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FSA Offices are now making appointments to sign up for the 2022 ARC/PLC Program. Call your local FSA Office for an appointment!

Emergency Conservation Program Assistance

FSA is accepting ECP applications in Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, St Bernard, St Charles, St Helena, St James, St John the Baptist, St Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Washington, and West Feliciana Parishes. If you've suffered a loss from a natural disaster may contact your local FSA County Office and request assistance from October 12, 2021 to December 13, 2021.

ECP helps you with the cost to restore damaged farmland to pre-disaster conditions. You may receive up to 75 percent of the cost of approved restoration activity. Limited resource, socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers may receive up to 90 percent cost-share.

In most cases, you must apply for assistance prior to beginning reconstructive work. FSA's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and environmental compliance review process is required to be completed before any actions are taken. Submitting an application after reconstructive work has been completed may not qualify for ECP. Conservation concerns that were present on the land prior to the disaster are not eligible for ECP assistance.

FSA County Committees will evaluate applications based on information provided and if applicable, an on-site inspection of the damaged land, taking into consideration the type and extent of the damage. Submission of an application does not guarantee that cost-share funding will be provided.

Contact your local FSA office for approved ECP practices.

Emergency Forest Restoration Program

FSA is accepting EFRP applications in Livingston, Washington, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and St. Helena Parishes. If you've suffered a loss from a natural disaster may contact your local FSA County Office and request assistance from October 12, 2021 to December 13, 2021.

EFRP provides payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land to enable them to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster. After applications are received, local FSA County Committees determine land eligibility using information provided and if applicable, an on-site damage inspection to assess the type and extent of damage.

Eligible forest restoration practices include debris removal, such as down or damaged trees, in order to establish a new stand or provide natural regeneration; site preparation, planting materials and labor to replant forest land; restoration of forestland roads, fire lanes, fuel breaks or erosion control structures; fencing, tree shelters and tree tubes to protect trees from wildlife damage; and wildlife enhancement to provide cover openings and wildlife habitat.

In order to meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and be sustainable for growing trees. The land must also be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land. The natural disaster must have resulted in damage that if untreated would impair or endanger the natural resources on the land and/or materially affect future use of the land.

More Information

For more information on disaster recovery, visit farmers.gov/recover, or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA Provides \$1.8 Billion to Offset Market Fluctuations

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is in the process of issuing \$1.8 billion in payments to agricultural producers who enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2020 crop year. These payments provide critical support to help mitigate fluctuations in either revenue or prices for certain crops. These two USDA safety-net programs help producers of certain crops build back better after facing the impacts of COVID-19 and other challenges.

In addition, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is encouraging producers to contact their local USDA Service Centers to make or change elections and to enroll for 2022 ARC or PLC, providing future protections against market fluctuations. The election and enrollment period opened on Oct. 18, 2021 and runs through March 15, 2022.

2020 Payments and Contracts

ARC and PLC payments for a given crop year are paid out the following fall to allow actual county yields and the Market Year Average prices to be finalized. This month, FSA processed

payments to producers enrolled in 2020 ARC-County (ARC-CO), ARC-Individual (ARC-IC) and PLC for covered commodities that triggered for the crop year.

For ARC-CO, view the [2020 ARC-CO Benchmark Yields and Revenues online database](#) for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity.

For PLC, payments have triggered for barley, canola, chickpeas (large and small), dry peas, flaxseed, lentils, peanuts, seed cotton and wheat. More information on rice payments will be announced later this fall and in early 2022.

For ARC-IC, producers should contact their local FSA office for additional information pertaining to 2020 payment information, which relies on producer-specific yields for the crop and farm to determine benchmark yields and actual year yields when calculating revenues.

By the Numbers

More than 1.7 million contracts were signed in 2019. In 2020, producers signed nearly 1.8 million ARC or PLC contracts, and 251 million out of 273 million base acres were enrolled in the programs. In 2021, signed contracts surpassed 1.8 million.

Since the ARC and PLC were authorized by in the 2014 Farm Bill and reauthorized by in the 2018 Farm Bill, these safety-net programs have paid out more than \$32.5 billion to producers of covered commodities.

2022 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-CO or PLC, which are both crop-by-crop, or ARC-IC, which is for the entire farm. Although election changes for 2022 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2022, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2022, the election remains the same as the 2021 election for crops on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed, and wheat.

Web-Based Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), a tool available through the University of Illinois allows producers to estimate payments for farms and counties for ARC-CO and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), a tool available through Texas A&M allows producers to estimate payments and yield updates and expected payments for 2022.

