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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Nebraska FSA State Office Newsletter

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Tim Divis (acting)

A Message from the Acting State Executive Director

I have been seeing more and more of you in the field (in between weather events) over the past several weeks, preparing the ground for planting season.

As you gear up for this effort, please keep Nebraska FSA in mind. Acreage reporting is an eligibility requirement in order to receive most FSA program benefits, and with that reporting, we need to know details such as what you planted, where you planted it and when you planted it. Keeping track of this

State Committee:

Scott Spilker, *chair*
Geoff Ruth
Lonnie Starke
Mark Jagels

Program Chiefs:

Cathy
Anderson, *Production/Compliance*
Doug Klein, *Conservation/Price Support*
Mark Wilke, *Farm Loans*

Patty Wilke, *Administrative Officer*
Bobbie Kriz-Wickham, *Public Affairs and Outreach*

To find more information about FSA programming or contact information for your local office, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

information while you are in the field is critical to helping us help you through the acreage certification process once you are done planting for the season.

So, whether it's a small notebook, your cell phone, digital records created by your tractor's technology, or maps provided ahead of time by your county FSA office, please use something to record your actions. We will be able to assist you better with that information in hand at your certification appointment. Please contact your county FSA office ahead of time to learn what process it is using for acreage reporting this season. For more information on the acreage reporting process, [please take a look at this short video](#).

Our offices continue to receive phone calls regarding the Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative and the American Rescue Plan Act. There are a number of parts to each of these, and not all parts are being implemented by Farm Service Agency. To learn more about each of these, please read the articles below and/or click on these links: [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) and [American Rescue Plan Act](#). You also can learn more during a [May 6 webinar](#) as part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Farm and Ranch Management Series.

A big part of FSA's role in the Pandemic Assistance for Producers is the reopening of applications for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2). This is a direct financial assistance program created in response to the impacts of the global pandemic. Most crops and livestock raised and grown in Nebraska are eligible. **We want to be sure producers with operations of all sizes and types are aware of the opportunity to apply for this assistance.** If you haven't already, please contact your county FSA office to inquire about CFAP 2.

That's it for this month. Best wishes and good luck with spring planting and calving.

--Tim Divis

FSA Dates to Remember

May 31, 2021 – USDA Service Centers closed for federal holiday

June 1, 2021 – 2020 Marketing Assistance Loan availability deadline for corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seed

July 15, 2021 – Deadline to report all spring-seeded crops, perennial forage and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage

FSA Reopens CFAP 2 Signup for Additional Enrollment, Updates CFAP Provisions

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced signup has reopened for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. The initial CFAP 2 signup ended on Dec. 11, 2020, but USDA has reopened signup for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning April 5, 2021, for producers who have not yet applied or for those who need to make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.

CFAP 2 provides direct financial relief to producers due to market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. CFAP 2 payments will be made for three categories of commodities – Price Trigger Commodities, Flat-rate Crops and Sales Commodities.

Visit farmers.gov/cfap/commodities for a full list of eligible commodities for each category. Most crops and livestock grown and raised in Nebraska are eligible for this program.

Price Trigger Commodities

Price trigger commodities are major commodities that meet a minimum 5-percent price decline over a specified period of time. Eligible price trigger crops include barley, corn, sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers, and all classes of wheat. Payments will be based on 2020 planted acres of the crop, excluding prevented planting and experimental acres.

For broilers and eggs, payments will be based on 75 percent of the producers' 2019 production.

Dairy (cow's milk) payments will be based on actual milk production.

Eligible beef cattle, hogs and pigs, and lambs and sheep payments will be based on the maximum owned inventory of eligible livestock, excluding breeding stock, on a date selected by the producer, between April 16, 2020, and Aug. 31, 2020.

Flat-rate Crops

Crops that either do not meet the 5-percent price decline trigger or do not have data available to calculate a price change will have payments calculated based on eligible 2020 acres multiplied by \$15 per acre. These crops include alfalfa, oats, hemp, millet, mustard, safflower, sesame, triticale, rapeseed, and several others.

