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General CRP Signup #60 in the Homestretch

The signup for General CRP that started February 27th will end on April 7th, 2023. Producers interested in offering new land for CRP or to re-enroll land that is scheduled to expire this fall, may submit an offer in this signup. By April 7th, at least one eligible producer on the farm must sign the worksheet and contract for the offer to be considered.

After signup ends, a final cost score will be determined by the Secretary and applied to all submitted offers to determine their final Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) score. All general CRP offers will be ranked nationally. The Secretary will then determine the total number of acres to be accepted, and the EBI cutoff score will be set to accept that many acres. Producers will be notified if their EBI is above the cutoff score, and whether their offer has been accepted or rejected. Producers with accepted offers must contact FSA within 30 days of the date of notification to confirm they want to proceed with the offer. Once producers confirm that they wish to proceed, NRCS will work with the producers to analyze the existing stand and develop a conservation plan for the contract period.

FSA is also accepting offers to enroll in the continuous CRP and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Offers to enroll new land can be submitted throughout the year. Please note that offers to re-enroll expiring offers cannot be submitted until after April 1st, 2023. All offers must be submitted in time for NRCS to determine basic eligibility.

If you want to make a CRP offer and do not currently have an appointment, please contact the county office immediately as FSA staff schedules are filling up quickly.

Report Damage or Loss of NAP Covered Crops Immediately

If spring weather causes damage to or loss of your 2023 NAP covered crops, you must report this to your local FSA county office.

NAP notices of loss can be initiated by phone, email, or fax, but must be submitted in writing, to your local FSA county office for weather related events or adverse natural occurrences that cause damage to or loss of the NAP covered crop. To report crop damage or loss you must complete, sign, and file the loss portion of form CCC-576 with your FSA office by the earlier of either of the following:

- **15 calendar days** after the disaster occurrence or date of loss or damage to the crop or commodity first becomes apparent or
- **15 calendar days** after the normal harvest date.

Please note, producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA **within 72 hours** of when a loss becomes apparent.

FSA county offices can take initial NAP notice of loss notifications via phone, email, or fax. Offices will assist producers in completing the official CCC-576 Notice of Loss Form as best as possible, sending the form to producers via email, fax, or mail for final review and signature. The completed and signed CCC-576 should then be returned to the county office as soon as possible via email, fax, or mail. **A CCC-576 is not considered filed until it has been signed and returned to FSA.**

As the 2023 crop year progresses, it is imperative that a notice of loss is filed (for all affected NAP covered crops) within the timeframe noted above for each weather-related event or adverse natural occurrence. This will ensure FSA is notified that your NAP covered crop or crops have been damaged or lost. If the loss event is approved, remember to provide your crop production to your local FSA county office within 60 days after harvest or request an appraisal within 60 days of the normal harvest date so that the payment portion of form CCC-576 can be filed timely.

When a covered crop is lost or damage is significant, replanting is required if feasible and the final planting date has not passed. **When you determine that a NAP covered crop will be destroyed, abandoned, or not taken to harvest as intended, you must report this to your local FSA office as soon as possible** so a field visit can be conducted by a certified loss adjuster. Once the crop appraisal has been completed, the loss adjuster will release the field and you can destroy the covered crop acres and replant to a different crop or harvest the acres for a different use.

Remember, failure to timely notify your FSA county office of NAP covered crop damage or loss will result in denial of NAP payment benefits. Destroying NAP covered crop acres or harvesting for a different use without a loss adjuster appraisal will result in those acres being determined ineligible for NAP payment benefits.

If you have any questions about NAP policy requirements, contact your local [county FSA office](#) for more information.

2022 Marketing Assistance Loans Still Available

FSA Marketing Assistance Loans are still available for harvested commodities. A loan can provide you with interim financing to meet cash flow needs without selling your harvested crop at a time when market prices are at harvest-time lows. Your 2022 harvested farm-stored or warehouse-stored commodity is used as collateral for the loan. Marketing Assistance Loans mature 9 months after the month loan funds are disbursed to you, with repayment due at loan maturity. Before moving farm-stored loan collateral, you must contact the county FSA office and obtain an authorization to move the collateral. Producers who have a commodity pledged as collateral for a marketing assistance loan can purchase a commodity certificate that can be immediately exchanged for the outstanding loan collateral in situations when the loan rate exceeds the exchange rate. Producers who are eligible for marketing assistance loans can obtain a loan deficiency payment (LDP) in lieu of a loan. LDP's are available when the posted county price for a crop falls below the county loan rate. You can check the daily LDP rates online at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/Index> .

FSA is still accepting requests for 2022 MALs for some eligible harvested commodities. The final date to request a MAL for 2022 corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans, and sunflower seeds is **May 31, 2023**.

For a commodity to be eligible for a loan or certificate, you must have beneficial interest in the commodity which is defined as having title, possession, and control of the commodity. The quality of stored collateral must be maintained, and you are responsible for loss or damage to the commodity through the term of the loan. To retain eligibility for an LDP when beneficial interest in your harvested crop will be lost upon delivery, you must file form CCC-633 EZ Page 1 with your local FSA office prior to loss of beneficial interest.

If you are interested, please contact [your local FSA county office](#) to learn more about Marketing Assistance Loans.

USDA Offers Farm Loans for Underserved and Beginning Farmers

SPOKANE VALLEY, WA, October 1, 2022 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers farm ownership and farm operating loans to underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers. Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for FSA direct or guaranteed loans.

