no later than 90 days after the date of the transaction.

Foreign investors should report holdings of agricultural land totaling 10 acres or more used for farming, ranching or timber production, and leaseholds on agricultural land of 10 or more years. Tracts totaling 10 acres or less in the aggregate, and which produce annual gross receipts in excess of \$1,000 from the sale of farm, ranch, forestry or timber products, must also be reported. AFIDA reports are also required when there are changes in land use, such as from agricultural to nonagricultural use. Foreign investors must also file a report when there is a change in the status of ownership.

The information from AFIDA reports is used to prepare an annual report to Congress. These annual reports to Congress, as well as more information, are available on the FSA [AFIDA webpage](#).

Assistance in completing the FSA-153 report may be obtained by contacting your local [County FSA office](#).

USDA Launches New Bobwhite Conservation Pilot in Ohio, Enhancing Opportunities for Producers and Wildlife

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the launch of a new Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) conservation effort – the Northern Bobwhite Pilot Project, which offers agricultural producers and landowners the tools to conserve wildlife habitat for northern bobwhite quail by improving East-Central grasslands while achieving other critical conservation benefits, including sequestering carbon and improving water quality and soil health.

The Northern Bobwhite Pilot Project, offered by the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) through Working Lands for Wildlife, provided dedicated funding of \$13 million -- for fiscal year 2024 -- in new assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This is for producers to help the bobwhite and other game and non-game species by managing their working lands for early successional habitat while meeting their lands natural resource and production goals.

NRCS accepts applications year-round for EQIP. Interested producers in Ohio should contact or visit their [local USDA Service Center](#) to enroll.

The Northern Bobwhite Pilot Project supports the 5-year, 7-million-acre goal of the Working Lands for Wildlife Northern Bobwhite, Grasslands and Savannas Framework for Conservation Action unveiled in 2022 by USDA. Recently, NRCS expanded the [Climate- Smart Agriculture and Forestry Mitigation Activities](#) that qualify for funding through the Inflation Reduction Act. Those funds will also be critical to Working Lands for Wildlife's success in reaching its long-term goals.

The Northern Bobwhite Pilot Project advances USDA's efforts in climate-smart agriculture with almost 20 climate-smart practices being deployed voluntarily on private lands, including field borders, brush management, tillage management, prescribed burning, prescribed grazing, forest stand improvement and herbaceous weed treatment. More than 17 conservation practices that support climate smart mitigation are included in the Northern Bobwhite Pilot Project.

New 'Bobscares' App

NRCS and Quail Forever are also supporting northern bobwhite conservation with a new "Bobscares" mobile app for citizen science reporting that will help researchers better understand population dynamics and help managers direct resources for habitat work where those investments will be most effective in recovering the species. Additionally, for those interested, the app will connect landowners to technical experts who can make habitat recommendations and share information on voluntary cost share programs. Bobscares reporting adheres to protection of personally identifiable information for citizens and for bobwhite locations. Lastly, the data provided will assist wildlife biologists in creating a national habitat network of "Bobwhite landscapes" necessary to ensure this species persists for future generations.

More Information

Producers and landowners interested in the Northern Bobwhite Pilot Project should contact NRCS at their local [USDA Service Center](#) to sign up now.

USDA Reminds Producers of Climate-Smart Opportunities Using Farm Loan Programs

The USDA FSA reminds agricultural producers that Farm Loan Programs can be used to support a variety of climate-smart agriculture practices, which build on many practices that farmers and ranchers already use, like cover cropping, nutrient management and conservation tillage.



Climate-smart agricultural practices generate significant environmental benefits by capturing and sequestering carbon, improving water management, restoring soil health and more. Farm loan funding complements other tools to help producers adopt climate-smart practices, such as FSA's [Conservation Reserve Program](#), [crop insurance options](#) that support conservation, and conservation programs offered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

FSA offers [multiple types of loans](#) to help farmers and ranchers start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. These loans can provide the capital needed to invest in climate-smart practices and equipment including the establishment of rotational grazing systems, precision agriculture equipment or machinery for conversion to no-till residue management. Additionally, for programs like Conservation Reserve Program and NRCS conservation programs where USDA and the producer share the implementation cost, a farm loan could be used for the producer's share, if consistent with the authorized loan purpose.

Some additional ways farm loans can be leveraged to invest in climate-smart agriculture practices or equipment include:

- **Precision Agriculture Equipment** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment like GPS globes, monitors, or strip till fertilizer equipment.
- **Cover Crops** - Eligible producers could use an Annual Operating Loan for seed costs.
- **No/Reduced Till** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment.
- **Livestock Facility Air Scrubber or Waste Treatment** - Eligible producers could use a Farm Ownership Loan for capital improvements to livestock facilities.
- **Cross Fencing** - Eligible producers could use an Annual or Term Operating Loan to purchase fencing and installation equipment.

Visit the [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry webpage on farmers.gov](#) to learn more and see detailed examples of how an FSA farm loan can support climate-smart agriculture practices.

Applying for Youth Loans

The FSA makes loans to youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Applicants must:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

To find out more about the FSA Youth loan program, contact your local [County FSA office](#) to setup an appointment with your Farm Loan Team.

May 2024 Loan and Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans, Direct	-- 5.250%
Farm Ownership Loans, Direct	-- 5.500%
Limited Resource Loans	-- 5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment	-- 1.500%
Farm Ownership – Joint Financing	-- 3.500%
Emergency Loans	-- 3.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year	-- 4.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year	-- 4.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year	-- 4.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year	-- 4.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year	-- 4.500%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year	-- 4.625%
Commodity Loans	-- 6.125%

Dates to Remember

May 27 ---- Memorial Day Holiday. **USDA Service Centers Closed.**

May 31 ---- **Deadline** to apply for 2023 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.

May 31 ---- **Deadline** for soybean producers to request a referendum at their USDA FSA County office, on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order.

June 15 --- County Committee Nomination Period begins.

June 19 --- Juneteenth National Independence Day. **USDA Service Center Closed.**

July 4 ----- Independence Day Holiday. **USDA Service Center Closed.**

July 15 ---- End of primary nesting season for CRP program purposes.

July 15 ---- Final certification date to report burley tobacco; cabbage planted through May 31; corn, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, spring oats, potatoes, popcorn, sugar beets, tomatoes and other crops. Report perennial forage crops. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

July 15 ---- Final Date to Report Production for the preceding Crop Year for Farms Enrolled in ARC-IC.

July 31 ---- **Deadline** for producers to submit an offer for re-enrolled land or combination new and re-enrolled land for Continuous CRP Signup 61.

August 1 --- **Last day** to file County Committee Nomination forms.

August 1 --- **Deadline** to Request farm reconstitutions and transfers for 2023.

August 15 - **Deadline** for producers to request enrollment into **Transition Incentives Program (TIP)**.

Ongoing Reminders:

ERP 2022 signup continues. The application deadline has not yet been determined and will be announced at a later date.

Reports of Failed Acreage must be filed with the FSA County Office before disposition of the crop.

Reports of Prevented Planting Acreage must be filed with the FSA County Office no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date for that county and producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Contact FSA right away for notice of loss deadlines and disaster program requirements.

FSA is continually receiving new applications for loan programs.

Inform the office of bank account changes.

Inform FSA if you have picked up or dropped any farm(s).

Inform FSA of farm and cropland boundary changes.

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Visit the Ohio FSA website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

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