

Washington State FSA Newsletter - July 1, 2023

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Important ARC/PLC Deadline:

Production Due for 2022 ARC-IC Farms

Producers who elected to participate in the 2022 ARC-IC program are required to provide their harvested yields for planted covered commodities for each year of the benchmark period (2016-2020) and for the 2022 crop year. **The deadline to submit production evidence for the 2022 contract year is July 15, 2023.**

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.

Farm Records Changes

All changes to farming operations for FY 2023 that result in succession of interest ARC/PLC contracts **must be made by September 30, 2023**. Changes that can result in succession of interest contracts include things such as a sale of land, changes to an operator or producer on the contract, or changes to shares that were originally approved on the contract. Failure to notify your local servicing office of changes to your operation may result in delay of payment or a determination of ineligibility for your contract. Please notify your local service center of farm record changes at your earliest convenience.

2023 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 2023 OTECP and OCCSP signup period is open until October 31, 2023.

Cost Share for 2023

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 2023. 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, 2022 to September 30, 2023. 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, 2023 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 <u>county FSA office</u>. 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 <u>OTECP</u> and <u>OCCSP</u> webpages.

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 <u>earlier</u> 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 2023 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 <u>destroyed</u>, <u>abandoned</u>, or <u>not taken to harvest as intended</u>, 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 <u>county FSA</u> office for more information.

USDA Announces Corrections to Emergency Relief Program Policy to More Accurately Reflect 2020 and 2021 Natural Disaster Impacts on Crops Intended for On-Farm Use

Duplicative payment provisions for two key conservation programs also clarified

he U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two to provide a method for valuing losses and accessing program benefits to eligible producers of certain crops, including grapes grown and used by the same producer for wine production or forage that is grown, stored and fed to livestock, that do not generate revenue directly from the sale of the crop. These updates ensure that ERP benefits are more reflective of these producers' actual crop losses resulting from 2020 and 2021 natural disaster events. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin accepting ERP Phase Two applications from eligible wine grape and forage producers once this technical correction to ERP is published in the Federal Register and becomes effective, which it anticipates will be on Friday, June 16, 2023. The deadline to submit applications for ERP Phase Two is July 14.

Background

In January 2023, FSA announced ERP Phase Two, designed to wrap-up and fill remaining gaps in previous natural disaster assistance for 2020 and 2021.

To be eligible for ERP Phase Two, producers must have suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event. Assistance is primarily for producers of crops that were not covered by Federal Crop Insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program since crops covered by Federal Crop Insurance and NAP were included in the assistance under ERP Phase One administered in 2022.

Determining Crop Value

Producers of certain crops now have a method for including crop value in their allowable gross revenue for the purpose of determining ERP Phase 2 benefits.

The value of the eligible crop intended for on-farm use will be based on the producer's actual production of the crop and a price for the crop as determined by FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs based on the best available data for each crop such as published crop price data or the average price obtained by other producers in the area. Acceptable, published sources including but are not limited to Federal Crop Insurance Corporation established prices, FSA established National Crop Table prices and National Agricultural Statistic Service prices.

Revenue and pricing guidelines for expected revenue for wine grapes and on-farm forage is available online for producer reference and convenience when applying for ERP Phase Two.

Wine grape and forage producers who have already submitted their ERP Phase Two applications to FSA have the option of revising the application and updating their allowable gross revenue to include crop value if applicable.

Producers of crops grown for on-farm use other than wine grapes and forage may request consideration to use a crop's value in their allowable gross revenue. Submit requests to RA.FSA.DCWA2.ppb@wdc.usda.gov. FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs will review submitted requests.

Additional Technical Corrections – Conservation Programs

In addition to emergency relief policy updates, FSA has also established policy corrections for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP). The policy correction clarifies that federal payments received for the same practice will be considered duplicative assistance for producers who receive ECP and EFRP program payments. The revised program provisions are related to program updates FSA announced in January that give more farmers, ranchers, and tribes the opportunity to apply for and access programs that support recovery following natural disasters (see <u>January 10, 2023 news release</u> for more information).

ECP and EFRP provide financial and technical assistance to restore conservation practices like fencing, damaged farmland or forests following natural disasters.

More Information

USDA Reminds Washington State Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers in Washington who have not yet completed their <u>crop acreage reports</u> after planting should make an appointment with their U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center before the applicable deadline.

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 State:

July
17, 2023 All spring seeded crops, Perennial Forage, HEMP,
CRP August 15, 2023 Buckwheat, Cabbage planted after June 11

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 cropspecific 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 e-Auth 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.

Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds you to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

You should report crop acreage you intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. 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 Risk Management Agency (RMA).

If you're unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, if you have failed acres, you should also use form *CCC-576*, *Notice of Loss*, to report failed acres.

For hand-harvested crops and certain perishables, you must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. If you notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576, you are still required to file a CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), you must file a *Notice of Loss* within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. You must timely file a *Notice of Loss* for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of "idle" and "fallow."

Reporting Cover Crops:

Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- Cereals and other grasses
- Legumes
- Brassicas and other broadleaves
- Mixtures

If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

Acreage Reports:

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, you must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Reporting Grazing Allotments:

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. You will use form "FSA-578" to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the "Reporting Unit" field. Your local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

Definitions of Terms

FSA defines "idle" as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season.

For more information, contact your County USDA Service Center at fsa.usda.gov.

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.

