

## In This Issue:

- [Message from the Acting SED](#)
- [Upcoming Events and Workshops](#)
- [Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for County Committee Members](#)
- [Producers with Individual Agriculture Risk Coverage Reminded to Report Yields](#)
- [USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports](#)
- [USDA Opens Signup for CLEAR30, Expands Pilot to Be Nationwide](#)
- [USDA Announces Dates for Conservation Reserve Program General and Grasslands Signups](#)
- [FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [New Farmers.gov Features Help You Manage Your USDA Business Online](#)
- [USDA Launches New Farmers.gov Features to Help Farmers Hire Workers](#)
- [Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation](#)
- [Rates and Dates](#)

---

## Message from the Acting SED

Please remember that there is a July 23, 2021 deadline to apply for CRP General signup 56. Additionally, applications will be accepted for CRP Grasslands from July 12 to August 20.

USDA is providing up to \$200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through FSA from July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

Also, Livestock and poultry producers who suffered losses during the pandemic due to insufficient access to processing may apply for assistance for those losses and the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animals. The Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program (PLIP) is part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Livestock and

poultry producers may apply for assistance through FSA from July 20 through Sept. 17, 2021.

Additional information is also available online at the [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) portal.

Some see dirt, others see potential. It's all in how you view it. Continue to stay safe and practice social distancing.

## Upcoming Events and Workshops

The USDA Arkansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to educating producers on available programs and loans. FSA representatives will be available at the following workshops and conferences. Producers interested in attending these conferences/workshops should follow the registration or RSVP instructions listed below.

### Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Diversity in Ag Conference

Farm Bureau is hosting the Diversity in Ag Virtual Conference on Thursday Mar. 22, 2021 at 9:00am. **Danny Hoots, Acting SED, and Precilla Wade, Farm Loan Officer, will represent FSA on program.** The Conference is free and open to all who wish to attend. Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/diversity-in-ag-virtual-conference-tickets-161126280041>

**Aug 31<sup>st</sup> - Sep. 1<sup>st</sup> – 2021 SFLR Regional Conference** The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff is partnering with Prairie View A&M University, Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division, and USDA (FSA & NRCS) to host this conference. The conference will begin Wednesday, August 31, 2021 at 9:00am and conclude Thursday, September 1, 2021. **An FSA Representative will be presenting on Obtaining a Farm Number and FSA Updates.** The conference will be virtual and the link forthcoming in the August Newsletter. Please mark your calendar. Contact UAPB Small Farm Program (870.575.7225) for additional information.

## Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for County Committee Members



**County Committee Elections 2021**

Date	Event
Jun. 15 2021	Beginning of nomination period. Forms available at <a href="http://fsa.usda.gov/elections">fsa.usda.gov/elections</a> .
Aug. 2 2021	Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.
Nov. 1 2021	Ballots mailed to eligible voters.
Dec. 6 2021	Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.
Jan. 1 2022	Newly elected county committee members take office.

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

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) began accepting nominations for county committee members on June 15. 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 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 2, 2021.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in a USDA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote, and hold office.

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

LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. This may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

### **More Information**

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election. They should check with their local USDA Service Center to see if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form or an [FSA-669-A-3](#) for urban county committees. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 1, 2021. To find your local USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).



## Producers with Individual Agriculture Risk Coverage Reminded to Report Yields

Producers who elected Individual Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC-IC) are required to report yields annually to FSA. The final date to report production from the prior crop year for farms enrolled in ARC-IC is July 15. The ARC Program is an income support program that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level.

ARC-IC program payments are issued when the actual individual crop revenue for all covered commodities planted on the ARC-IC farm is less than the ARC-IC guarantee for those covered commodities. ARC-IC uses producer's certified yields, rather than county level yields. ARC-IC payments are dependent upon the planting of covered commodities on the farm. A producer's ARC-IC farm is defined as the sum of the producer's interest in all ARC-IC enrolled farms in the state. Producers with all farms enrolled in County Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage are not required to report production from the prior crop year.

For more information contact your Local USDA Service center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after spring planting should make an appointment with the Local County Farm Service Agency (FSA) 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 dates are applicable for Arkansas:

July 15, 2021      Acreage reporting spring seeded crops & other crops. (Note: crops insured under NAP may have an earlier acreage reporting date. Check with your local county office for verification.)

