



Wisconsin Farm Service Agency - June 2021

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Important Announcements

Dates to Remember:

- **June 15, 2021** - Cover Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline for producers to qualify for the new [Pandemic Cover Crop Program \(PCCP\)](#)
- **July 5, 2021** - USDA Service Centers closed in Observance of Independence Day
- **July 15, 2021:** [Acreage Reporting](#) Deadline for Barley, Corn, Dry Beans, Forage Seeding, Grain Sorghum, Green Peas, Mint, Oats, Onions, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sweet Corn, Whole Farm Revenue Protections

Pending Program Deadlines:

[Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) - Continuous](#)

[Coronavirus Food Assistance Program \(CFAP\)](#)

[Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)/State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement \(SAFE\) Initiative](#)

[American Rescue Plan Debt Payments](#)

Important Reminders for Acreage Reporting:

- Cover crops must be reported by June 15, 2021 to be eligible for USDA Risk Management Agency's [Pandemic Cover Crop Program \(PCCP\)](#)
- The [Acreage Reporting](#) Deadline for Alfalfa and other perennial forages, Barley, Corn, Dry Beans, Forage Seeding, Grain Sorghum, Green Peas, Mint, Oats, Onions, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sweet Corn, Whole Farm Revenue Protections, and many other crops is July 15, 2021
- Producers are reminded to report grazing acres to remain eligible for [disaster programs](#) such as the [Livestock Forage Program](#).
- Please contact your local FSA office if you have questions on filing your acreage reports.

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Direct Farm Ownership loans can help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a Direct Farm Ownership Microloan option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is \$600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about farm loans, contact your local USDA Service Center.

Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

Current loan rates as of June 1, 2021

Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	1.875%
Farm Operating - Microloan	1.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.250%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	3.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	2.500%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	2.875%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):

3-year FSFL	0.375%
5-year FSFL	0.875%
7-year FSFL	1.125%
10-year FSFL	1.625%
12-year FSFL	1.750%

Please visit the [Farm Loan Program](#) webpage for more information.

USDA Announces New Initiative to Quantify Climate Benefits of Conservation Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced an initiative to quantify the climate benefits of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. This multi-year effort will enable USDA to better target CRP toward climate outcomes and improve existing models and conservation planning tools while supporting USDA's goal of putting American agriculture and forestry at the center of climate-smart solutions to address climate change.

CRP Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation Projects

FSA has historically worked with partners to identify [Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation \(MAE\)](#) projects to quantify CRP environmental benefits to water quality and quantity, wildlife and rural economies. The agency will now invest \$10 million through this program to measure and monitor the soil carbon sequestration and other climate and environmental benefits of conservation practices over the life of CRP contracts.

This effort will allow USDA to better target climate outcomes through CRP while gaining critical data to calibrate, validate and further improve quantification methods within existing models and tools. One model of focus is the Daily Century Model, or DayCent, which simulates the movement of carbon and nitrogen through agricultural systems and informs the [National Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#). Data will also be used to strengthen the [COMET-Farm](#) and [COMET-Planner](#) tools, which enable producers to evaluate potential carbon

sequestration and greenhouse gas emission reductions based on specific management scenarios.

Request for Proposals

USDA is seeking proposals for projects to survey, sample and measure the climate benefits of land enrolled in the following CRP practice types over time:

1. Predominately Perennial grass with legumes and shrubs, depending on the practice
2. Tree
3. Wetland, including both mineral and organic soils and both floodplain and non-floodplain wetlands

A project can cover one or more of the above practice types and should be for a three- to five-year term, with the potential for renewal. Projects should be a minimum of \$1 million and not exceed \$9 million.

Applications are welcome from all types of organizations, including public, private and nonprofit institutions. Project proposals can be from a single entity or from a group of partners who coordinate efforts. Applications from or in partnership with Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU), Tribal Colleges & Universities (TCU) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) or organizations will be considered as part of the selection process.

The deadline for proposals is July 2, 2021. Visit the [request for proposals](#) for more information on requirements, project deliverables, evaluation criteria and how to submit your proposal. Visit [FSA's Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation page](#) for additional information on CRP MAEs.

Conservation Reserve Program

CRP is one of the world's largest voluntary conservation programs with an established track record of preserving topsoil, sequestering carbon, reducing nitrogen runoff and providing healthy habitat for wildlife.

In April, [USDA announced updates to CRP](#) including higher payment rates, new incentives for environmental practices and a more targeted focus on the program's role in climate change mitigation. This included a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive for CRP general and continuous signups that aims to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate-Smart CRP practices include establishment of trees and permanent grasses, development of wildlife habitat and wetland restoration. [Download our "What's New" fact sheet](#) to learn more about program updates.

