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2022 OTECP and OCCSP Signups Open

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program](#) (OTECP) and [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses. **The 2022 OTECP and OCCSP signup period is open until October 31, 2022.**

Cost Share for 2022

OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).
- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per category of certification costs in 2022. In the state of Washington, OCCSP can provide cost share under the following categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, and processing/handling.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible expenses for cost share reimbursement under OCCSP include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage. Itemized invoices documenting paid eligible expenses are required to be submitted as part of an acceptable application packet for OCCSP and may be requested for OTECP applications. Producers have until October 31, 2022 to file OTECP and OCCSP applications. FSA will process payments as completed application packets are received.

How to Apply

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local [county FSA office](#). As part of completing the OCCSP applications, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses. Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating State agencies.

Additional details can be found on the [OTECP](#) and [OCCSP](#) webpages.

Opportunity for State Agencies

FSA is accepting applications for State agencies to administer OCCSP through July 18, 2022. If a State department of agriculture chooses to participate in OCCSP, both the State department of agriculture and FSA County Offices in that State will accept OCCSP applications and make payments to eligible certified operations. However, the producer or handler may only receive OCCSP assistance by either FSA or the participating State department of agriculture.

Producers and handlers certified organic by Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) may receive OCCSP cost share reimbursement funding through WSDA later in the year. If cost share is paid through WSDA, producers and handles are not eligible to receive duplicate OCCSP reimbursement from USDA-FSA. If a producer has an organic operation certified by WSDA and does not receive reimbursement through WSDA, the producer can apply for OCCSP through FSA. Additional documentation may be required to verify that a duplicate payment was not processed through WSDA. OTECP funding

available is not available to state agencies like WSDA. All OTECP applications must be received and processed through FSA.

Report Damage or Loss of NAP Covered Crops Immediately

Weather can be unpredictable and harmful to crops. If weather events cause damage to or loss of your NAP covered crops, remember that you must report this to your local FSA county office timely in order to be eligible for a NAP benefit.

NAP notices of loss can be initiated by phone, email, or fax, but must be submitted in writing, to your local FSA county office for weather related events or adverse natural occurrences that cause damage to or loss of the NAP covered crop. To report crop damage or loss you must complete, sign, and file the loss portion of form CCC-576 with your FSA office by the earlier of either of the following:

- **15 calendar days** after the disaster occurrence or date of loss or damage to the crop or commodity first becomes apparent or
- **15 calendar days** after the normal harvest date.

Please note, producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA **within 72 hours** of when a loss becomes apparent.

FSA county offices can take initial NAP notice of loss notifications via phone, email, or fax. Offices will assist producers in completing the official CCC-576 Notice of Loss form as best as possible, sending the form to producers via email, fax, or mail for final review and signature. The completed and signed CCC-576 should then be returned to the county office as soon as possible via email, fax, or mail. **A CCC-576 is not considered filed until it has been signed and returned to FSA.**

As the 2022 crop year progresses, it is imperative that a notice of loss is filed (for all affected NAP covered crops) within the timeframe noted above for each weather-related event or adverse natural occurrence. This will ensure FSA is notified that your NAP covered crop or crops have been damaged or lost. If the loss event is approved, remember to provide your crop production to your local FSA county office within 60 days after harvest or request an appraisal within 60 days of the normal harvest date so that the payment portion of form CCC-576 can be filed timely.

When a covered crop is lost or damage is significant, replanting is required if feasible and the final planting date has not passed. **When you determine that a NAP covered crop will be destroyed, abandoned, or not taken to harvest as intended, you must report this to your local FSA office as soon as possible** so a field visit can be conducted by a certified loss adjuster. Once the crop appraisal has been completed, the loss adjuster will release the field and you can destroy the covered crop acres and replant to a different crop or harvest the acres for a different use.

Remember, failure to timely notify your FSA county office of NAP covered crop damage or loss will result in denial of NAP payment benefits. Destroying NAP

covered crop acres or harvesting for a different use without a loss adjuster appraisal will result in those acres being determined ineligible for NAP payment benefits.

If you have any questions about NAP policy requirements, contact your local [county FSA office](#) for more information.