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 the Local County FSA office 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 more information contact your Local USDA Service center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

## USDA Opens Signup for CLEAR30, Expands Pilot to Be Nationwide

Landowners and agricultural producers currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) now have a wider opportunity to enroll in a 30-year contract through the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers initiative, called CLEAR30. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expanding CLEAR30 – a water-quality focused option available through CRP – to be nationwide now.

Interested producers with CRP contracts expiring September 30, 2021, should sign up by August 6, 2021. CLEAR30 provides an opportunity for producers to receive incentives for a 30-year commitment to water quality practices on their CRP land, building on their original 10- to 15-year CRP contracts.

These long-term contracts ensure that practices remain in place for 30 years, which improves water quality through reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and helping prevent algal blooms. **About CLEAR30**

CLEAR30 was created by the 2018 Farm Bill to better address water quality concerns. Originally, CLEAR30 was only available in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watersheds. Now, access is expanded to agricultural producers nationwide.

Eligible producers must have certain water quality benefitting practices currently enrolled under continuous CRP or through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), under contracts that are expiring on September 30, 2021.

These long-term contracts will help ensure that conservation impacts and benefits remain in place for 30 years, reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and, ultimately, algal blooms. Conservation in riparian areas also provides important carbon sequestration benefits. Traditional CRP contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

Annual rental payments for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus a 20% water quality incentive and annual rate adjustment of 27.5%. **How to Sign Up**

To sign up for CLEAR30, contact your local USDA Service Center by August 6, 2021. While USDA offices may be closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Contact information can be found at [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). **More Information**

CLEAR30 is an option available through CRP, which is one of the world's largest voluntary conservation programs with a long track record of preserving topsoil, sequestering carbon and reducing nitrogen runoff, as well providing healthy habitat for wildlife.

To enroll in CLEAR30, please contact your local USDA Service Center. For more information on CRP, visit the Conservation Reserve Program.

---

## USDA Announces Dates for Conservation Reserve Program General and Grasslands Signups

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has set a July 23, 2021, deadline for agricultural producers and landowners to apply for the Conservation Reserve Program

(CRP) General signup 56. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will accept applications for CRP Grasslands from July 12 to August 20. This year, USDA updated both signup options to provide greater incentives for producers and increase its conservation benefits, including reducing the impacts of climate change.

Both signups are competitive and will provide for annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

"Bottom line, CRP now makes more financial sense for producers while also providing a bigger return on investment in terms of natural resource benefits. The General and Grasslands signups are part of a broader suite of tools available through CRP to integrate key conservation practices on our nation's working lands."

### **General Signup**

Through CRP, producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Lands enrolled in CRP also play a key role in mitigating impacts from climate change, and FSA has added a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive for practices that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

FSA is also adding a one-time "inflationary" adjustment for payment rates, as well as having more flexibility on adjusting soil rental rates.

FSA opened the [General Signup](#) in January 2021 and extended the original deadline to July 23, 2021, to enable producers to consider FSA's new improvements to the program.

### **Grasslands Signup**

[CRP Grasslands](#) helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and improves environmental quality.

FSA has updated the Grasslands Signup to establish a minimum rental rate of \$15 per acre, as well as new National Grassland Priority Zones.

### **How to Sign Up**

To enroll in the CRP General signup, producers and landowners should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) by the July 23 deadline. To enroll in the CRP Grasslands signup, they should contact USDA by the August 20 deadline. While USDA offices may have limited visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To work with FSA, producers and landowners should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Contact information can be found at [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

### **More Information on CRP**

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. The program marked its 35-year anniversary this past December.

# FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19

## *Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers*

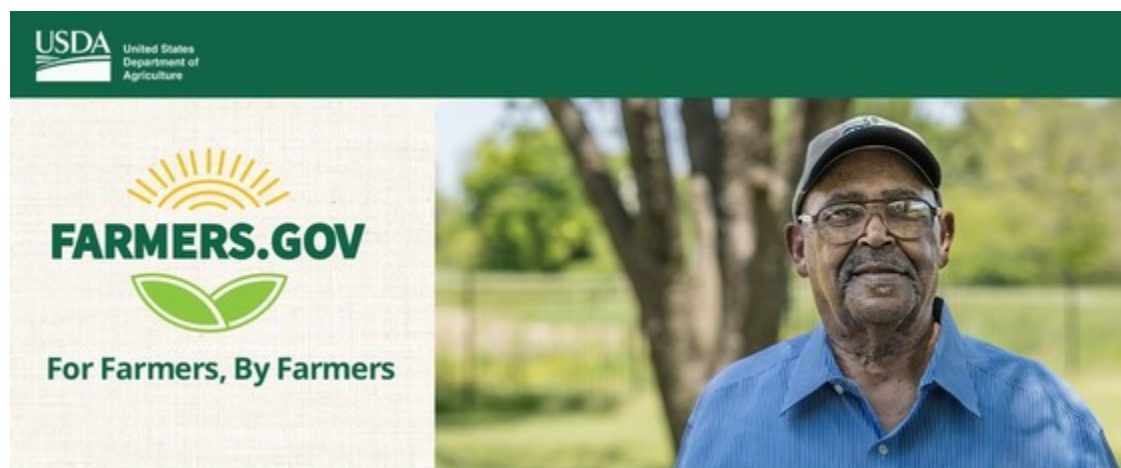
USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