Sales Commodities

Sales commodities include specialty crops; aquaculture; nursery crops and floriculture; other commodities not included in the price trigger and flat-rate categories, turfgrass sod; pullets; goat milk; mink (including pelts); mohair; wool; and other livestock (excluding breeding stock), not included under the price trigger category that were grown for food, fiber, fur, or feathers. Payment calculations will use a sales-based approach, where producers are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales, and crop insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) payments for crop year 2019.

Applying for CFAP 2

Visit farmers.gov/cfap for details on all eligible commodities, producer eligibility, payment limitations and structure and additional program resources.

Producers have multiple options to apply for CFAP 2, including through an online application portal and by working directly with their local FSA office. Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process also can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

Additional CFAP Payments for Beef and Row-Crop Producers

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorizes an increase in CFAP 1 payment rates for cattle. Cattle producers with approved CFAP 1 applications will automatically receive these payments and do not need to submit a new application since payments are based on previously approved CFAP 1 applications. Producers may be asked for additional information depending on how they filed the original application. Information on the additional payment rates for cattle can be found on farmers.gov/cfap.

This act also authorized additional CFAP assistance of \$20 per acre for producers of eligible CFAP 2 flat-rate or price trigger commodities. FSA will automatically issue payments to eligible producers based on the eligible acres included on their CFAP 2 applications. Eligible producers do not need to submit a new CFAP 2 application.

Additional CFAP Actions

FSA has also begun payment processing applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance program in the following categories:

- Applications filed for pullets and turfgrass sod;
- A formula correction for row-crop producer applications to allow producers with a non-Actual Production History (APH) insurance policy to use 100% of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield in the calculation; and
- Sales commodity applications revised to include insurance indemnities, NAP payments, and WHIP+ payments.

Additional payments for swine producers and contract growers under CFAP Additional Assistance remain on hold and are likely to require modifications to the regulation as part of the broader evaluation and future assistance; however, FSA will continue to accept applications from interested producers.

Nebraska FSA will participate in a May 6 webinar as part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Farm and Ranch Management Series to discuss CFAP details as outlined in the Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative. [To view details and register, click here.](#)

American Rescue Plan Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Payments

USDA recognizes that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have faced systemic discrimination with cumulative effects that have, among other consequences, led to a substantial loss in the number of socially disadvantaged producers, reduced the amount of farmland they control, and contributed to a cycle of debt that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, socially disadvantaged communities saw a disproportionate amount of COVID-19 infection rates, loss of property, hospitalizations, death, and economic hurt.

To address these systemic challenges, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides historic debt relief to socially disadvantaged producers including Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander. To learn more about USDA implementation of this legislation, please visit farmers.gov/americanrescueplan.

More guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. As information becomes available, it will be provided directly to socially disadvantaged borrowers and stakeholder groups representing socially

disadvantaged producers, posted on farmers.gov, and shared through social media channels, email newsletters, and the media.

Who qualifies for this debt relief?

Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies. The American Rescue Plan Act uses the 2501 definition of socially disadvantaged, which includes Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander. Gender is not a criterion in and of itself, but of course women are included in these categories.

I qualify as socially disadvantaged under the American Rescue Plan definition, but I am not late on my payments. Do I still qualify?

Yes. Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies.

When will qualified borrowers begin to see a loan pay-off or other payment in response to the American Rescue Plan?

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. For borrowers in arrears, the moratorium established on January 26th to stop all debt collections, foreclosures and evictions for all borrowers, including socially disadvantaged producers, remains in effect.

Producers who have worked with USDA's Farm Service Agency previously may have their ethnicity and race on file. A borrower, including those with guaranteed loans, can contact their local USDA Service Center to verify, update or submit a new ethnicity and race designation using the AD-2047. Find your nearest service center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

To learn more about USDA's work to implement the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, visit www.usda.gov/arp.