USDA Accepts More Than 1 Million Acres in Offers Through Conservation Reserve Program General Signup

More than 1 million acres were accepted nationwide into this year's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup. This is one of several signups that USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is holding for the program, and these results reflect the recognition the agricultural community give to CRP as a resource for climate-smart agriculture that helps promote plant and animal biodiversity as well as healthier soil.

Local offices have notified producers of the results of the signup and work is beginning on Conservation Plans for offers that wish to proceed with enrollment. Participating producers and landowners should also remember that all eligibility documentation is required to be on file prior to contract approval and all CRP contract approvals must occur by **September 29th, 2023**. Producers can choose to withdraw their accepted offers up to contract approval without penalty. Withdrawals should be submitted to the local office in writing.

The total number of accepted CRP acres will continue to climb in the coming weeks once FSA accepts acres on the Grassland CRP signup, which closed May 26. Additionally, so far this year, FSA has received 761,000 offered acres for the Continuous CRP signup (SAFE, FWP, CREP, CLEAR30), for which FSA accepts applications year-round. Continuous CRP offers that wish to begin on October 1st, 2023 must be submitted to FSA by **July 31, 2023**.

FSA Guaranteed Loans

Did you know that your USDA Farm Service Agency not only provides direct loans, but also guaranteed loans through USDA-approved commercial lenders? The USDA guarantee facilitates loans at reasonable terms to finance annual operating, term operating, and farmland purchases. FSA provides the financial institution loan guarantees up to 95% of the loan against possible financial loss of principal and interest. With this additional risk protection from FSA, commercial lenders may be more likely to extend credit.

An advantage of this program is that it enables larger purchases due to the maximum guarantee of \$2,037,000, considerably higher than FSA's direct loans. Your local FSA Farm Loan Team can help you connect with local lenders that are known to make agricultural loans in your area.

- FSA can guarantee Operating Loans and Lines of Credit, Farm Ownership loans, and Conservation loans up to \$2,037,000; this amount is adjusted annually each fiscal year based on inflation.
- The maximum loan limit for Land Contract Guarantees is \$500,000.

The *EZ Guarantee Program* is available for smaller loans. This program provides a simplified Guaranteed Loan application process to help small, new or underserved family farmers with early financial assistance. The EZ Guarantee is available for loan applications up to \$100,000 for farm operating or farm ownership purposes. Lenders need only submit one application form per loan request containing all necessary information for the application. No other supporting documents will typically be required. In addition, streamlined financial underwriting is available for these loans, allowing all approved lenders to analyze the request in the same manner in which they would analyze a nonguaranteed loan request of the same size and type. All existing eligibility, loan purpose, security, and other requirements remain the same.

If you have any questions concerning FSA Direct loans or FSA Guaranteed loans, please contact your local county FSA office.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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, 2023, 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 <u>fsa.usda.gov/elections</u>. You can also check this map to see the <u>Local Administrative Areas (LAAs)</u> that are up for election in 2023.

Vacancy Announcements for Permanent FSA Positions in WA State

Whitman County - Program Technician

The Farm Service Agency office located in Colfax, 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 will be posted on USA Jobs at www.usajobs.gov. The salary ranges from \$34,584 to \$60,703 per year. Candidates may qualify for a 25% recruitment incentive for this position.

Lewis County or Pierce County - Farm Loan Program Technician

The Farm Service Agency office located in Chehalis, WA and Puyallup, 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 are posted on at www.usajobs.gov. The salary ranges from \$\$41,925 to \$67,514 per year.

Lewis County or Whatcom County - Farm Loan Officer Trainee

The Farm Service Agency office located in Chehalis, WA or Everson, WA will be 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.

Spokane County - Farm Loan Officer Trainee

The Farm Service Agency office located in Spokane Valley, WA will be 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.

Okanogan County or Grant County - Farm Loan Officer Trainee

The Farm Service Agency office located in Okanogan, WA or Ephrata, WA will be 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.

FSA Looking for Temporary Part-time or Fulltime Assistance in Spokane

Washington State Farm Service Agency (FSA) is hiring part-time, Temporary Program Technician (PT), positions in **Spokane County**. This is a great opportunity for students or those that can only commit to a part-time schedule but full-time schedules are available as well.

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 hourly rate depends on education and experience.

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 travis.martin@usda.gov. You may also direct questions by calling 509-323-3036.

Important Dates and Deadlines

July 4, 2023 – Independence Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

July 14, 2023 – Deadline for ERP Phase 2 and PARP applications.

July 15, 2023 – Final acreage reporting date for perennial forage, CRP, and spring seeded crops.

July 15, 2023 – Deadline to report actual harvested production of 2022 NAP covered grass seeds, forages, and annually planted spring crops for actual production history (APH) purposes.

July 15, 2023 – Final date to report 2022 production for ARC-IC.

July 26, 2023 – Deadline to file Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) applications.

July 31, 2023 – Deadline to submit continuous CRP offers.

August 1, 2023 – County Committee election nominations due.

August 15, 2023 – Deadline for CRP Transition Incentive Program (TIP) offers to be submitted.

August 31, 2023 – 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 12, 2023 – Deadline for eligibility forms to be filed for ERP and PARP.

Washington State / FSA Office

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Jon Wyss State Executive Di<u>rector</u>

State Committee

Bernard "Butch" Ogden, Chair Brett Blankenship, Member Jackie Richter, Member Jose Ramirez, Member Sam Ledgerwood, Member

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