

In This Issue:

- [Just Around the Corner](#)
- [Tim Boring Appointed FSA State Executive Director for Michigan](#)
- [Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?](#)
- [FSA Offers Safety Net Programs for Honeybee Producers](#)
- [2021 FSA County Committee Elections Underway](#)
- [Pandemic Support for Certified Organic and Transitioning Operations](#)
- [USDA Provides \\$1.8 Billion to Offset Market Fluctuations](#)
- [November 2021 Lending Rates](#)

Just Around the Corner

COC Elections

Dec. 6 is the deadline to postmark or return COC ballots to your local FSA county office.

Fall Seeded Grains

Nov. 15 is the deadline to submit [acreage reports](#) for fall-seeded small grains, such as rye and wheat, for the 2022 crop year.

Honey & Maple Sap

Dec. 31 is the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) deadline to enroll 2022 honey and maple sap production.

Jan. 2 is the deadline to report the number of colonies in production for honey.

Organic

Jan. 7 is the deadline to sign up for 2020 and 2021 [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program \(OTECP\)](#).

Perennial Crops

Nov. 15 is the deadline to submit [acreage reports](#) for mint for the 2022 crop year.

Nov. 20 is the [NAP](#) deadline to enroll perennial fruit crops, including apples, blueberries, and cane berries, as well as other crops such as asparagus, rhubarb, strawberries, and hops.



Tim Boring Appointed FSA State Executive Director for Michigan

The Biden Administration recently appointed Tim Boring as the new State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Michigan FSA. Boring joined the Michigan FSA team on Oct. 11, 2021.

Boring operates his family's sixth generation farm in Stockbridge, Michigan, raising a wide variety of grain crops utilizing soil health and regenerative agriculture principles. He is the founder of Michigan Agriculture Advancement, an organization dedicated to improving the economic, environmental, and social state of Michigan agriculture. Boring has served on the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development, as Vice President of the Michigan Agri-Business Association and as Research Director of the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee. He holds a Master of Science and PhD in Crop and Soil Sciences from Michigan State University.



As SED, Boring will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of FSA programs to agricultural producers in Michigan. These commodity, conservation, credit, and disaster assistance programs ensure a safe, affordable, abundant, and nutritious food, fiber, and fuel supply for consumers.

Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers, foresters, and agricultural partners through the effective, efficient, and equitable delivery of federal agricultural programs. The Agency offers producers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. Additionally, through conservation programs, FSA continues to preserve and protect natural resources and provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including targeted loan funds for beginning, underserved, women and military veterans involved in production agriculture.

Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?

Farmers and ranchers rely on crop insurance to protect themselves from disasters and unforeseen events, but not all crops are insurable through the USDA's Risk Management Agency. The FSA Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides producers another option to obtain coverage against disaster for these crops. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insured crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevents crop planting.



Eligibility

Commercially produced crops and agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available are generally eligible for NAP. Eligible crops include those grown specifically for food, fiber, livestock consumption, biofuel or biobased products, or be commodities such as value loss crops like Christmas trees and ornamental nursery, honey, maple sap, and many others. Contact your FSA office to see which crops are eligible in your state and county.

Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, earthquake, flood. These events must occur during the NAP policy coverage period, before or during harvest, and the disaster must directly affect the eligible crop. For guidance on causes of loss not listed, contact your local FSA county office.

How to Apply

Interested producers must apply for coverage using FSA form [CCC-471](#), "Application for Coverage," and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. These must be filed by

the application closing date. Closing dates vary by crop, so it is important to contact your local FSA office as soon as possible to ensure you don't miss an application closing date.

At the time of application, each producer will be provided a copy of the [NAP Basic Provisions](#), which describes how NAP works and all the requirements you must follow to maintain NAP coverage. NAP participants must provide accurate annual reports of their production in non-loss years to ensure their NAP coverage is beneficial to their individual operation.

Fees and Premiums

Producers are required to pay service fees which vary depending on the number of crops and number of counties your operation is located in. The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums also apply when producers elect higher levels of coverage with a maximum premium of \$15,750 per person or legal entity depending on the maximum payment limitation that may apply to the NAP covered producer. The service fee can be waived for beginning, qualifying veteran, and limited resource farmers and rancher., These farmers and ranchers can also receive a 50 percent reduction in the premium.

More Information

For more detailed information on NAP, download the [NAP Fact Sheet](#). To get started with NAP, we recommend you contact your [local USDA service center](#).