Reminders for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations
- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

FSA April Interest Rates

OPERATING/OWNERSHIP

Farm Operating: 1.5%

Microloan Operating: 1.5%

Farm Ownership: 2.875%

Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.5%

Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.5%

Emergency - Actual Loss: 2.5%

FARM STORAGE

Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 year term: 0.250%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 year term: 0.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 year term: 1.250%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 year term: 1.5%

Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 year term: 1.750%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 1.125%

Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

NAP provides financial assistance for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

To receive payment, you had to purchase NAP coverage for 2021 crops and file a notice of loss the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

For hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

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

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible losses include:

- **Livestock** - grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.
- **Honeybee** - loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.
- **Farm-Raised Fish** - death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

If you've suffered eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses during calendar year 2021, you must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent (15 days for honeybee losses) and an application for payment by Jan. 30, 2022.

CRP Enrollment Open in Select Counties for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Nebraska and the State of Nebraska currently are taking applications for enrollment in the Platte-Republican Resources Area Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP is a voluntary program that is part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) operated by FSA. The Platte-Republican Resources Area CREP is available for enrollment in certain Nebraska counties in the project area. To view a map of the eligible project area and learn more about the CREP, [click here](#).

CREP allows states to develop projects with specific end goals, and its costs are shared between the federal government and state resources. FSA and the State of Nebraska launched the Platte-Republican Resources Area CREP in 2005. It is designed to reduce irrigation water use, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat through the establishment of vegetative cover using approved CRP practices.

Under the Nebraska Platte-Republican River CREP, landowners are provided irrigated land rental payments to convert their irrigated crop land into CRP habitat. In addition to the annual rental payments, signing incentive and practice incentive payments are available, as well as cost-share funds. Up to 100,000 acres can be enrolled in the project in Nebraska, with the contracts running from 10-15 years.

CREP is available to landowners/farmers with property in specified areas of the Republican River Basin and the North Platte, South Platte and Platte River basins.

Landowners/farmers with questions about this program should contact their county FSA office for more information. To find your nearest county FSA office, [click this county office locator tool](#).

Program Participants Must Maintain Acres Enrolled in ARC/PLC, CRP; Includes Control of Noxious Weeds

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants also must control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Nebraska is May 1 through July 15. Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

For reference, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture has designated 12 weeds in the state as noxious: Canada thistle, leafy spurge, musk thistle, plumeless thistle, purple loostribe, spotted and diffuse knapweeds, saltcedar, phragmites, sericea lespedeza, Japanese knotweed, Bohemian knotweed and giant knotweed.

County FSA offices will complete field visits and spot-checks of ARC/PLC and CRP acreage and will consult with county weed authorities as necessary. This effort usually begins the later part of May and continues through the summer months.

Share Your Planting Season Experience for #Plant2021

Spring has sprung and it's planting time! For many, 2020 was the first year they'd ever seen an empty shelf at the grocery store. And for the first time, many people realized how much they take farming and the people who make it possible for granted. Let's change that. Let Farmers.gov showcase your work by participating in the #Plant2021 campaign. We'll share your stories on social media and our nationwide [storymap](#). [Here's how](#).

USDA Invests \$50 Million in Innovative, Partner-Driven Conservation Projects; Still Accepting Applications

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced a \$50 million investment in 10 conservation projects across 16 states through its Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). Through these projects, partners will contribute more than \$65 million to amplify the conservation work that can be performed on agricultural land and privately owned forests across the nation.

Partners are given the liberty to manage an RCPP project and the associated relationships with participating producers and landowners. They identify those producers and landowners, contract with them, and carry out the technical assistance. In addition, through the AFA provision, NRCS has the authority to pursue innovative conservation approaches, such as pay-for-performance, that are not possible under RCPP Classic. In an example of a Nebraska-based project, the Nebraska Forest Service was awarded funding for the **Nebraska Forest Restoration Partnership**. The Forest Service will develop a "forests first" effort to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration, windbreak renovation, and tree canopy recovery throughout the state.

NRCS is accepting AFA project proposals now through May 28. Information about submitting project proposals is available on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Visit the [RCPP website](#) for full project details.

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).