Marketing Assistance Loans, Loan Deficiency Payments, and Certificates Available

With the start of 2022 crop harvest, keep in mind that FSA Marketing Assistance Loans are available for harvested commodities. A loan can provide you with interim financing to meet cash flow needs without selling your harvested crop at a time when market prices are at harvest-time lows. Your 2022 harvested farm-stored or warehouse-stored commodity is used as collateral for the loan. Marketing Assistance Loans typically mature 9 months after the month loan funds are disbursed to you, with repayment due at loan maturity. Before moving farm-stored loan collateral, you must contact the county FSA office and obtain an authorization to move the collateral. Producers who have a commodity pledged as collateral for a marketing assistance loan can purchase a commodity certificate that can be immediately exchanged for the outstanding loan collateral in situations when the loan rate exceeds the exchange rate. Producers who are eligible for marketing assistance loans can obtain loan deficiency payments (LDPs) in lieu of a loan. LDP's are available when the posted county price for a crop falls below the county loan rate. You can check the daily LDP rates online at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/Index>.

For a commodity to be eligible for a loan, loan deficiency payment, or certificate, you must have beneficial interest in the commodity which is defined as having title, possession, and control of the commodity. The quality of stored collateral must be maintained, and you are responsible for loss or damage to the commodity through the term of the loan. To retain eligibility for an LDP when beneficial interest in your harvested crop will be lost upon delivery, **you must file form CCC-633 EZ Page 1 with your local FSA office prior to loss of beneficial interest.**

Marketing assistance loans or loan deficiency payments are available for wheat, barley, oats, corn, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, grain sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower seed, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe, sesame seed, graded and non-graded wool, mohair, and honey. Unshorn pelts are available for an LDP only. If you are interested, please contact [your local FSA county office](#) to learn more about Marketing Assistance Loans.

2022 Wool Triggers Loan Deficiency Payments

Wool producers may be eligible for a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) through the Farm Service Agency. LDPs are direct payments made in lieu of a marketing assistance loan when the Commodity Credit Corporation determined value, based on the current local price, is below the applicable loan rate. For wool, the local prices and loan rates are set at a national level. The payment is the difference between the price and loan rate times the eligible quantity. Wool LDP rates are updated on a weekly basis and can be found online

[here](#). Use the Weekly Commodity Rates icon to open the dropdown which includes the “Wool and Mohair LDP Rates” spreadsheet.

Unsold wool shorn during the 2022 calendar year may be eligible for a 2022 LDP. For a commodity to be eligible for an LDP, the producer must have beneficial interest in the commodity, defined as having title, possession, and control of the commodity, and responsible for loss of or damage to the commodity. All related application forms must be completed at the local FSA office prior to loss of beneficial interest. Additional eligibility requirements must be met before an LDP payment can be paid. This includes a 2022 FSA-578 acreage report for all crop acres, a CCC-941 Adjusted Gross Income Certification, a CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan, an AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Certification, and a direct deposit form or waiver.

In order to request an LDP for wool, producers must complete a **CCC-633 EZ Loan Deficiency Payment Agreement and Request form**. Page 1 is the agreement which signifies an intent to request an LDP and must be completed before a producer loses beneficial interest of the eligible commodity. Page 4 is the wool request for LDP benefits and must be submitted after page 1 is completed. Once signed and approved, page 4 cannot be cancelled and payments cannot be deferred. Payments are processed after page 4 has been submitted and approved.

For more information on LDPs, visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/Index> or visit [your local FSA office](#).

Important Deadline: Production due for 2021 ARC-IC Farms

Producers who elected to participate in the 2021 ARC-IC program are required to provide their harvested yields for planted covered commodities for each year of the benchmark period (2015-2019) and also for the 2021 crop year. **The deadline to submit production evidence for the 2021 contract year is July 15, 2022.**

Producers may submit production records by:

- Self-certification on the CCC-863 or previous certification on the CCC-658 for the ACRE program
- Commercial receipts, warehouse settlement sheets, load summaries, etc
- RMA production and yield data
- Measurement service or appraisal records

While yield certification will be accepted solely upon producer self-certification, producers are expected to be able to provide production records to FSA upon request from COC or in the event they are selected for review.

USDA Announces Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans to provide up to \$200 million in assistance for specialty crop producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 or 2023. USDA's new [Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops](#) (FSCSC) program will help to offset costs for specialty crop producers to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements, which is part of USDA's broader effort to transform the food system to create a more level playing field for small and medium producers and a more balanced, equitable economy for everyone working in food and agriculture.

Specialty crop operations can apply for assistance for eligible expenses related to a 2022 food safety certificate issued on or after June 21, 2022. USDA is delivering FSCSC to provide critical assistance for specialty crop operations, with an emphasis on equity in program delivery while building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions.

Program Details

FSCSC will assist specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and related expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023. For each year, FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing their certification, as well as a portion of their related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small business or very small business; and have paid eligible expenses related to the 2022 (issued on or after June 21, 2022) or 2023 certification.