“Farming and ranching is a capital-intensive business and FSA is committed to helping producers start and maintain their agricultural operations,” said Jon Wyss, FSA State Executive Director in Washington State. “FSA loans are designed to make sure that everyone has access to credit including underserved and beginning farmers and ranchers. Last year, FSA in Washington obligated \$44.5 million in loans to underserved borrowers and beginning farmers and ranchers.”

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, underserved groups are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

In order to qualify as a beginning farmer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation. For farm ownership purposes, the applicant must not own a farm greater than 30 percent of the average size farm in the county at the time of application. All direct farm ownership applicants must have participated in the business operations of a farm for at least three years out of the last 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted to FSA. Substitutions for as much as the full three years of experience may be made based on education, business management experience, military experience, participation with a [qualified](#) mentor, and farm management experience as a hired laborer. Your local FSA office will be able to provide more details on acceptable substitutions.

If the applicant is an entity, all members must be related by blood or marriage and all entity members must be eligible beginning farmers. At least one of the members must have three years or more experience in the business operations of a farm prior to the date the application is submitted.

Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program offers two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans.

Farm ownership loan funds may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch; purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm's operation; build or improve buildings such as a dwelling or barn; promote soil and water conservation and development; and pay closing costs.

Farm operating loan funds may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm equipment, fertilizer, and other materials necessary to operate a farm. Operating loan funds can also be used for family living expenses; refinancing debts under certain conditions; paying salaries for hired farm laborers; installing or improving water systems for home, livestock or irrigation use; and other similar improvements.

Repayment terms for direct operating loans are scheduled from one to seven years. Financing for direct farm ownership loans cannot exceed 40 years. Interest rates for direct loans are set periodically according to the government's cost of borrowing. Guaranteed loan terms and interest rates are set by the lender.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, please contact your local FSA office or visit farmers.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Vacancy Announcements for Permanent FSA Positions in WA State

Whitman County - Program Technician

The Farm Service Agency office located in Colfax, WA is accepting applications for a Full-Time Permanent Program Technician position. Duties include carrying out office activities related to farm programs. The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications, eligibility requirements will be posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov. The salary ranges from \$34,584 to \$60,703 per year. **Candidates may qualify for a 25% recruitment incentive for this position.**

Okanogan County – County Executive Director

The Farm Service Agency office located in Okanogan, WA will be accepting applications for a Full-Time Permanent Program Technician position. Duties include directing and managing program and administrative operations for Okanogan and Ferry Counties. The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications, eligibility requirements, and salary range are posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov. The position is open until April 4, 2023 and this is a great opportunity for external candidates to apply for a County Executive Director position with FSA.

Walla Walla County - Program Technician

The Farm Service Agency office located in Walla Walla, WA is accepting applications for a Full-Time Permanent Program Technician position. Duties include carrying out office activities related to farm programs. The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications, eligibility requirements will be posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov. The salary ranges from \$34,584 to \$60,703 per year.

Skagit County - Program Technician

The Farm Service Agency office located in Mt Vernon, WA is accepting applications for a Full-Time Permanent Program Technician position. Duties include carrying out office activities related to farm programs. The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications, eligibility requirements will be posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov. The salary ranges from \$37,473 to \$67,514 per year.

FSA Looking for Part-time Assistance in Various Locations

Washington State Farm Service Agency (FSA) is hiring part-time, Temporary Program Technician (PT), positions in **Chelan County, Douglas County, Okanogan County, Skagit County, Spokane County, Walla Walla, and Yakima County**. This is a great opportunity for students or those that can only commit to a part-time schedule.

Duties include general office activities supporting FSA programs administered at the field level. Successful applicants must be reliable, have a professional attitude, enjoy working with the public. The Spokane position will require a valid driver's license for day travel to local offices in Lincoln, Adams, and Whitman counties. The hourly rate depends on education and experience and ranges from \$16.14 to \$32.35.

Applicant closing dates will vary by location. If you are interested or know of someone who might be interested, please share this information with them. To apply please submit a copy of your resume to the following. You may also contact the number listed for specific questions regarding the position:

- Chelan and Douglas County limon@usda.gov 509-415-3689
- Okanogan County gaston@usda.gov 509-381-6719
- Skagit County chamberlain@usda.gov 360-488-4814
- Spokane County martin@usda.gov 509-323-3036
- Walla Walla County betts@usda.gov 509-404-3081
- Yakima County delamora@usda.gov and jose.limon@usda.gov 509-415-3689

Important Dates and Deadlines

April 1, 2023 – Beginning of the Primary Nesting Season for CRP. Activities on established CRP stands are prohibited April 1 through July 1 unless specifically authorized by FSA on a contract-by-contract basis.

April 7, 2023 – Deadline to submit General CRP contract offers for 2023.

May 29, 2023 – Memorial Day. USDA Service Centers will be closed.

May 31, 2023 – Final date to request a MAL for 2022 corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans, and sunflower seeds.

May 31, 2023 – Deadline to obtain 2024 crop year NAP coverage for nursery crops and to file a 2024 acreage report on nursery crops (full list of Washington State NAP dates posted [here](#)).

June 15, 2023 – Nominations open for 2023 FSA County Committee Elections.

Washington State / FSA Office

11707 E. Sprague Ave
Suite 303
Spokane Valley, WA 99206

Phone: 509-323-3000
Fax: 855-843-1172

Jon Wyss
State Executive Director

State Committee

Bernard "Butch" Ogden, Chair
Brett Blankenship, Member
Jackie Richter, Member
Jose Ramirez, Member
Sam Ledgerwood, Member

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).