



Wisconsin Farm Service Agency - October 2021

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Dates to Remember

October 11, 2021: USDA Service Centers closed in Observance of Columbus Day

October 12, 2021: Deadline to apply for or modify applications for the [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 \(CFAP 2\)](#)

October 12, 2021: Deadline to apply for the [Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program \(PLIP\)](#)

October 15, 2021: Deadline to apply for the [Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program \(PATHH\)](#)

October 21, 2021, 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.: Organic Certification & Organic Cost Share Informational Webinar hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Learn how to apply for organic cost share, how to become certified organic and about resources and assistance available to producers pursuing organic certification. Registration required:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltduurpj8qG3p4DzgHV97RU7oMtDsOcTc>

October 31, 2021: Deadline to apply for [Wetland Reserve Easements \(WRE\)](#) for fiscal year 2022

November 1, 2021: Deadline to apply for the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#)

November 1, 2021: Ballots mailed for 2021 FSA [County Committee Elections](#)

November 11, 2021: USDA Service Centers closed in Observance of Veterans Day

November 15, 2021: [Acreage Reporting](#) deadline for 2021 Fall-seeded Small Grains and Fall Mint

November 20, 2021: [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance \(NAP\)](#) deadline for 2022 crop year for Apples, Aronia, Asparagus, Blueberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Currants, Grapes, Honey, Hops, Maple Syrup, Pears, Plums, and Strawberries

November 20, 2021: Crop Insurance Local Sales Closing Date for 2022 crop year for Apples and Cranberries - <https://rma.usda.gov/en/RMALocal/Wisconsin>

USDA Extends Deadline to Apply for Pandemic Assistance to Livestock Producers with Animal Losses

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing additional time for livestock and poultry producers to apply for the [Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program \(PLIP\)](#). Producers who suffered losses during the pandemic due to insufficient access to processing may now apply for assistance for those losses and the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animals through **Oct. 12, 2021**, rather than the original deadline of Sept. 17, 2021. PLIP is part of USDA's [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) initiative

PLIP provides payments to producers for losses of livestock or poultry depopulated from March 1, 2020 through Dec. 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. Payments are based on 80% of the fair market value of the livestock and poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animal. Eligible livestock and poultry include swine, chickens and turkeys.

PLIP Program Details

PLIP payments are calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible livestock or poultry by the payment rate per head, and then subtracting the amount of any payments the eligible livestock or poultry owner has received for disposal of the livestock or poultry under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or a state program. The payments will also be reduced by any Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 1 and 2) payments paid on the same inventory of swine that were depopulated.

Eligible livestock and poultry producers can apply for PLIP through the Oct. 12, 2021 deadline by completing the FSA-620, Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program application, and submitting it to any Farm Service Agency county office. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/plip more information on how to apply.

Additional Pandemic Assistance

Other programs within the Pandemic Assistance for Producer initiative with upcoming deadlines include:

- **Oct. 12 - [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2](#)**, which provides critical support to agricultural producers impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions.
- **Oct. 15 – [Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers](#)**, which provides financial relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that experienced losses in 2020 due to COVID-19.

To learn more about USDA's commitment to delivery of financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers and businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions, farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance.

USDA Reminds Wisconsin Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers in Wisconsin are reminded to make an appointment with their Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to complete [crop acreage reports](#) before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting date is applicable in Wisconsin:

- **November 15, 2021:** Fall-seeded Small Grains and Fall Mint

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your local FSA office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment.

To file a crop acreage report, you will need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.

- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

Acreage Reporting Details

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.

More Information

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

Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

Current loan rates as of October 1, 2021

Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	1.750%
Farm Operating - Microloan	1.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct	2.875%

Farm Ownership - Microloan	2.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	2.500%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	2.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):

3-year FSFL	0.375%
5-year FSFL	0.750%
7-year FSFL	1.125%
10-year FSFL	1.375%
12-year FSFL	1.500%

Please visit the [Farm Loan Program](#) webpage for more information.

Higher Loan Limit Now Available for USDA Guaranteed Farm Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a higher loan limit will be available for borrowers seeking a guaranteed farm loan starting Oct. 1, 2021, from \$1.776 million to \$1.825 million.

FSA farm loans offer access to funding for a wide range of producer needs, from securing land to financing the purchase of equipment. Guaranteed loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. FSA provides up to a 95% guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

In fiscal year 2021, FSA saw continued strong demand for guaranteed loans. FSA obligated more than \$3.4 billion in guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans. This includes nearly \$1.2 billion for beginning farmers. The number of guaranteed borrowers has grown by 10% to more than 38,750 farmers and ranchers over the last decade. FSA expects the increasing demand for farm loans to continue into fiscal year 2022.

Disaster Set-Aside Extension

USDA has additional support available to producers given the recent outbreaks of the COVID-19 Delta variant and has extended the availability of COVID-19 Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) for installments due through Jan. 31, 2022. In addition, FSA will permit a second DSA for COVID-19 and a second DSA for natural disasters for those who had an initial COVID-19 DSA. Requests for a COVID-19 DSA or a second DSA must be received before a loan becomes 90 days delinquent, and no later than May 1, 2022.

