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- [USDA Begins 49th Enrollment Period for the Conservation Reserve Program](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Began Dec. 7](#)
- [2016 Acreage Reporting Dates](#)
- [USDA Designates 68 Counties in Ohio as Primary Natural Disaster Areas](#)
- [FSA Microloans Available up to \\$50,000](#)
- [Have you heard about the Ohio AgrAbility Program?](#)

Ohio FSA State News and Updates

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**Production Adjustment,
Compliance and Risk**

USDA Begins 49th Enrollment Period for the Conservation Reserve Program

Farmers and landowners are reminded that the next general enrollment period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has started, and will end on Feb. 26, 2016.

As of September 2015, 24.2 million acres were enrolled in CRP. CRP also is protecting more than 170,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, enough to go around the world 7 times.

Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. At times when commodity prices are low, enrolling sensitive lands in CRP can be especially attractive to farmers and landowners, as it softens the economic hardship for landowners at the same time that it provides ecological benefits. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish native plant species on marginal agricultural lands for the primary purpose of preventing soil erosion and improving water quality and related benefits of reducing loss of wildlife habitat.

Contracts on 1.64 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2016. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with

Management Chief:
Matt Kleski

environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

State Committee:
Bob Boggs, Chairperson
Bob Cole, member
Bruce Long, member
Jim Rex, member
Jim Zumbrink, member

For more information about FSA's conservation programs, visit your County FSA office or go online to www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

Visit Ohio FSA website for additional information at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

Please contact your [FSA County Office](#) for questions specific to your operation.

Dates to Remember

Dec. 15 ---- **Deadline** to report the 2016 Fall Seeded Crops for fall barley, fall wheat and all other fall-seeded small grains.

Dec. 25 ---- Christmas Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Jan. 1 ----- New Year's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Jan. 1 ----- Elected Committee Members and alternates take office.

Jan. 18 ---- Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Feb. 1 ----- **Deadline** on 2015 LDPs for wool and unshorn lamb pelts.

Feb. 15 ---- President's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**

Feb. 26 ---- General CRP sign-up 49 ends.

Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Began Dec. 7

Producers who chose coverage from the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Dec. 7, 2015, to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2016. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2016. Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2016 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

The two programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, dry peas, rapeseed, safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

For more information, producers are encouraged to contact your [county FSA Office](#).

2016 Acreage Reporting Dates

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

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable:

Dec. 15, 2015 --- Fall Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

Jan. 2, 2016 ----- Report honey and Maple sap.

Jan. 15, 2016 ---- Apples, Grapes.

May 31, 2016 ---- Report Nursery Crop Acreage.

July 15, 2016 --- Report all your Burley Tobacco, Cabbage (Planted 3/19/15-5/31/15), Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hybrid Corn Seed, Spring Oats, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Tomatoes and all other crops.

Aug. 15, 2016 --- Report Cabbage (Planted 6/1/15-7/20/15).

Sept. 30, 2016 -- Report Aquaculture.

Dec. 15, 2016 --- Fall 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.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

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.

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

USDA Designates 68 Counties in Ohio as Primary Natural Disaster Areas

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated 68 Ohio counties as primary natural disaster areas due to damage and losses caused by the combined effects of excessive rain, flash flooding, flooding, excessive heat, landslides, mudslides, high winds, hail and lightning that occurred during the period of March 1, 2015, through Aug. 25, 2015.

Those counties are:

Adams, Allen, Ashtabula, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Carroll, Clermont, Clinton, Columbiana, Coshocton, Crawford, Defiance, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Fulton, Gallia, Geauga, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Harrison, Henry, Highland, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Lake, Lawrence, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Lucas, Marion, Medina, Meigs, Mercer, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Ottawa, Paulding, Perry, Pickaway, Portage, Preble, Putnam, Sandusky, Shelby, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Union, Van Wert, Vinton, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wood and Wyandot counties.

Farmers and producers in the following counties in Ohio also qualify for disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Those counties are:

Ashland, Athens, Champaign, Clark, Cuyahoga, Darke, Erie, Franklin, Hocking, Huron, Jefferson, Madison, Mahoning, Miami, Pike, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Seneca and Williams counties.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Nov. 19, 2015, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the [Emergency Conservation Program](#), The [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#), the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#), the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#), and the [Tree Assistance Program](#).

Interested farmers may contact their [county FSA office](#) for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

FSA Microloans Available up to \$50,000

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans is up to \$50,000. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

The microloan lending increase from \$35,000 allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay.

To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans.

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$50,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, livestock, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, feed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses.

Individuals interested in applying for a FSA [microloan](#) or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact their local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official.

Have you heard about the Ohio AgrAbility Program?

Ohio AgrAbility promotes success in agriculture for Ohio's farmers and farm families coping with a disability or long term health condition.

The Ohio AgrAbility Program is part of a national program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that promotes independence for people in agriculture who want to continue to farm after experiencing a disabling condition. The Ohio State University has partnered with Easter Seals to help bring this program to the local level. The goal is to provide education, resources, and technical assistance to those individuals and their families so they may continue to be successful in agriculture.

The Ohio AgrAbility Program can assist those engaged in agriculture, who have a disability. Some disabilities may be present at birth, while others may be a result of accidents, illness, or age-related conditions and may include: Arthritis, Head or Spinal Cord injury, Amputation, Paralysis, Back pain or

injury, Stroke, Diabetes, Visual or Hearing Impairment, Respiratory Problems, Cerebral Palsy, Parkinson's disease and Repetitive Motion Injuries.

If you are interested in learning more about this program or know someone that might benefit from the Ohio AgrAbility Program, contact:

Andy Bauer, Education Program Coordinator

Ohio AgrAbility Program
The Ohio State University
590 Woody Hayes Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43210
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bauer.528@osu.edu

For additional information, visit the Ohio AgrAbility website at: <http://agrability.osu.edu/> .

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).