In partnership with NRCS, Wisconsin Women in Conservation Launches Summer Camp Lunch Series

Wisconsin Women in Conservation (WiWiC) is launching a four-part virtual Conservation Summer Camp Lunch Series that aims to address the top land stewardship concerns of women farmers and landowners across the state. All women who desire to better care for land, water and wildlife are welcome to attend..

WiWiC is a state-wide collaborative effort led by the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute in partnership with Renewing the Countryside, the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), and Wisconsin Farmers Union. A three-year multi-faceted project funded by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), WiWiC gathers women landowners in a variety of ways to connect and learn about conservation practices and funding opportunities.

WiWiC Conservation Summer Camp Lunch Series

Thursday, May 27, noon to 1pm - Increase Pollinator Habitat

Thursday, June 24, noon to 1pm - Restore Healthy Soil

Thursday, July 29, noon to 1pm - Restore Native Habitat

Thursday, Aug 26, noon to 1pm - Explore Regenerative Agriculture

The sessions will include presentations from experts in each topic, regional roundtable breakout rooms, and practical stories from WiWiC Conservation Coaches. WiWiC has assembled a team of sixteen Conservation Coaches from across the state to provide mentoring for other women landowners by sharing their experiences.

In addition to the virtual Conservation Summer Camp Series, WiWiC will be offering four regional in-person farm field days in September and four regional in-person workshops in October. An Advisory Committee on Women in Conservation will convene to share experiences and ideas, and interpret the findings of research conducted by the E Resources Group during workshops and events. WiWiC will also hold regional summits at the end of the project to present research, recommendations, and conservation education.

Registration is now open for the Conservation Summer Camp Series at www.WiWiC.org. Follow along on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. For more information, contact WiWiC Communications Specialist Kriss Marion at kmarion@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 608-844-3758.

USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

\$4 million in competitive grants is available to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov for planning and implementation projects until midnight July 30, 2021.

Planning Projects Planning projects initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers, urban agroforestry or food forests, and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

Implementation Projects Implementation projects that accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers. Projects will improve local food access and collaborate with partner organizations and may support infrastructure needs, emerging technologies, educational endeavors and urban farming policy implementation.

[Find out more about these grants.](#)

Producers with Crop Insurance to Receive Premium Benefit for Cover Crops

Agricultural producers who have coverage under most crop insurance policies are eligible for a premium benefit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) if they planted cover crops during this crop year. The Pandemic Cover Crop Program (PCCP), offered by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA), helps farmers maintain their cover crop systems, despite the financial challenges posed by the pandemic.

The PCCP is part of USDA's [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) initiative, a bundle of programs to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions.

About the Premium Benefit

PCCP provides premium support to producers who insured their spring crop with most insurance policies and planted a qualifying cover crop during the 2021 crop year. The premium support is \$5 per acre, but no more than the full premium owed.

Illinois, Indiana and Iowa have existing programs for producers to receive a premium benefit for planting cover crops. In these states, participating producers will receive an additional benefit.

All cover crops reportable to FSA are eligible and include cereals and other grasses, legumes, brassicas and other non-legume broadleaves, and mixtures of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time.

To receive the benefit for this program, producers must file a [Report of Acreage form \(FSA-578\)](#) for cover crops with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) by June 15, 2021, which is distinct from the normal acreage reporting date. The normal acreage reporting

deadline with FSA has not changed, but to receive the premium benefit, producers must file by June 15. The cover crop fields reported on the Report of Acreage form must match what the producer reported to their insurance company for crop insurance policies. To file the form, producers must contact and make an appointment with their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Program Details

Certain policies are not eligible because they have underlying coverage, which would already receive the benefit or are not designed to be reported in a manner consistent with the Report of Acreage form (FSA-578). PCCP is not available for Whole-Farm Revenue Protection, Enhanced Coverage Option, Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index, and Supplemental Coverage Option. Stacked Income Protection (STAX) and Margin Protection (MP) policies are only eligible for PCCP when insured as a standalone policy. STAX and MP endorsements to underlying policies are not eligible for PCCP.

PCCP does not change acreage reporting dates, reporting requirements, or any other terms of the crop insurance policy.

Cover Crop Conservation Practice Standard

Meanwhile, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made the determination not to update its conservation practice standard for cover crops. NRCS originally proposed restricting mechanical harvest of cover crops, but after reviewing input from agricultural producers and groups, NRCS recognizes this could present challenges for producers who use this important conservation practice. The latest version of the conservation practice standard can be found in the [Field Office Technical Guide](#) under Section IV, Conservation Practices and Supporting Documents, by State.

More Information

A [Notice of Funding Availability](#) was posted on the *Federal Register* today. Additional information on PCCP, including [frequently asked questions](#), can be found at farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/cover-crops.

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