

In This Issue:

- [In Historic Move, USDA to Begin Loan Payments to Socially Disadvantaged Borrowers under American Rescue Plan Act Section 1005](#)
- [New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting](#)
- [Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting](#)
- [Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early](#)
- [USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property](#)
- [Kentucky Department of Agriculture Reminds Produce Growers to Take Survey, Schedule Training](#)
- [USDA Launches New Farmers.gov Features to Help Farmers Hire Workers](#)
- [Producers with Crop Insurance to Receive Premium Benefit for Cover Crops](#)
- [June 2021 Selected Interest Rates](#)

In Historic Move, USDA to Begin Loan Payments to Socially Disadvantaged Borrowers under American Rescue Plan Act Section 1005

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) [published the first notice of funding availability \(NOFA\)](#) (PDF, 242 KB) announcing loan payments for eligible borrowers with qualifying direct farm loans under the American Rescue Plan Act Section 1005. The official NOFA will be published in the Federal Register early this week and USDA expects payments to begin in early June and continue on a rolling basis. A subsequent notice addressing guaranteed loan balances and direct loans that no longer have collateral and have been previously referred to the Department of Treasury for debt collection for offset, will be published within 120 days.



Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) provides funding and authorization for USDA FSA to pay up to 120 percent of direct and guaranteed loan outstanding balances as of January 1, 2021, for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as defined in Section 2501(a) of the Food, Agriculture Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(a)). Section 2501(a) defines a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher as a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group, which is further defined as a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Qualifying loans as part of today's announcement are certain direct loans under the Farm Loan Programs (FLP) and Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL).

For much of the history of the USDA, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have faced discrimination—sometimes overt and sometimes through deeply embedded rules and policies—that have prevented them from achieving as much as their counterparts who do not face these documented acts of discrimination. Over the past 30 years, several major civil rights lawsuits have compensated farmers for specific acts of discrimination—including Pigford I and Pigford II, Keepseagle, and the Garcia cases. However, those settlements and other related actions did not address the systemic and cumulative impacts of discrimination over a number of decades that the American Rescue Plan now begins to address.

Sections 1005 and 1006 of ARPA provide USDA with new tools to address longstanding inequities for socially disadvantaged borrowers. Section 1006 of ARPA provides additional funding to begin long-term racial equity work within USDA, including to address heirs property claims and to stand up an Equity Commission to identify barriers to access USDA programming.

To learn more about the loan payments to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, visit www.farmers.gov/americanrescueplan.

New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting



Update Lets Farmers and Ranchers Report Common Acreage Information Once

If you file crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA), you can now provide the common information from your acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

You must still contact both your local FSA office and your insurance provider to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps, or provide program-specific information, including reporting uninsured crops to FSA. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report.

You can access your FSA farm information from the convenience of your home computer using the customer self-service portal, **FSAFarm+**. You'll have the ability to view, print or export personal farm data, such as field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

To enroll in this online service, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting



The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of "idle" and "fallow."

Reporting Cover Crops:

Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- **Cereals and other grasses**
- **Legumes**
- **Brassicas and other broadleaves**
- **Mixtures**

If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or

ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

Acreage Reports:

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, you must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Reporting Grazing Allotments:

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. You will use form "FSA-578" to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the "Reporting Unit" field. Your local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

Definitions of Terms

FSA defines "idle" as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season.

For more information, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

Farm Loan teams in Kentucky are already working on operating loans for spring 2021 and asks potential borrowers to submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. Farm loan teams can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new operation, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash

flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures, and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

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 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).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture Reminds Produce Growers to Take Survey, Schedule Training

Requirements part of produce safety rule

FRANKFORT (May 18, 2021) – As planting season begins, Kentucky’s produce growers are entering a busy time of year. While producing delicious, nutritious food is the ultimate goal, Kentucky producers always work hard to put safety first.

“Kentucky produce growers are responsible for some of the freshest, nutrient-rich, and delicious products offered in grocery stores, farm stands, and farmers’ markets across the state,” Commissioner of Agriculture Dr. Ryan Quarles said. “Part of that is the dedication it takes to keep our food, environment, and people safe. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s Produce Safety Rules help growers do exactly that.”

In 2011, Congress passed the Food Safety Modernization Act, a law that tasked the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with implementing new food safety protocols aimed at increasing food safety across the nation. Instead of allowing the FDA to inspect Kentucky farms, Commissioner Quarles worked to secure passage of legislation in 2020 which allowed the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) to enter into a state-led program. The KDA's Produce Safety Program helps producers comply with federal regulatory standards for the growing, harvesting, packing and holding of produce.

For Kentucky growers, the first step in the process is to complete the Produce Farm Survey. The survey, which can be completed on-line or via a mail-in-survey card, is a requirement of Kentucky's Produce Safety Regulation for all produce growers regardless of farm size or sales. If you have not already completed this survey, you can do so on-line by visiting the KDA's Produce Safety page on its website.