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
-

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each category of eligible costs. A higher payment rate has been set for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers. Details about the payment rates and limitations can be found at farmers.gov/food-safety.

Applying for Assistance

The FSCSC application period for 2022 began on June 27, 2022 and runs through January 31, 2023, and the application period for 2023 will be announced at a later date.

FSA will issue payments at the time of application approval for 2022 and after the application period ends for 2023. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application. The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Producers can visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find their local FSA office. Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to assist.

Producers can visit farmers.gov/food-safety for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

Washington State Producers Reminded to File Crop Acreage Reports

Producers in Washington who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after planting should make an appointment with their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center before July 15th.

“Most USDA programs require producers to file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline,” said Jon Wyss, State Executive Director in Washington. “Once planting is complete, call your local FSA office to make an appointment to report your acreage. Our FSA staff can assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps.”

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in Washington: July 15, 2022
All Spring planted crops,

CRP,

Perennial Forage crops,

Hemp,

August 15, 2022

Buckwheat

September 30, 2022

Value Loss crops including shellfish

To file a crop acreage report, producers need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.

- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

Acreage Reporting Details

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If crops are covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, acreage reports should be submitted by the applicable state, county, or crop-specific reporting deadline or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to because of a natural disaster.

Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

FSA offers continuous certification for perennial forage. This means after perennial forage is reported once and the producer elects continuous certification, the certification remains in effect until a change is made. Check with FSA at the local USDA Service Center for more information on continuous certification.

New Option to View, Print and Label Maps on Farmers.gov

Producers with an eAuth account linked to their USDA customer record can now access their FSA farm records, maps and common land units by logging into farmers.gov. A new feature will allow producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries. This will allow producers to view, print and label their own maps for acreage reporting purposes.

Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via form FSA-211 Power of Attorney, Business Partner Signature Authority, along with other

signature types, or as a member of a business can now access information in the farmers.gov portal.

Producers can learn how to use the farmers.gov Farm Records Mapping functionality with this [fact sheet](#) and these [video tutorials](#).

More Information

Producers can make an appointment to report acres by contacting their local USDA Service Center.

MicroLoans Available

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the microloan program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of new, niche, and small to mid-sized family farm operations.

Microloans offer more flexible access to credit and serve as an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations, like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA). These smaller farms, including non-traditional farm operations, often face limited financing options.

Two types of microloans are available: Farm Operating Loans and Farm Ownership Loans. The microloans are issued to the applicant directly from FSA.

- Operating microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses authorized by the FSA Operating Loan (OL) Program, including but not limited to: initial start-up expenses; annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents; marketing and distribution expenses; family living expenses; purchase of livestock, equipment and other materials essential to farm operations; minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers; hoop houses to extend the growing season; essential tools; irrigation; and delivery vehicles.
- Ownership microloans can be used for all approved expenses authorized by the FSA Farm Ownership (FO) Loan Program, such as to purchase a farm or farm land, enlarge an existing farm, construct new farm buildings, improve existing farm buildings, pay closing costs, and implement soil and water conservation and protection practices.

The microloan application process is simpler, requiring less paperwork to complete, consistent with a smaller loan amount. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to accommodate veterans, smaller farm operations, and beginning farmers.

To qualify for assistance, the applicant must not be larger than a family-sized farmer, have a satisfactory history of meeting credit obligations, be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms and meet all other loan eligibility requirements.

Security Requirements

Operating microloans for annual operating expenses must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount, and up to 150 percent, when available. Operating microloans made for purposes other than annual operating expenses must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products purchased with loan funds and having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount.

Ownership microloans are secured by the real estate being purchased or improved. The value of the real estate must be at least 100 percent of the loan amount.

Rates & Terms

Applicants may apply for microloans totaling a combined maximum of \$100,000: Up to \$50,000 for a farm ownership loan and up to \$50,000 for an operating loan.

For operating microloans, eligible applicants may obtain up to \$50,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular FSA operating loan rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less.

For ownership microloans, eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$50,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed 25 years. Interest rates are the regular FSA farm ownership rates in effect at the time of the loan approval or closing.

How to Apply

FSA microloan application forms can be obtained from the local FSA office or can be downloaded and printed from the USDA website at fsa.usda.gov/microloans. Applicants who are having problems gathering information or completing forms should contact their local FSA office for help. After completing the required paperwork, an applicant should submit the farm loan application to their local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov.

After a loan application is submitted, FSA reviews the application and determines if the applicant is eligible for the requested loan. The applicant will receive written notification of each step in the process, such as when the application is received, determination is made and when a final decision is made. If the application is approved, FSA makes the loan and funds are distributed as needed. If the application is denied, the applicant is notified in writing of the specific reasons for the denial and provided reconsideration and appeal rights.

