

April 2021



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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North Dakota FSA eNews

USDA Service Centers in North Dakota are working with customers by appointment only because of the pandemic. The **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** and **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** staff also **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.

North Dakota Farm Service Agency

North Dakota State Office
1025 28th St. S
Fargo, ND 58103

Calendar Deadlines

April 9, 2021: Deadline to apply for the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (**Deadline is TODAY!**)

June 15, 2021: 2021 Nominations open for 2021 FSA County Committee Elections

July 15, 2021: Acreage Reporting Deadline for 2021 Crop Year spring planted crops and perennial forage

July 15, 2021: 2020 ARC-IC Production Certification

Phone: 701-239-5224
Fax: 855-813-6644

Underway: Conservation Reserve Program ([CRP](#)) [General Signup](#)
(Deadline TBD)

Acting State Executive Director: Brian Haugen

State Committee (STC):
Jim Hauge, Chairperson
Erika Kenner, Member
Edward Kessel, Member
Barton Schott, Member

State Office Staff:
Administrative Officer
Amber Briss
Compliance/Payment Limitations
Ronald Duvall
Conservation/Livestock
Wanda Braton
ARC/PLC/NAP/Disaster
Laura Heinrich
Farm Loan Programs
Mary Sue Ohlhauser
Price Support
Brian Haugen

Explore the new USDA [Farmers.gov](#) portal for county office locations, program info, and much more!

Policy Reminders: [2021 Annual Notification to FSA Customers](#)

April 2021 Loan and Interest Rates

Commodity Loans: **1.125%**
Direct Operating Loans: **1.500%**
Farm Ownership Down Payment: **1.500%**
Direct Farm Ownership Joint Financing: **2.500%**
Direct Farm Ownership Loans: **2.875%**
Emergency Loans Actual Loss: **2.500%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan 3 Year: **0.250%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan 5 Year: **0.750%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 Year: **1.125%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 Year: **1.500%**
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 Year: **1.750%**

Quality Loss Adjustment Program- Deadline is Today!

Deadline to sign up is [April 9, 2021 \(TODAY\)](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is extending the deadline from March 5 to April 9 for agricultural producers to apply for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program because of recent winter storms and some clarifications to program rules. This program assists producers who suffered crop quality losses due to qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disasters.

Quality Loss Adjustment Program Eligible Crops

Eligible crops include those for which [federal crop insurance](#) or [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) coverage is available, except for grazed crops and value loss crops, such as honey, maple sap, aquaculture, floriculture, mushrooms, ginseng root, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, and turfgrass sod.

Additionally, crops that were sold or fed to livestock or that are in storage may be eligible; however, crops that were destroyed before harvest are not eligible. Crop quality losses occurring after harvest, due to deterioration in storage, or that could have been mitigated, are also not eligible.

Assistance is based on a producer's harvested affected production of an eligible crop, which must have had at least a 5% quality loss reflected through a quality discount; or for forage crops, a nutrient loss, such as total digestible nutrients.

Qualifying Disaster Events

Losses must have been a result of a qualifying disaster event (hurricane, excessive moisture, flood, qualifying drought, tornado, typhoon, volcanic activity, snowstorm, or wildfire) or related condition that occurred in calendar years 2018 and/or 2019.

Assistance is available for eligible producers in counties that received a qualifying Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or Secretarial Disaster Designation because of one or more of the qualifying disaster events or related conditions.

Lists of counties with Presidential Emergency Disaster Declarations and Secretarial Disaster Designations for all qualifying disaster events for 2018 and 2019 are available [here](#). For drought, producers are eligible for QLA if the loss occurred in an area within a county rated by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) as having a D3 (extreme drought) or higher intensity level during 2018 or 2019.

Producers in counties that did not receive a qualifying declaration or designation may still apply but must also provide supporting documentation to establish that the crop was directly affected by a qualifying disaster event.

To determine QLA eligibility and payments, FSA considers the total quality loss caused by all qualifying natural disasters in cases where a crop was impacted by multiple events.

Applying for QLA

Producers now have access to a worksheet to assist in summarizing affected production from multiple settlement/assembly sheets to be entered on the FSA-898 QLA application. The worksheet, 'QLA Calculator Worksheet,' can be found at www.farmers.gov/quality-loss under 'Submit Application to USDA Service Center'.

When applying, producers are asked to provide verifiable documentation to support claims of quality loss or nutrient loss in the case of forage crops. For crops that have been sold, grading must have been completed within 30 days of harvest, and for forage crops, a laboratory analysis must have been completed within 30 days of harvest. County FSA Committees have limited authority to accept grading and nutrient analysis completed after 30 days.

Some acceptable forms of documentation include sales receipts from buyers, settlement sheets, truck or warehouse scale tickets, written sales contracts, similar records that represent actual and specific quality loss information, and forage tests for nutritional values.

Payments Calculations and Limitations

QLA payments are based on formulas for the type of crop (forage or non-forage) and loss documentation submitted. Based on this documentation FSA is calculating payments based on the producer's own individual loss or based on the county average loss. More information on payments can be found on farmers.gov/quality-loss.