Last year, FSA broadened the use of the DSA. Normally used in the wake of natural disasters, the DSA can now allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19 and determined to be eligible, to have their next payment set aside. The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to

twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This will improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting their [local USDA Service Center](#). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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 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.

Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits.

The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman must sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from the minor's parent

Note, by signing a document with a minor, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc.

When signing on one's behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc.

FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Examples of documents not approved for FAXED signatures include:

- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office.

Spouses cannot sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Likewise, a spouse cannot sign a document on behalf of the other in order to affirm the eligibility of oneself.

Any member of a general partnership can sign on behalf of the general partnership and bind all members unless the Articles of Partnership are more restrictive. Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office. Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts must consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity.

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.

USDA Offers Assistance to Protect Privately-Owned Wetlands, Agricultural Lands and Grasslands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages people wanting to protect critical wetlands, agricultural lands and grasslands to consider enrolling their property into conservation easements. The Farm Bill provides USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) with technical and financial assistance to help private landowners, tribes, land trusts and other groups protect these valuable lands.

The [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP) focuses on restoring and protecting wetlands, conserving productive agricultural lands and conserving grasslands. Landowners are compensated for enrolling their land in easements.

Applications for the ACEP are taken on a continuous basis, and they are ranked and considered for funding one time a year. The deadline for the Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) for fiscal year 2022 is **December 1, 2021**, and the deadline for Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) for fiscal year 2022 is **October 31, 2021**.

"This year we are having an earlier deadline than we have had in previous years to allow staff ample time to collect and review required due-diligence information. In past years, on-site reviews of applications may have occurred during our snow-covered time of year,

making it difficult to assess potential projects,” said Greg Kidd, Assistant State Conservationist for Easements. “Since we have such a high demand for our easement programs with very limited funding, we want to make sure we are selecting the best projects we can.”

Wetland Reserve Easements

Through ACEP-WRE, the NRCS helps landowners and tribes restore and protect wetland ecosystems. Wetlands are some of nature’s most productive ecosystems providing many ecological, societal and economic benefits.

WREs are either permanent or for 30 years in length. Eligible lands include farmed or converted wetlands that can successfully be restored, croplands or grasslands subject to flooding and riparian areas that link protected wetland areas. As part of the easement, the NRCS and the landowner work together to develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland.

Agricultural Land Easements

Through ACEP-ALE, the NRCS provides funds to conservation partners to purchase conservation easements on private working lands. This program helps keep working lands working, especially in areas experiencing development pressure.

Partners include state or local agencies, non-profit organizations and tribes. Landowners continue to own their property but voluntarily enter into a legal agreement with a cooperating entity to purchase an easement. The cooperating entity applies for matching funds from the NRCS for the purchase of an easement from the landowner, permanently protecting its agricultural use and conservation values. Landowners do not apply directly to the NRCS for funding under this program.

All ALE easements are permanent. Eligible lands include privately owned cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, and forestlands.

More Information

Landowners and tribes interested in wetland reserve easements and partners interested in agricultural easements should contact their [local USDA service center](#) to get started.

High Tunnels Provide More Locally Grown Fresh Fruits, Veggies

It’s hard to beat produce grown locally. It’s often fresher and tastier, uses less energy for transport, and helps farmers in your community. But the off-season presents a big challenge for farmers who grow fruits and vegetables and for consumers who want to find local produce throughout the year.

When farmers can lengthen the growing season, even by several weeks, their options change. That's why the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service promotes seasonal high tunnel as such a powerful tool. High tunnels are plastic-wrapped, metal-framed structures that are fairly easy and inexpensive to build. They are designed to extend the growing season into the colder months, helping to increase the availability of local produce, keep plants at a steady temperature and even conserve water and energy.

High tunnels are similar to greenhouses, except they are considered "passively heated." That means they do not require electricity to heat – only sunlight. The plastic on the frame actually provides enough insulation to add up to 12 extra weeks to the growing season, depending on location. The inside of a high tunnel boasts its own microclimate, often producing crops of higher quality and quantity than those in traditional farm fields. High tunnels are also different than greenhouses in that the plants are actually in the ground, not in pots or on tables. You can think of it as a plastic covering over a field.

High tunnels can cut costs for the producer by conserving water and requiring fewer inputs, like fertilizers or pesticides. In high tunnels, these inputs are often applied through tubes that run along the base of the plants, allowing water and fertilizer to be delivered directly above the soil. Outside of high tunnels, these inputs are often dispersed on a larger scale and require more to ensure the plants receive an adequate amount.

NRCS helps farmers build high tunnels, providing technical expertise and funding. Local and regional markets often provide farmers with a higher share of the food dollar, and money spent at a local business often continues to circulate within community, creating a multiplier effect and providing greater economic benefits to the area.

For more information, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit nrcs.usda.gov.

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