FSA Offers Safety Net Programs for Honeybee Producers

FSA administers two programs that have specific safety net benefits for producers of honeybees and honey. The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) assist producers when disasters impact honey production or damage or destroy colonies, hives or honeybee feed.



Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

NAP is designed to reduce financial losses when natural disasters result in lower yields or crop losses, including honey. NAP coverage is equivalent to catastrophic insurance, meaning it covers up to 50 percent of a producer's normal yield (must have at least a 50 percent loss) at 55 percent of the average market price. The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

You must apply for NAP coverage by Dec. 31 prior to the year for which you're seeking coverage.

Emergency Livestock Assistance Program

ELAP covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses (the physical structure) and honeybee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.

Reporting

Both the NAP and ELAP programs require you to report the number of colonies you have in production to FSA by Jan. 2, 2022. You must notify FSA within 30 calendar days of changes in the total number of colonies or when honeybees are moved to another county.

For both programs, you must notify FSA within 15 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent.

More Information

To learn more about programs for honey and honeybee producers, visit fsa.usda.gov or contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

2021 FSA County Committee Elections Underway

USDA mailed ballots the week of Nov. 1 for the FSA county committee elections to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners in Michigan.

Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these committee members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally.



Voting Deadline is Dec. 6

To be counted, producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or be postmarked by Dec. 6, 2021.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits. Also, for County Committee elections, producers who are not of legal voting age, but supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, are eligible to vote.

Producers can find out if their LAA is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from their local FSA county office. To find your local USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-locator. Visit fsa.usda.gov/elections for more information.

About Committees

Each committee has from three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office, and at least one seat representing an LAA is up for election each year. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2022. <https://www.farmers.gov/blog/ag-business/lead-your-fsa-serving-our-neighbors>

Pandemic Support for Certified Organic and Transitioning Operations

USDA will provide pandemic assistance to cover certification and education expenses to agricultural producers who are certified organic or transitioning to organic. USDA made \$20 million available through the new [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program \(OTECP\)](#) as part of USDA's broader [Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative](#), which provides new, broader and more equitable opportunities for farmers, ranchers and producers.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, certified organic and transitional operations faced challenges due to loss of markets, and increased costs and labor shortages, in addition to costs related to obtaining or renewing their

organic certification, which producers and handlers of conventionally grown commodities do not incur. Transitional operations also faced the financial challenge of implementing practices required to obtain organic certification without being able to obtain the premium prices normally received for certified organic commodities.

Eligible Expenses

OTECP funding is provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). Certified operations and transitional operations may apply for OTECP for eligible expenses paid during the 2020, 2021 and 2022 fiscal years. For each year, OTECP covers 25% of a certified operation's eligible certification expenses, up to \$250 per certification category (crop, livestock, wild crop, handling and State Organic Program fee). This includes application fees, inspection fees, USDA organic certification costs, state organic program fees and more.

Crop and livestock operations transitioning to organic production may be eligible for 75% of a transitional operation's eligible expenses, up to \$750, for each year. This includes fees charged by a certifying agent or consultant for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan.

For both certified operations and transitional operations, OTECP covers 75% of the registration fees, up to \$200, per year, for educational events that include content related to organic production and handling in order to assist operations in increasing their knowledge of production and marketing practices that can improve their operations, increase resilience and expand available marketing opportunities. Additionally, both certified and transitional operations may be eligible for 75% of the expense of soil testing required under the National Organic Program (NOP) to document micronutrient deficiency, not to exceed \$100 per year.

Applying for Assistance

Signup for 2020 and 2021 OTECP is open through Jan. 7, 2022. Producers apply through their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office and can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364. Visit farmers.gov/otecp to learn more.

Additional Organic Support

OTECP builds upon USDA's Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) which provides cost share assistance of 50%, up to a maximum of \$500 per scope, to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the NOP. This year's application period for OCCSP ended Nov. 1, 2021.

Additionally, USDA's Risk Management Agency announced improvements to the Whole-Farm Revenue Program including increasing expansion limits for organic producers to the higher of \$500,000 or 35%. Previously, small and medium size organic operations were held to the same 35% limit to expansion as conventional practice producers. Also, producers can now report acreage as certified organic, or as acreage in transition to organic, when the producer has requested an organic certification by the acreage reporting date.

To learn more about USDA's assistance for organic producers, visit usda.gov/organic.