FSA will issue payments once the application period ends. If the total amount of calculated QLA payments exceeds available program funding, payments will be prorated.

For each crop year, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive, directly or indirectly, is \$125,000. Payments made to a joint operation (including a general partnership or joint venture) will not exceed \$125,000, multiplied by the number of persons and legal entities that comprise the ownership of the joint operation. A person or legal entity is ineligible for QLA payment if the person's or legal entity's average Adjusted Gross Income exceeds \$900,000, unless at least 75% is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities.

Future Insurance Coverage Requirements

All producers receiving QLA Program payments are required to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available crop years at the 60% coverage level or higher. Wildlife and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) participants who already met the WHIP+ requirement to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage are considered to have thereby met the requirement to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage for QLA. If eligible, QLA participants may meet the insurance purchase requirement by purchasing [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection](#) coverage offered through USDA's Risk Management Agency.

More Information

FSA began accepting applications on January 6 and has received more than 8,100 applications so far.

To apply, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Additional information is also available at farmers.gov/quality-loss. Producers can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364.

To watch the educational QLA webinar conducted by NDSU and ND FSA visit: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmmanagement/qla-webinar>

While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Disaster Assistance for 2021 Livestock Forage Losses

Producers in many North Dakota Counties may soon become eligible to apply for 2021 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass and forage sorghum. Certain commodities listed above not planted yet, but if planted with the intent of grazing would be eligible if the County is in a D3 drought status.

The Livestock Forage Program pays eligible producers and contract growers for grazing losses on qualifying drought or fire. North Dakota's grazing period begins April 15 and ends October 15th. For Counties to qualify for the LFP program, a County in a D3 Drought Status, only needs to be in a D3 status for one day; therefore, if on April 15th (the start of ND's grazing period), Counties that are under a D3 drought designation, will become eligible as of April 15th.

[The US Drought Monitor](#) determines the eligibility for the Livestock Forage Program and **currently North Dakota** has **43** Counties that are in D3 drought status according to the [US Drought Monitor](#). County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire. The North Dakota Farm Service Agency is closely watching the U.S. drought monitor to determine which Counties remain in that D3 status as we near the start of the grazing period. Stay tuned for more North Dakota Drought Monitor and LFP updates.

For additional information about LFP, you can visit the [LFP Resource Page](#) and or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#)

USDA Announces Funding Available to Organizations to Assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers under Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative

FSA Accepting CFAP 2 Applications Beginning April 5

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces the availability of \$2 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The funding was made possible by USDA's new Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, an effort to distribute resources more broadly and to put greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers impacted by the pandemic.

FSA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) signup reopened on April 5, 2021, as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Farmers and ranchers will have at least 60 days to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.

Cooperative Agreements The cooperative agreements will support participation in programs offered by FSA, including those that are part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Interested organizations must submit proposals by May 5, 2021.

Outreach and technical assistance cooperative agreements support projects that:

- Increase access and participation of socially disadvantaged applicants in FSA programs and services.
- Improve technical assistance for socially disadvantaged applicants related to county committees focused on urban agriculture as well as FSA programs, including loan, disaster assistance, conservation and safety-net programs.

FSA will prioritize review of proposals that support outreach on CFAP 2. To ensure effective outreach during the signup period for CFAP 2, these applications will be reviewed immediately following the submission deadline for prioritized approval and project initiation.

This funding opportunity is available to non-profits having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (other than institutions of higher education), Federally recognized Native American tribal governments, Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments), and public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, including 1890 land grant institutions and 1994 tribal land-grant colleges and universities.

Awards will range from \$20,000 to \$99,999 for a duration between six months and one year. Applications focusing primarily on CFAP 2 will be expedited. For other proposals, FSA anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by June 20, 2021 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 1, 2021.

For more information, view the cooperative agreement opportunity on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) (No. USDA-FSA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001104) or visit fsa.usda.gov/cooperativeagreements.

Reopening of CFAP 2 CFAP 2 provides financial assistance that gives producers the ability to absorb increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible commodities include specialty crops, livestock, dairy, row crops, aquaculture, floriculture and nursery crops. The initial CFAP 2 signup ended on Dec. 11, 2020, but USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning today. 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 the FSA office at their local USDA Service Center. Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages with the team at the FSA county office.

Additional CFAP Actions

USDA will also finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula.

While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](https://www.usda.gov/service-center). Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

More Information to Come on Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Relief through the American Rescue Plan

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act.

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.

To address these systemic barriers, 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. Gender is not a criteria in and of itself.

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.

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 FSA websites and social media channels, and shared through email newsletters and the media.

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.

Farm Service Agency Expands Payment Options

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) expanded its payment options to now accept debit cards and Automated Clearing House (ACH) debit. These paperless payment options enable FSA customers to pay farm loan payments, measurement service fees, farm program debt repayments and administrative service fees, as well as to purchase aerial maps.