Crop Insurance Considerations

ARC and PLC are part of a broader safety net provided by USDA, which also includes crop insurance and marketing assistance loans.

Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products.

Producers on farms with a PLC election have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider; however, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres for that farm.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

Farm Loan teams throughout Louisiana are already working on operating loans for spring 2022 so it is important that potential borrowers submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team 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 operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Staff at your local FSA office can provide more details on farm operating and microloans and provide loan applications. 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, or 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.

Please call your local FSA office if you have questions about any of the loans available through FSA.

Borrower Training for Farm Loan Customers

Borrower training is available for all Farm Service Agency (FSA) customers. This training is required for all direct loan applicants, unless the applicant has a waiver issued by the agency.

Borrower training includes instruction in production and financial management. The purpose is to help the applicants develop and improve skills that are necessary to successfully operate a farm and build equity in the operation. It aims to help the producer become financially successful. Borrower training is provided, for a fee, by agency approved vendors. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager for a list of approved vendors.

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a customer receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

A service is any information, program, or loan assistance provided whether through an office visit, email, fax, or letter.

USDA and SCORE Joining Forces to Find 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.

USDA is collaborating with SCORE – score.org - the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors in an effort 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. FSA invites you to learn more and sign up to become a mentor today at newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship.

USDA to Collect Final 2021 Crop Production and Stocks Data

Beginning Nov. 29, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will contact producers nationwide to gather final year-end crop production numbers and the amount of grain and oilseed stored on their farms. At the same time, NASS will survey grain facility operators to determine year-end grain and oilseed stocks.

Responses to the producer survey will be included in calculating state and parish yields. This is your only opportunity to be included in the calculation used for Louisiana parish yields.

Learn more about the survey at nass.usda.gov

Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Under WHIP+ and/or QLA

If you received a payment under the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLA) for crop production and/or quality losses occurring in 2018, 2019, or 2020 crop years, you are required to meet linkage requirements by obtaining federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level, or higher, for both the 2022 and 2023 crop years.

When applying for WHIP+ or QLA, form FSA-895 (Crop Insurance and/or NAP Coverage Agreement) was submitted acknowledging the requirement to obtain federal crop insurance, if available, or NAP coverage if federal crop insurance is not available. The coverage requirement is applicable to the physical location county of the crop that received WHIP+ and/or QLA benefits.

Producers should not delay contacting their federal crop insurance agent or local county FSA Office to inquire about coverage options, as **failure to obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will result in the required refund of WHIP+ benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest.** You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by [visiting the RMA website](#).

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

USDA Issuing Approximately \$270 Million in Pandemic Assistance to Poultry, Livestock Contract Producers

USDA has begun issuing approximately \$270 million in payments to contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry who applied for Pandemic Assistance. Earlier this year, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) identified gaps in assistance including in the initial proposal to assist contract growers. In August, USDA [released the improved program for contract producers to fill these gaps](#), providing support as part of USDA's broader [Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative](#).

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided funding for payments to contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry for revenue losses from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 27, 2020. Contract producers of broilers, pullets, chicken eggs, turkeys, hogs and pigs, ducks, geese, pheasants and quail were eligible for assistance, along with eligible breeding stock and eggs of all eligible poultry types produced under contract. Signup ran from Aug. 24, 2021, through Oct. 12, 2021.

In total, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2), of which assistance for contract producers is part, provided more than [\\$18.8 billion to producers](#) whose operations were impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. CFAP 2 had a fourfold increase in participation by historically underserved producers since the program reopened in April 2021. This highlights USDA's commitment to increase outreach, education and technical assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers, including by investing [\\$4.7 million to assist in targeted outreach](#) for FSA programs.

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2021 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on Nov. 1, 2021, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 6, 2021.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2021 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

Important Dates

- **Dec. 6** County Committee election ballots must be postmarked or returned to your local FSA Office
- **Dec. 24** USDA Service Centers will be closed in observance of the Christmas Holiday
- **Dec. 31** USDA Service Centers will be closed in observance of the New Year's Holiday
- **March 15, 2022** is the deadline so sign up for 2022 ARC/PLC

Louisiana FSA now offers SMS texting; receive text message alerts on your cell phone regarding important deadlines, reporting requirements and updates. Contact your local FSA Office for more information.

All USDA Service Centers in Louisiana are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, but Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools.

Call your Service Center to schedule an appointment. You can find contact information at farmers.gov/service-locator.

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