USDA Provides \$1.8 Billion to Offset Market Fluctuations

USDA is in the process of issuing \$1.8 billion in payments to agricultural producers nationwide who enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2020 crop year. These payments provide critical support to help mitigate fluctuations in either revenue or prices for certain crops. These two USDA safety-net programs help producers of certain crops build back better after facing the impacts of COVID-19 and other challenges.



In addition, FSA encourages producers to contact their local USDA Service Centers to make or change elections and to enroll for 2022 ARC or PLC, providing future protections against market fluctuations. The election and enrollment period opened on Oct. 18, 2021 and runs through March 15, 2022.

2020 Payments and Contracts

ARC and PLC payments for a given crop year are paid out the following fall to allow actual county yields and the Market Year Average prices to be finalized. This month, FSA processed payments to producers enrolled in 2020 ARC-County (ARC-CO), ARC-Individual (ARC-IC) and PLC for covered commodities that triggered for the crop year.

For ARC-CO, view the [2020 ARC-CO Benchmark Yields and Revenues online database](#) for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity.

For PLC, payments have triggered for barley, canola, chickpeas (large and small), dry peas, flaxseed, lentils and wheat. More information on rice payments will be announced later this fall and in early 2022.

For ARC-IC, producers should contact their local FSA office for additional information pertaining to 2020 payment information, which relies on producer-specific yields for the crop and farm to determine benchmark yields and actual year yields when calculating revenues.

Michigan ARC and PLC By the Numbers

In Michigan, more than 50 thousand contracts were signed in 2019. In 2020, Michigan producers signed nearly 54 thousand ARC or PLC contracts. In 2021, signed contracts in Michigan surpassed 55 thousand.

Since 2019, these safety-net programs have paid out over \$76.9 million to Michigan producers of covered commodities.

2022 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-CO or PLC, which are both crop-by-crop, or ARC-IC, which is for the entire farm. Although election changes for 2022 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2022, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2022, the election remains the same as the 2021 election for crops on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Covered commodities in Michigan include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed, and wheat.

Web-Based Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), a tool available through the University of Illinois allows producers to estimate payments for farms and counties for ARC-CO and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), a tool available through Texas A&M allows producers to estimate payments and yield updates and expected payments for 2022.

Crop Insurance Considerations

ARC and PLC are part of a broader safety net provided by USDA, which also includes crop insurance and marketing assistance loans.

Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products.

Producers on farms with a PLC election have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider; however, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

November 2021 Lending Rates

FSA loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment and storage structures, or meet cash flow needs.



Operating, Ownership and Emergency Loans

FSA offers farm ownership and operating loans with favorable interest rates and terms to help eligible agricultural producers, whether multi-generational, long-time or new to the industry, obtain financing needed to start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. FSA also offers emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters or quarantine. For many loan options, FSA sets aside funding for historically underserved producers, including veterans, beginning, women, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and Hispanic farmers and ranchers

Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for November 2021 are as follows:

- [Farm Operating Loans](#) (Direct): 1.750%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct): 2.875%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct, Joint Financing): 2.500%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Down Payment): 1.500%
- [Emergency Loan](#) (Amount of Actual Loss): 2.750%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. You can find out which of these loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

Commodity and Storage Facility Loans

Additionally, FSA provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade on-farm storage facilities and purchase handling equipment and loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low. Funds for these loans are provided through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and are administered by FSA.

- [Commodity Loans](#) (less than one year disbursed): 1.125%
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#):
 - Three-year loan terms: 0.625%
 - Five-year loan terms: 1.000%
 - Seven-year loan terms: 1.375%

- Ten-year loan terms: 1.500%
- Twelve-year loan terms: 1.625%
- [Sugar Storage Facility Loans](#) (15 years): 1.750%

Pandemic and Disaster Support

Due to recent outbreaks of the COVID-19 Delta variant, USDA has extended the deadline for producers to apply for the COVID-19 Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision to Jan. 31, 2022. FSA will permit a second DSA for COVID-19 and a second DSA for natural disaster for those who had an initial COVID-19 DSA. Requests for a second DSA must be received no later than May 1, 2022.

More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Michigan Farm Service Agency

3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 350
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-324-5110

State Executive Director

Tim Boring, PhD

Farm Loan Programs Chief

Dave Russ

Price Support Programs Chief

Ken Schapman

Conservation Programs Chief

Dale Allen

Production Adjustment Programs Chief

Kyle Knapp