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A Message from the Ohio FSA State Office

On June 17, FSA opens the nomination period for the [2024 FSA County Committee elections](#). Each county office is looking for producers to serve on the local county committee. County committees are unique to FSA and serve as a direct link between agricultural communities across the country and USDA. Producers who serve on committees work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers. Are you interested? Contact your [FSA County office](#) to see which area in your county is up for election or view the [GIS locator tool](#) to locate your LAA. Nomination forms can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections or from any FSA county office.

USDA recently announced through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#) that FSA will cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organic certification, up to \$750 per category, through the OCCSP. FSA encourages organic agricultural producers and handlers to apply for OCCSP by Oct. 31, 2024, for expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2023, through Sept. 30, 2024. To apply, Ohio producers and handlers should contact their [County FSA office](#). As part of completing the OCCSP application, 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 departments of agriculture.

Our FSA County offices continue to be busy with acreage certification, and they need to hear from you as soon as you are finished with planting. Ohio has thousands of customers to get through the acreage reporting process before the **July 15 deadline**, so the sooner you contact your FSA County office, the better. This includes those of you with perennial forage (pasture) and CRP acres.

FSA Grasslands is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers to help landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and eligible land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. The Grasslands CRP program is a working lands conservation program that helps farmers to enhance the sustainability of their operations while keeping land in production. Grassland CRP signup will run **through June 28, 2024**. For additional information, producers are encouraged to contact their [USDA FSA County office](#).

Additional program details and more in-depth information is provided in our newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact your [FSA County office](#) for questions about our programs, loans and information that is included in this newsletter edition.

Nominations Open June 17 for the 2024 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers and FSA program participants to take part in the Name County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2024. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member* available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections.

USDA Offers Free June 24 Webinar on Tax Strategies for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program

Financial assistance provided by USDA's Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) is taxable, and producers will need to report the assistance as gross income during next year's filing season. Join experts Guido van der Hoeven and JC Hobbs as they discuss strategies for dealing with the tax liabilities that DFAP recipients may encounter.

Event: Tax Strategies for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program

Date: Monday, June 24, 2024

Time: 1 p.m. ET

Register at:

https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_CuL_vfOMTPaGeecyLwWnvA#/registration

Additional information can be found at: <https://www.farmers.gov/your-business/taxes>

USDA Announces Grassland Conservation Reserve Program Signup for 2024

Sign up for the Grassland CRP June 3 - 28, 2024

The USDA announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can now sign up for the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (Grassland CRP). The signup runs **through June 28, 2024**. Grassland CRP, offered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), is a voluntary working lands conservation program that enables participants to conserve grasslands and provide important conservation benefits for wildlife, soil health and carbon sequestration, all while continuing most grazing and haying practices.

More than 2.3 million acres from agricultural producers and private landowners were accepted through the 2023 Grassland CRP signup. That signup reflects the continued success and value of investments in voluntary, producer-led, working lands conservation programs. The current total participation in Grassland CRP is 8.64 million acres, which is part of the 24.8 million acres enrolled in CRP opportunities overall.

On Nov. 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024 (Pub. L. 118-22), which generally extended the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334), more commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill, through Sept. 30, 2024. This extension allows authorized programs, including CRP, to continue operating.

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their [County FSA office](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before the June 28 deadline.

Other CRP Options

FSA is also accepting applications for the [Continuous CRP](#) signup, which opened in January 2024. Under this enrollment, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

Additionally, FSA also offers financial assistance to producers and landowners enrolled in CRP to improve the health of their forests through the [Forest Management Incentive](#) (FMI), which can help participants with forest management practices, such as brush management and prescribed burning.

Producers with expiring CRP acres can use the [Transition Incentives Program](#) (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.

For more information or to sign up, producers should contact their [County FSA office](#).

Getting Acreage Reporting Right

You have a lot at stake in making sure your crop insurance acreage reporting is accurate and on time. If you fail to report on time, you may not be protected. If you report too much acreage, you may pay too much premium. If you report too little acreage, you may recover less when you file a claim.

Crop insurance agents often say that mistakes in acreage reporting are the easiest way for producers to have an unsatisfactory experience with crop insurance. Don't depend on your agent to do this important job for you. Your signature on the bottom of the acreage reporting form makes it, legally, your responsibility. Double-check it for yourself.

Remember - acreage reporting is your responsibility. Doing it right will save you money. Always get a copy of your report immediately after signing and filing it with your agent and keep it with your records. Remember, it is your responsibility to report crop damage to your agent within 72 hours of discovery. Never put damaged acreage to another use without prior written consent of the insurance adjuster. You don't want to destroy any evidence of a possible claim. [Learn more by visiting RMA's website](#).

2024 Acreage Reporting Dates

To comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to contact their FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for:

July 15, 2024 --- Report all your Burley Tobacco, Cabbage (Planted 3/19/24-5/31/24), Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hybrid Corn Seed, Spring Oats, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Tomatoes and all other crops. Report Perennial Forage Crops. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

Aug. 15, 2024 --- Report Cabbage (Planted 6/1/24-7/20/24).

Sept. 30, 2024 --- Report Aquaculture.

Dec. 15, 2024 ---- Report Fall-Seeded 2025 crops, Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above 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 above 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.

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

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

If you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary documentation to FSA immediately upon receipt from the certifying agent.

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 your FSA office 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](#).

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your [County FSA office](#).

