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Just Around the Corner

Cover Crops

May 31 is the acreage reporting deadline for cover crops planted after March 15, 2022, to be counted for PCCP.

Grains & Oilseeds

May 31 is [Marketing Assistance Loan \(MAL\)](#) application deadline for prior year harvested corn, soybeans and other oilseeds, rice, grain sorghum, and pulse crops

Nurseries

May 31 is the crop reporting deadline for June 2022 to May 2023 nursery crops

May 31 is the deadline to sign up for June 2022 to May 2023 [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) coverage for nursery crops.

More Information

This information is for general awareness. Program deadlines may change or vary by county. Be sure to verify program deadlines for your land or operation by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).



Showcase Your Season with #Plant2022

This planting season let's highlight the innovation and leadership demonstrated by conservation-minded farmers in our #Plant2022 campaign. We'll share your photos and stories on social media, blogs, and a nationwide storymap.

Learn more at <https://go.usa.gov/xuTqj>.



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Michigan

USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories confirmed the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in commercial and backyard flocks in several states including Michigan.

Avian influenza viruses are classified as either "low pathogenic (LPAI)" or "highly pathogenic (HPAI)" based on their genetic features and the severity of the disease they cause in poultry. Caused by an influenza type A virus, HPAI can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and wild birds (especially waterfowl).



The clinical signs of birds affected with all forms of Avian Influenza may show one or more of the following:

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Decreased water consumption up to 72 hours before other clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Soft-shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, and legs
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Lack of coordination
- Diarrhea

In addition to the disease infecting domestic birds, it is important to know that wild birds can also be infected and show no signs of illness. They can carry the disease to new areas when migrating, potentially exposing domestic poultry to the virus. The [APHIS' wild bird surveillance program](#) provides an early warning system for the introduction and distribution of avian influenza viruses of concern in the United States, allowing APHIS and the poultry industry to take timely and rapid action.

With the recent detections of avian influenza in wild birds and domestic poultry in the United States, bird owners should review their biosecurity practices and stay vigilant to protect poultry and pet birds from transmission of this disease. The following bio-safety guidelines are effective methods for safeguarding commercial operations and smaller flocks:

- Backyard flock owners should practice strict biosecurity, including preventing birds from exposure and/or co-mingling with wild birds and other types of poultry.

- Shower, change clothes, and clean and disinfect footwear before entering your poultry housing areas.
- Respiratory protection such as a medical facemask would also be important and remember to always wear clean clothes when encountering healthy domestic birds.
- Carefully follow safe entry and exit procedures into your flock's clean area.
- Reduce the attractiveness for wild birds to stop at your place by cleaning up litter and spilled feed around poultry housing areas.
- If you have free range guinea fowl and waterfowl, consider bringing them into coops or flight pens under nets to prevent interaction of domesticated poultry with wild birds and their droppings.
- It is best to restrict visitors from interacting with your birds currently.
- Do not touch sick or dead wildlife and keep them away from domestic poultry
- Try not to handle sick or deceased domestic birds (if you must, use proper personal protective equipment to minimize direct contact and cautiously disinfect anything that comes into contact with the deceased and or sick bird).

As part of the existing USDA Avian Influenza response plans, Federal and State partners as well as industry are responding quickly and decisively to these outbreaks by following these five basic steps:

- **Quarantine** – restricting movement of poultry and poultry-moving equipment into and out of the control area;
- **Eradicate** – depopulate the affected flock(s);
- **Monitor region** – testing wild and domestic birds in a broad area around the quarantine area;
- **Disinfect** – kills the virus in the affected flock locations; and
- **Test** – confirming that the poultry farm is AI virus-free.

Sick or deceased domestic birds should be reported to your local veterinarian. Positive domestic cases are handled by APHIS and its partners. States that have confirmed cases of Avian Influenza should work closely with USDA-APHIS on surveillance, reporting and control efforts. Disposal methods will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the flock, space requirements, associated costs, local conditions, and applicable laws/regulations.

