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Farm Service Agency  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## [USDA Announces 2021 Signup Period for its Soil Health and Income Protection Program](#)

**News Release | Montana | May 10, 2021**

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**BOZEMAN, MT., May 10, 2021** – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that agricultural producers in the Prairie Pothole states can now sign up for the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP), which provides a short-term option to plant cover on less productive agricultural lands while improving soil health and carbon sequestration.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made improvements to this pilot program available in South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota and Montana, and signup runs from today to July 16, 2021.

“SHIPP is part of a suite of resources we have under the Conservation Reserve Program and part of a much larger effort across USDA to invest in, support, and promote climate-smart agricultural practices to create a win-win for both the environment and our farmers,” Vilsack said. “We’re excited to remove unnecessary hurdles from the previous sign-up and offer this streamlined pilot program for a second year, and we’re grateful to U.S. Senator John Thune and others who helped create this new option for producers.”

“SHIPP pays farmers to take their most unprofitable land out of annual crop production, while at the same time improving soil health, providing wildlife habitat and supporting livestock producers by allowing appropriate haying and grazing,” said Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator for USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Improvements to SHIPP include:

- **Boosting rental rates:** A change to the rental rate calculation method to use a rate equivalent to 50% percent of the county average rental rate for every offer in the county, regardless of the soil productivity in the offer. This removes the current practice of adjusting the rate by soil

productivity factors, which may reduce the soil rental rate further.

- **Changes to offer selection for producers:** Producers can now self-certify that the acres they want to offer are less productive or prone to drought or flood damage. Additionally, they can now use field boundaries and straight lines to delineate the offers. This is a change to the previous policy, which required using soil map unit boundaries and the associated soil productivity values, which created difficulty for producers by generating unusual and impractical sizes and shapes of land.

## More Information

Montana producers interested in SHIPP can learn more at [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp) or by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](#). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

SHIPP is part of the options available through the Conservation Reserve Program, and the updates that FSA has made to SHIPP are part of a broader group of changes to increase enrollment and climate-smart outcomes. Read more in the [April 21, 2021 news release](#) or "[What's New with CRP](#)" [fact sheet](#).

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve our nation's lands, biodiversity, and natural resources including our soil, air and water. Through conservation practices and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including state, local, and tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).

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