



## Share Your Plant 2023 Stories

Spring is finally here and for many, this is a time of hope and renewal. As some head to the local hardware store to kickstart outdoor improvements, America's agricultural producers are already putting their spring plans into action, planting the seeds that will feed, fuel, and clothe us later in the year.

As in years past, we'd like to showcase the planting season stories of farmers and ranchers across America. To share yours, make a post on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter with photos or video and tag [@FarmersGov](#). Be sure to include where you are and what you're working on in your post. You can also direct message us through any of our [@FarmersGov](#) social media accounts.



Alternatively, email us at [SM.FP.Social@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.Social@usda.gov) with your name or the name of your operation, your location (city/county and state), and information about what's happening in your photos or videos.

Need more ideas on what makes a great #Plant23 photo? Check out highlights from previous years:

- [Plant 2022](#)
- [Plant 2021](#)
- [Plant 2020](#)

Make sure to follow [@FarmersGov](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), and we look forward to sharing your story!

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## USDA Fruit, Vegetable and Wild Rice Planting Rules Unchanged in 2018 Farm Bill

Fruit, vegetable and wild rice producers will continue to follow the same rules for certain Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs.

If you intend to participate in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, you are subject to an acre-for-acre payment reduction when fruits and nuts, vegetables or wild rice are planted on payment acres of a farm. Payment reductions do not apply to mung beans, dry peas, lentils or chickpeas. Planting fruits, vegetables or wild rice on

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acres not considered payment acres will not result in a payment reduction. Farms that are eligible to participate in ARC/PLC but are not enrolled for a particular year may plant unlimited fruits, vegetables and wild rice for that year but will not receive ARC/PLC payments. Eligibility for succeeding years is not affected.

Planting and harvesting fruits, vegetables and wild rice on ARC/PLC acreage is subject to the acre-for-acre payment reduction when those crops are planted on more than 15 percent of the base acres of an ARC enrolled farm using the county coverage or PLC, or more than 35 percent of the base acres of an ARC enrolled farm using the individual coverage.

Fruits, vegetables and wild rice that are planted in a double-cropping practice will not cause a payment reduction if the farm is in a double-cropping region as designated by the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

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## **Implementing Fire Management on CRP Acres**

FSA encourages you to be proactive in preventing the spread of wildfire. If you participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), you are responsible for fire management on your CRP acreage. The goal is to suppress the amount of fuel in the event of a wildfire while still promoting the diversity of the conservation cover.

One fire management practice includes installing firebreaks, which should be included in the contract support document and installed according to NRCS firebreak standards. Barren firebreaks will only be allowed in high risk areas, such as transportation corridors, rural communities, and adjacent farmsteads. A conservationist must certify that there will not be an erosion hazard from the barren firebreak. If erosion becomes a problem, remedial action will be taken. Remember that fireguard technical practices should be outlined in your Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO).

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## **USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property**

Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can also help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers

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strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

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## **SCORE Matches Producers to Mentors**

If you are a farmer or rancher, or have agricultural or business experience, join us in supporting the next generation and in investing in your local community. Your experiences and knowledge as a business owner, agricultural professional, or farmer can provide vital support to your community.

SCORE – [score.org](http://score.org) - the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors, is looking to expand the field of available agricultural mentors and provide free business mentoring to farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural and rural business owners.

SCORE is currently looking for volunteers with experience in an agriculture-related field who would like to become part of an extended field of volunteers. The organization's Orientation and Mentoring Certification program provides volunteers with everything needed to be a successful volunteer. Training includes background about SCORE's mission and services, as well as guidance on how to be a business mentor, including enhancement of listening, interviewing and problem-solving skills.

Current mentors have backgrounds in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, business and financial planning. The mentors provide local expertise and free one-on-one business mentoring to new and existing farmers and business owners. Together they work through the process of starting or maintaining agricultural and rural businesses. No matter what stage a business is in, SCORE volunteer mentors can help in developing business plans, navigating financing and legal issues, identifying new markets, and other topics, in order to help their clients succeed.

Learn more and sign up to become a mentor today at [score.org/usda](http://score.org/usda).



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