Previously, only cash, check, money orders and wires were accepted. By using debit cards and ACH debit, transactions are securely processed from the customer's financial institution through [Pay.gov](https://pay.gov), the U.S. Treasury's online payment hub.

While traditional collection methods like cash and paper checks will continue, offering the new alternatives will improve effectiveness and convenience to customers while being more cost effective.

This marks the beginning of a multi-phased roll-out of new payment options for USDA customers. Ultimately, payment option flexibility will be extended to allow farmers and producers to use debit cards and ACH debit payments to make payments for all FSA programs, including farm storage facility loan repayments, farm loan facility fees, marketing assistance loan repayments, Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) administrative fees and premiums and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) fees.

To learn more, contact your [FSA county office](#), visit farmers.gov, or download the "[Make Your FSA Payments Instantly](#)" fact sheet.

Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

If you take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral, remember that you are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain Results in Financial Penalties

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and your name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

USDA Announces Updates for Honeybee Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced updates to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) specific to honeybee producers. For honeybees, ELAP covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses (the physical structure) and honeybee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.

Updates include:

- Starting in 2020, you have 15 days from when the loss is first apparent, instead of 30 days, to file a honeybee notice of loss, which provides consistency between ELAP and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which also has a 15-day notice of loss period for honey.
- ELAP will now run according to the calendar year. Since you are still required to apply for payment within 30 calendar days of the end of the program year, the new signup deadline for calendar year 2021 losses is January 30, 2022.
- If you were paid for the loss of a honeybee colony or hive in either or both of the previous two years, you will be required to provide additional documentation to substantiate how your current year inventory was acquired.
- If the honeybee colony loss was caused by Colony Collapse Disorder, you must provide a producer certification that the loss was a direct result of at least three of the five symptoms of Colony Collapse Disorder, which include:
 - the loss of live queen and/or drone bee populations inside the hives;
 - rapid decline of adult worker bee population outside the hives, leaving brood poorly or completely unattended;
 - absence of dead adult bees inside the hive and outside the entrance of the hive;
 - absence of robbing collapsed colonies; and
 - at the time of collapse, varroa mite and Nosema populations are not at levels known to cause economic injury or population decline.

For more information contact the local County Service Center or visit farmers.gov/recover.

Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

CRP contract holders are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the landowner or operator for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires.

CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants must agree to sell, have a contract to sell, or agree to lease long term (at least

five years) land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who is not a family member.

Beginning, veteran or social disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning two years before the expiration date of the CRP contract. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands. New landowners or renters that return the land to production must use sustainable grazing or farming methods.

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 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.

Cover Crop Guidelines

The Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) worked together to develop consistent, simple and a flexible policy for cover crop practices.

Cover crops, such as grasses, legumes, and forbs, can be planted: with no subsequent crop planted, before a subsequent crop, after prevented planting acreage, after a planted crop, or into a standing crop.

Termination:

The cover crop termination guidelines provide the timeline for terminating cover crops, are based on zones and apply to non-irrigated cropland. To view the zones and additional guidelines visit nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/landuse/crops/ and click "Cover Crop Termination Guidelines."

The cover crop may be terminated by natural causes, such as frost, or intentionally terminated through chemical application, crimping, rolling, tillage or cutting. A cover crop managed and terminated according to NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines is not considered a crop for crop insurance purposes.

Reporting:

The intended use of cover only will be used to report cover crops. This includes crops

that were terminated by tillage and reported with an intended use code of green manure. An FSA policy change will allow cover crops to be hayed and grazed. Program eligibility for the cover crop that is being hayed or grazed will be determined by each specific program.

If the crop reported as cover only is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated properly, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop.

Crops reported with an intended use of cover only will not count toward the total cropland on the farm. In these situations, a subsequent crop will be reported to account for all cropland on the farm.

2020 ARC-IC – Farm Benchmark and Actual Yield Certification

Producers, who have a 2020 ARC-IC program contract on one or more FSA farms, must complete the certification of ARC-IC yields for each ARC-IC farm and each covered commodity planted in 2020 by not later than July 15, 2021.

Production evidence that can be used to support the certified yields can be from the following sources:

- Crop Insurance loss records
- Sales records (buyer specific)
- Crop Insurance APH data base records
- Farm stored production records, appraisals

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. You should also report changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase. You should also report any changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC, or other legal entity.

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their Farm Operating Plan on form CCC-902.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

Feeling Overwhelmed? FirstLink Offers Resources to Help

Help is available if you, or someone you know, is in need of emotional support as a result of farm stress. You are not alone, and help is as easy as dialing 2-1-1. The FirstLink Helpline provides confidential listening and support on a variety of topics, including financial assistance and mental health support. For help, or to connect to available resources, dial the 24-hour helpline at 2-1-1 or 701-235-7335 (SEEK). The 24-Hour Suicide Lifeline is 800-273-8255 (TALK). Find FirstLink online at <http://myfirstlink.org/>.

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).



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