USDA Now Accepting Applications for Available Funds to Help Cover Organic Certification Costs

Organic Producers and Handlers are Encouraged to apply for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program that can help cover up to 75% of organic certification costs

Through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), FSA will cover up to 75% of organic certification costs at a maximum of \$750 per certification category. FSA is now accepting applications, and organic producers and handlers should apply for OCCSP by the Oct. 31, 2024, deadline for eligible expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024. FSA will issue payments as applications are received and approved.

OCCSP was part of a [broader organic announcement](#) made by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on May 15, 2024, which also included the Organic Market Development Grant program and Organic Transition Initiative.

Eligible Applicants, Expenses and Categories

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of organic agricultural commodities for expenses incurred obtaining or maintaining organic certification under USDA's [National Organic Program](#). Eligible OCCSP applicants include any certified organic producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Cost share assistance covers expenses including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, inspector travel expenses, user fees, sales assessments and postage. OCCSP pays a maximum of \$750 per certification category for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling, and state organic program fees (California only).

How to Apply

To apply, producers and handlers should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#) and be prepared to provide documentation of organic certification and eligible expenses. OCCSP applications can also be submitted through participating state departments of agriculture. For more information, visit the [OCCSP](#) webpage.

Opportunity for State Departments of Agriculture

FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA posted a [funding opportunity summary on grants.gov](#) and will electronically mail the Notice of Funding Opportunity to all eligible state departments of agriculture. Applications are due July 12, 2024.

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. Producers or handlers can receive OCCSP assistance from either FSA or the participating state department of agriculture but not both.

More Information

USDA offers other assistance for organic producers, including the [Organic Transition Initiative \(OTI\)](#), which includes direct farmer assistance for organic production and processing and conservation. For more information on organic agriculture, visit farmers.gov/organic. To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA and FarmRaise Launch Additional Online Disaster Assistance Decision Tool for Livestock, Honey Bee and Farm-Raised Fish Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, in partnership with FarmRaise, has launched a new, online Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) Decision Tool. The FSA tool is designed to assist agricultural producers who have been impacted by natural disasters access available program support.

This ELAP Decision Tool, a component of a broader disaster assistance program educational module, further expands the library of online FSA disaster and farm loan program reference resources and decision aids currently available to agricultural producers on the FarmRaise [FSA educational hub](#). **The Decision Tool is a resource only and is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility.**

[ELAP](#) is designed to address losses not covered by other FSA disaster assistance programs. The program provides recovery assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honey bee, and farm-raised fish losses due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including drought, blizzards, disease, water shortages and wildfires. ELAP covers grazing and feed losses, transportation of water and feed to livestock and hauling livestock to grazing acres due to an eligible loss condition. ELAP also covers certain mortality losses, due to an eligible condition, for livestock including honey bees and farm-raised fish as well as honey bee hive losses.

New FarmRaise Tools and Resources

[FarmRaise](#), in partnership with FSA, recently launched their online, [educational hub](#) – the FarmRaise | FSA Educational Hub – comprised of videos, tools and interactive resources that enable USDA cooperators and agricultural producers to learn about and access major FSA programs.

Agricultural producers are encouraged to visit the FarmRaise, as more FSA program resources and tools will continue to be added to this educational hub.

June 2024 Loan and Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans, Direct	-- 5.375%
Farm Ownership Loans, Direct	-- 5.625%
Limited Resource Loans	-- 5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment	-- 1.625%
Farm Ownership – Joint Financing	-- 3.625%
Emergency Loans	-- 3.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year	-- 4.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year	-- 4.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year	-- 4.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year	-- 4.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year	-- 4.625%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year	-- 4.750%
Commodity Loans	-- 6.125%

Dates to Remember

June 17 --- County Committee Nomination Period begins.

June 19 --- Juneteenth National Independence Day. **USDA Service Center Closed.**

June 28 --- Last day to sign-up for Grasslands CRP.

July 4 ----- Independence Day Holiday. **USDA Service Center Closed.**

July 15 ---- End of primary nesting season for CRP program purposes.

July 15 ---- Final certification date to report burley tobacco; cabbage planted through May 31; corn, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, spring oats, potatoes, popcorn, sugar beets, tomatoes and other crops. Report perennial forage crops. Report Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.

July 15 ---- Final Date to Report Production for the preceding Crop Year for Farms Enrolled in ARC-IC.

July 31 ---- **Deadline** for producers to submit an offer for re-enrolled land or combination new and re-enrolled land for Continuous CRP Signup 61.

August 1 --- **Last day** to file County Committee Nomination forms.

August 1 --- **Deadline** to Request farm reconstitutions and transfers for 2023.

August 15 - **Deadline** for producers to request enrollment into **Transition Incentives Program (TIP)**.

August 31 - **Deadline** to obtain 2025 NAP coverage for Aquaculture, Christmas trees, Floriculture, Ginseng, Mushrooms, Turf grass Sod and Watercress.

September 2 - Labor Day Holiday. **USDA Service Center is Closed.**

Ongoing Reminders:

ERP 2022 signup continues. The application deadline has not yet been determined and will be announced at a later date.

Reports of Failed Acreage must be filed with the FSA County Office before disposition of the crop.

Reports of Prevented Planting Acreage must be filed with the FSA County Office no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date for that county and producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Contact FSA right away for notice of loss deadlines and disaster program requirements.

FSA is continually receiving new applications for loan programs.

Inform the office of bank account changes.

Inform FSA if you have picked up or dropped any farm(s).

Inform FSA of farm and cropland boundary changes.

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