The United States has the strongest Avian Influenza surveillance program in the world, where we actively look for the disease and provide fair market value compensation to affected producers to encourage reporting.

If you do not raise domestic birds or have a poultry operation but you encounter sick or dead wild birds, please use bio-safety measures, and report your findings through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, this strain of Avian Influenza is a low risk to the public. While the transmission rate from animals to humans is low, it is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be shared between species. To learn more about Avian Influenza and to remain up to date on the latest related news and information, you can visit the USDA [APHIS webpage](#).

USDA Updates Crop Insurance to Respond to Producer Needs, Support Conservation and Climate Mitigation Efforts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making updates to crop insurance to respond to the needs of agricultural producers, including organic producers, as well as to support conservation of natural resources on agricultural land.



Specifically, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is making permanent a new provision that allows producers to hay, graze or chop cover crops and still receive a full prevented planting payment. To accommodate the different farming practices across the country, RMA is also increasing flexibility related to the prevented planting "1 in 4" requirement, as well as aligning crop insurance definitions with USDA's National Organic Program.

Haying, Grazing, and Chopping of Cover Crops

In July, RMA announced producers can [hay, graze, or chop cover crops for silage, haylage, or baleage at any time](#) and still receive 100% of the prevented planting payment. Previously, cover crops could only be hayed, grazed or chopped after Nov. 1. Otherwise, the prevented planting payment was reduced by 65% if producers took those actions on the cover crop.

RMA added this flexibility starting with the 2021 crop year as part of a broader effort to encourage producers to use cover crops, an important conservation and good farming practice. Cover crops are especially important on fields prevented from being planted because they cover ground that would otherwise be left bare, which helps reduce soil erosion, boost soil health and increase soil carbon sequestration.

This change builds on the advanced research and identified benefits cover crops have supporting healthy soils and cropland sustainability efforts. Studies also show that cover crops provide increased corn and soybean yields. While results vary by region and soil type, cover crops are proven to reduce erosion, improve water quality and increase the health and productivity of the soil while building resilience to climate change. Additionally, RMA provided a premium benefit to producers who planted cover crops through the [Pandemic Cover Crop Program](#) to help producers maintain cover crop systems amid the financially challenging pandemic.

"1 in 4" Requirement Flexibilities

For the 2020 crop year, RMA implemented a policy stating that for land to be eligible for prevented planting coverage, the acreage must meet the "1 in 4" requirement, which means the land must be planted, insured and harvested in at least one of the four most recent crop years. Now, RMA is adding flexibilities to recognize different farming practices and crops grown, as well as the availability of risk management options.

New flexibilities allowed in order to meet the "1 in 4" requirement include:

- The annual regrowth for an insured perennial crop, such as alfalfa, red clover, or mint, to be considered planted.
- Allow a crop covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) to meet the insurability requirement.
- If crop insurance or NAP coverage was not available, allow the producer to prove the acreage was planted and harvested using good farming practices in at least two consecutive years out of the four previous years to meet the insurability requirement.

Aligning Organic Terms

RMA is revising four organic definitions to be consistent with USDA's National Organic Program. Consistency across USDA programs is important to eliminate the potential for confusion between the various programs that USDA is committed to providing to the producers.

This change builds on other RMA efforts to expand and improve current options for organic producers. In Sept. 2021, RMA announced several [updates to Whole-Farm Revenue Protection \(WFRP\)](#), including increasing farm operation growth limits for organic producers to the higher of \$500,000 or 35% over the five-year average allowable income, and to allowing a producer to report acreage as certified organic, or as acreage in transition to organic, when the producer has requested an organic certification by the acreage reporting date. In addition, RMA announced it will be offering the new Micro Farm policy through WFRP that specifically targets coverage for small, diversified farmers, including organic growers.