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 aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).





# New Farmers.gov Features Help You Manage Your USDA Business Online

Last June, NRCS' Conservation Client Gateway moved to farmers.gov enabling USDA customers to access multiple conservation features through a platform that provides a customer-centric digital experience. Farmers.gov provides a secure, single desktop- and mobile device-accessible authenticated portal for FSA, NRCS and RMA customer-facing features.

As we've continued to add more content and capabilities, farmers.gov has quickly become the premier online hub for customers to find resources, submit applications and assistance requests, and make connections.

Another new feature is coming to farmers.gov to help you manage your USDA business. You'll now receive an email letting you know that an NRCS document needs your signature, which you can quickly and easily sign online in the portal.

The farmers.gov portal also enables you to:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices and plans.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View detailed information on all previous and ongoing contracts.
- Have the authority as an FSA and/or NRCS customer to work in the portal and act on behalf of your active power-of-attorney entitlements and your current authorities for business entities.

These conservation features join several others already available through the farmers.gov portal, including the ability to view farm loan information. We'll continue to update you about new features as they become available.

If you do not have login information for farmers.gov, you can create your login profile, or eAuthentication by following the instructions at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

The [Conservation Features User Guide](#) gives you step-by-step instructions on how to navigate farmers.gov and the [how-to video instructions](#) explain some of the popular features. If you need additional help, personal assistance is available at the farmers.gov Service Desk by selecting the "Help" link located at the top of the all authenticated portal pages and submitting a "Contact Us" request. NRCS field office staff are always available to assist you with your conservation questions and other needs.

---

## USDA Launches New Farmers.gov Features to Help Farmers Hire Workers

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced new features on the [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) website designed to help facilitate the employment of H-2A workers.

USDA's goal is to help farmers navigate the complex H-2A program that is administered by Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, and the State Department so hiring a farm worker is an easier process.

The primary new H-2A features on Farmers.gov include:

- A real-time dashboard that enables farmers to track the status of their eligible employer application and visa applications for temporary nonimmigrant workers;
- Streamlining the login information so if a farmer has an existing login.gov account they can save multiple applications tracking numbers for quick look-up at any time;
- Enables easy access to the Department of Labor's (DOL) Foreign Labor Application Gateway (FLAG);
- Allows farmers to track time-sensitive actions taken in the course of Office of Foreign Labor Certification's (OFLC) adjudication of temporary labor certification applications;
- Allowing for farmers to access all application forms on-line.

All information can be found at [www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a](http://www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a).

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where customers can apply for programs, process transactions and manage accounts. With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov) delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America's agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

## Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmgers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](http://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

### About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](http://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact your local FSA office or visit [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov).

## Rates and Dates

Selected Interest Rates for July 2021			
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125		
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.875		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.250		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500		
Emergency Loans	2.875		
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years)	0.375	7/15/21	Acreage reporting spring seeded crops & other crops. (Note: crops insured under NAP may have an earlier acreage reporting date. Check with your local county office for verification.)
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 yrs.)	1.500		
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125	7/23/21	General CRP Signup 56 deadline
		8/20/21	CRP Grassland deadline

## Arkansas FSA State Office

700 West Capitol Room 3416 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201  
Phone: 501-301-3000 Fax: 855-652-2082

*Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.  
To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/ar](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ar).*

**State Committee Meeting:** 2nd Wednesday and Thursday of each Quarter

**Acting State Director**  
Danny Hoots

**Administrative Officer**

*Sharon Baker*

**Farm Loan Chief**

*Lori Lavender*

**Farm Program Chief**

*Terri McManus*

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).