More Information

For more information, visit fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or farmers.gov. Find your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

USDA Hiring for a Temporary Program Technician Positions in Various Locations

Washington State Farm Service Agency (FSA) is hiring a full time, Temporary Program Technician (PT), positions in **Douglas County, Grant County, Lincoln County, Skagit County, Spokane County, Walla Walla County, and Yakima County.**

Duties include general office activities supporting FSA programs administered at the field level. Successful applicants must be reliable, have a professional attitude, enjoy working with the public. The Spokane position will require a valid driver's license for day travel to local offices in Lincoln, Adams, and Whitman counties. The salary range is \$32,283 to \$51,834 per year.

Applicant closing dates will vary by location. If you are interested or know of someone who might be interested, please share this information with them. To apply please submit a copy of your resume to the following. You may also contact the number listed for specific questions regarding the position:

- Douglas County stokes@usda.gov 509-745-3005
- Grant County jensvold@usda.gov 509-717-3247
- Lincoln County cossio@usda.gov 509-725-4501 extension 102
- Skagit County chamberlain@usda.gov 360-488-4814
- Spokane County martin@usda.gov 509-323-3036
- Walla Walla County betts@usda.gov 509-956-3748
- Yakima County delamora@usda.gov and jeremy.nelson@usda.gov 509-367-8540

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FSA hiring multiple positions that close soon

Okanogan County - Farm Loan Program Technician

The Farm Service Agency office located in Okanogan, WA is accepting applications for a Full-Time Permanent Farm Loan Program Technician position. Duties include carrying out office activities related to farm loan programs. The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications and eligibility requirements will be posted on USA Jobs from June 24, 2022 to July 8, 2022 at www.usajobs.gov. The salary ranges from \$36,118 to \$58,158 per year. Candidates may qualify for a 15% recruitment incentive for this position.

Chelan County - Program Technician

The Farm Service Agency office located in Wenatchee, WA is accepting applications for a Full-Time Permanent Program Technician position. Duties include carrying out office activities related to farm programs. The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications, eligibility requirements, and closing date will be posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov in July.

Spokane County – Farm Loan Officer Trainee

The Farm Service Agency office located in Spokane Valley, WA is accepting applications for a Farm Loan Officer Trainee position. This is a paid position that offers 2-year classroom and on-the-job training to develop competencies required to be a successful Farm Loan Officer (FLO). The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications, eligibility requirements, and closing date will be posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov in July.

Location TBD – County Executive Director Trainee

Farm Service Agency has announced a Full- Time County Executive Director Trainee (CEDT) position. This is a paid position that offers one year of management and programs training. Upon completion the candidate has an opportunity to become a county office supervisor (CED). The training does require extensive paid travel and may require relocation once completed. The full vacancy announcement which includes qualifications, eligibility requirements, and closing date will be posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov in July.

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender.

Farm Service Agency Accepting Nominations for County Committees June 15 through August 1

The nomination period for USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees runs June 15 through August 1, 2022, and elections will take place starting in November.

County committees are unique to FSA and serve as a direct link between agricultural communities across the country and USDA. For more information on FSA county committees, visit fsa.usda.gov/elections. You can also check this map to see the [Local Administrative Areas \(LAAs\)](#) that are up for election in 2022.

Important Dates

July 4, 2022 – Independence Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

July 15, 2022 – Final acreage reporting date for perennial forage, CRP, and spring-seeded crops.

July 15, 2022 – Deadline to report actual harvested production of 2021 NAP covered grass seeds, forages, and annually planted spring crops for actual production history (APH) purposes.

July 15, 2022 – Final date to report 2021 production for ARC-IC.

August 1, 2022 – County Committee election nominations due.

August 31, 2022 – Deadline to obtain 2023 crop year NAP coverage for cabbage (for seed or fresh); canola; carrots (for seed); cauliflower (for seed or fresh); onions (for seed, fresh, or processing); rapeseed; rutabaga (for seed or fresh); turnips (for seed or fresh);

and any other fall planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates (full list of Washington State NAP dates posted [here](#)).

September 5, 2022 – Labor Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

September 30, 2022 – Deadline to obtain 2023 crop year NAP coverage for aquaculture; beets (for stecklings); Christmas trees; floriculture; garlic; mint; mushrooms; turf grass sod; biennial/perennial forages and mixed forages for hay, seed, or grazing.

Washington State / FSA Office

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Jon Wyss
State Executive Director

Danielle Garbe Reser
State Committee, Acting

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