Other Changes

RMA made other changes to Common Crop Insurance Policy Basic Provisions, Area Risk Protection Insurance Regulations, Coarse Grains Crop Insurance Provisions, and other insurance provisions, which published today:

- RMA is providing an option for producers to delay measurement of farm-stored production for 180-days through the Special Provisions, similar to flexibilities already available to grain crop producers.
- RMA added earlage and snaplage as an acceptable method of harvest for coarse grains. During the 2020 Derecho, many producers salvaged their damaged corn crop by harvesting as earlage or snaplage instead of grain or silage.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?

Farmers and ranchers rely on crop insurance to protect themselves from disasters and unforeseen events, but not all crops are insurable through the USDA's Risk Management Agency. The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides producers another option to obtain coverage against disaster for these crops. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insured crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevents crop planting.



Commercially produced crops and agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available are generally eligible for NAP. Eligible crops include those grown specifically for food, fiber, livestock consumption, biofuel or biobased products, or be commodities such as value loss crops like Christmas trees and ornamental nursery, honey, maple sap, and many others. Contact your FSA office to see which crops are eligible in your state and county.

Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, earthquake, flood. These events must occur during the NAP policy coverage period, before or during harvest, and the disaster must directly affect the eligible crop. For guidance on causes of loss not listed, contact your local FSA county office.

Interested producers must apply for coverage and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. These must be filed by the application closing date. Closing dates vary by crop, so it is important to contact your local FSA office as soon as possible to ensure you don't miss an application closing date.

Producers are required to pay service fees which vary depending on the number of crops and number of counties your operation is located in. The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums also apply when producers elect higher levels of coverage with a maximum premium of \$15,750 per person or legal entity depending on the maximum payment limitation that may apply to the NAP covered producer. The service fee can be waived for beginning, qualifying veteran, and limited resource farmers and rancher., These farmers and ranchers can also receive a 50 percent reduction in the premium.

NAP participants must provide accurate annual reports of their production in non-loss years to ensure their NAP coverage is beneficial to their individual operation.

For more detailed information on NAP, download the [NAP Fact Sheet](#). To get started with NAP, we recommend you contact your [local USDA service center](#).

FSA Accepting Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment Offers

FSA is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#).



About CRP

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

Additional Incentives

Through CRP Continuous, there are also opportunities for eligible agriculture landowners to participate in USDA partnership programs with the State of Michigan, including the [Michigan Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#), State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Pollinator Habitat, SAFE Pheasant and Monarch Recovery, and [CRP Clean Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers Program \(CLEAR30\)](#).

More Information

For more information, including a list of acceptable practices, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp.

Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes. Doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.



Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

May 2022 Lending Rates

FSA loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment and storage structures or meet cash flow needs.



Operating, Ownership and Emergency Loans

FSA offers farm ownership and operating loans with favorable interest rates and terms to help eligible agricultural producers, whether multi-generational, long-time, or new to the industry, obtain financing needed to start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. FSA also offers emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters or quarantine. For many loan options, FSA sets aside funding for historically underserved producers, including veterans, beginning, women, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic farmers and ranchers

Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for May 2022 are as follows:

- [Farm Operating Loans](#) (Direct): 2.875%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct): 3.375%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct, Joint Financing): 2.500%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Down Payment): 1.500%
- [Emergency Loan](#) (Amount of Actual Loss): 3.750%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. You can find out which of these loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) ([also available in Spanish](#)).

Commodity and Storage Facility Loans

Additionally, FSA provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade on-farm storage facilities and purchase handling equipment and loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low. Funds for these loans are provided through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and are administered by FSA.

- [Commodity Loans](#) (less than one year disbursed): 2.750%
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#):
 - Three-year loan terms: 2.625%
 - Five-year loan terms: 2.625%
 - Seven-year loan terms: 2.625%
 - Ten-year loan terms: 2.625%
 - Twelve-year loan terms: 2.625%
- [Sugar Storage Facility Loans](#) (15 years): 2.750%

More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).

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