For more information about the survey, the grower trainer course or the inspection process, contact Melissa Rutledge, KDA Education & Outreach Coordinator at (502) 229-4032 or Melissa.rutledge@ky.gov.

Click [here](#) to read the full article.

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

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced new features on the 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:

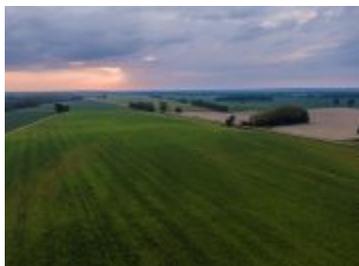
- A real-time dashboard that enables farmers to track the status of their eligible employer application and visa applications for temporary nonimmigrant workers;
- Streamlining the login information so if a farmer has an existing login.gov account they can save multiple applications tracking numbers 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.

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 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.

Producers with Crop Insurance to Receive Premium Benefit for Cover Crops



Agricultural producers who have coverage under most crop insurance policies are eligible for a premium benefit from the USDA if they planted cover crops during this crop year. The Pandemic Cover Crop Program (PCCP), offered by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA), helps farmers maintain their cover crop systems, despite the financial challenges posed by the pandemic.

The PCCP is part of USDA's [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) initiative, a bundle of programs to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions.

About the Premium Benefit

PCCP provides premium support to producers who insured their spring crop with most insurance policies and planted a qualifying cover crop during the 2021 crop year. The premium support is \$5 per acre, but no more than the full premium owed.

Illinois, Indiana and Iowa have existing programs for producers to receive a premium benefit for planting cover crops. In these states, participating producers will receive an additional benefit.

All cover crops reportable to FSA are eligible and include cereals and other grasses, legumes, brassicas and other non-legume broadleaves, and mixtures of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time.

To receive the benefit for this program, producers must file a [Report of Acreage form \(FSA-578\)](#) for cover crops with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) by June 15, 2021, which is distinct from the normal acreage reporting date. The normal acreage reporting deadline with FSA has not changed, but to receive the premium benefit, producers must file by June 15. The cover crop fields reported on the Report of Acreage form must match what the producer reported to their insurance company for crop insurance policies. To file the form, producers must contact and make an appointment with their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Program Details

Certain policies are not eligible because they have underlying coverage, which would already receive the benefit or are not designed to be reported in a manner consistent with the Report of Acreage form (FSA-578). PCCP is not available for Whole-Farm Revenue Protection, Enhanced Coverage Option, Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index, and Supplemental Coverage Option. Stacked Income Protection (STAX) and Margin

Protection (MP) policies are only eligible for PCCP when insured as a standalone policy. STAX and MP endorsements to underlying policies are not eligible for PCCP.

PCCP does not change acreage reporting dates, reporting requirements, or any other terms of the crop insurance policy.

Cover Crop Conservation Practice Standard

Meanwhile, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made the determination not to update its conservation practice standard for cover crops. NRCS originally proposed restricting mechanical harvest of cover crops, but after reviewing input from agricultural producers and groups, NRCS recognizes this could present challenges for producers who use this important conservation practice. The latest version of the conservation practice standard can be found in the [Field Office Technical Guide](#) under Section IV, Conservation Practices and Supporting Documents, by State.

A [Notice of Funding Availability](#) was posted on the *Federal Register*. Additional information on PCCP, including [frequently asked questions](#), can be found at farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/cover-crops.

RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

June 2021 Selected Interest Rates

Farm Loan Programs	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans - Direct	1.875%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct	3.250%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct FO Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	2.875%

Farm Programs Farm Storage Facility Loans	
3 Year	0.375%
5 Year	0.875%
7 Year	1.275%
10 Year	1.625%
12 Year	1.750%
15 Year	2.000%
Commodity Loans	1.125%

CCC Borrowing Rate	0.125%
--------------------	--------

Kentucky State FSA Office

771 Corporate Dr., Ste 205
Lexington, KY 40503
Phone: 859-224-7601
[Visit State Webpage](#)

State Committee:
Brenda Paul, Chair
Tom Flowers
Kenney Imel
Bart Peters
Kerry Lyons

Acting State Executive Director
Debbie Wakefield
859-785-7701
debbie.wakefield@usda.gov

Executive Officer
Robert W. Finch 859-224-7696
bob.finch@usda.gov

Administrative Officer
Clark Sturgeon 859-224-7622
clark.sturgeon@usda.gov

Farm Loan Chief
Mike Hoyt 859-224-7440
mike.hoyt@usda.gov

Farm Program Chief
Jennifer Farmer 859-224-7614
jennifer.farmer@usda.gov

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).

 **SHARE**

USDA Farm Service Agency
www.fsa.usda.gov | [contact us](#)



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:
[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Help](#)