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From the Alaska FSA State Executive

It's difficult to find appropriate words to share after the tragic events that took place in Uvalde Texas on Tuesday. As a mother of two school-aged daughters, I am saddened and angry that this is our reality. In a meeting with Gloria Montañó Greene, Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) within the USDA family, she shared the Spanish term *desahogar*: *to vent, to unchoke yourself*. She encouraged those of us in leadership positions across FSA to practice *desahogar*. With our employees, clients, friends and family. To hold space for those who have lost loved ones and to talk with those in our circle about how we make change. How can we come together after a tragedy such as this one and what can we do to ensure it doesn't happen again? I do not have the answers. I am still trying to unchoke myself.

I am thankful for the 18+ hours of daylight and beautiful sunshine we've had the past week. I am excited about visiting farms and farmers markets across the State in the coming months. I look forward to the first local zucchini, bouquets of fresh flowers, and soccer matches under the midnight sun. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or need additional information.



Reminders and Events:

- Memorial Day Holiday, State and County FSA Offices closed, May 30, 2022.
- Acreage Reporting date for 2022 Crop year for Nursery is May 31, 2022.
- Are you interested in learning more about our Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The State Office will host a Virtual NAP Discussion June 8th at 7:30 a.m. Contact Shelby Johnson for further information, 907-761-7773 or shelby.johnson@usda.gov
- Nenana Ag Days on June 10th, hosted by the Division of Agriculture. Learn more at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/nentot/>
- Acreage Reporting date for 2022 Crop year for ALL other spring planted crops, CRP, Perennial Forage is July 15, 2022.
- The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of September 01, 2022: Floriculture (Peonies), Aquaculture, Turf Grass
- The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of September 30, 2022: Perennial Grass Forage (Perennial Grasses intended use seed), Honey
- Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022.

Amy Pettit
State Executive Director
Alaska Farm Service Agency

USDA Pays Nearly \$2 Million to Producers for Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program

\$300,000 issued to 194 producers in Alaska

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that nearly \$2 million will be issued to 882 producers through the 2021 Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment (RTCP) program beginning on May 19, 2022. The RTCP helps eligible farmers and ranchers outside the contiguous U.S., including those in Alaska, offset a portion of the cost of transporting agricultural products or inputs used to produce an agricultural commodity over long distances. 194 producers in Alaska will receive more than \$300,000 to help mitigate the increased costs of doing business.

USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after spring planting should make an appointment with the Northern or Southern County Farm Service Agency (FSA) before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for the Northern and Southern County Offices:

For 2022 Crop Year

May 31, 2022	Nursery
July 15, 2022	All other spring planted crops, CRP, Perennial Forage

For 2023 Crop Year

September 30, 2022	Value-loss crops and controlled environment crops (except Nursery)
December 15, 2022	Fall-Seeded Small Grains
January 2, 2023	Honey

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 the Northern or Southern County FSA office to set up an in-person or phone appointment.

To file a crop acreage report, you will need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

Acreage Reporting Details

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:



- If the crop has not been planted by the 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 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.

More Information

For questions, please contact the Northern County FSA office at 907-895-4242 ext 150 and the Southern County FSA Office at 907-761-7773.

2022 Avian Influenza in the United States - What you need to know!

Commercial producers and backyard enthusiast alike are asked to practice good biosecurity and report sick or dead birds.

To date, USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories has confirmed the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in commercial and backyard flocks in several states including Alaska. Avian influenza viruses are classified as either "low pathogenic (LPAI)" or "highly pathogenic (HPAI)" based on their genetic features and the severity of the disease they cause in poultry. Caused by an influenza type A virus, HPAI can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and wild birds (especially waterfowl).

The clinical signs of birds affected with all forms of Avian Influenza may show one or more of the following:

- Sudden death without clinical signs
 - Decreased water consumption up to 72 hours before other clinical signs
 - Lack of energy and appetite
 - Decreased egg production
 - Soft-shelled or misshapen eggs
 - Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
 - Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, and legs
-

- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Lack of coordination
- Diarrhea

In addition to the disease infecting domestic birds, it is important to know that wild birds can also be infected and show no signs of illness. They can carry the disease to new areas when migrating, potentially exposing domestic poultry to the virus. The [APHIS' wild bird surveillance program](#) provides an early warning system for the introduction and distribution of avian influenza viruses of concern in the United States, allowing APHIS and the poultry industry to take timely and rapid action.

With the recent detections of avian influenza in wild birds and domestic poultry in the United States, bird owners should review their biosecurity practices and stay vigilant to protect poultry and pet birds from transmission of this disease. The following bio-safety guidelines are effective methods for safeguarding commercial operations and smaller flocks:

- Backyard flock owners should practice strict biosecurity, including preventing birds from exposure and/or co-mingling with wild birds and other types of poultry.
- Shower, change clothes, and clean and disinfect footwear before entering your poultry housing areas.
- Respiratory protection such as a medical facemask would also be important and remember to always wear clean clothes when encountering healthy domestic birds.
- Carefully follow safe entry and exit procedures into your flock's clean area.
- Reduce the attractiveness for wild birds to stop at your place by cleaning up litter and spilled feed around poultry housing areas.
- If you have free range guinea fowl and waterfowl, consider bringing them into coops or flight pens under nets to prevent interaction of domesticated poultry with wild birds and their droppings.
- It is best to restrict visitors from interacting with your birds currently.
- Do not touch sick or dead wildlife and keep them away from domestic poultry
- Try not to handle sick or deceased domestic birds (if you must, use proper personal protective equipment to minimize direct contact and cautiously disinfect anything that comes into contact with the deceased and or sick bird).

As part of the existing USDA Avian Influenza response plans, Federal and State partners as well as industry are responding quickly and decisively to these outbreaks by following these five basic steps:

- **Quarantine** – restricting movement of poultry and poultry-moving equipment into and out of the control area;
- **Eradicate** – depopulate the affected flock(s);
- **Monitor region** – testing wild and domestic birds in a broad area around the quarantine area;

- **Disinfect** – kills the virus in the affected flock locations; and
- **Test** – confirming that the poultry farm is AI virus-free.

Sick or deceased domestic birds should be reported to your local veterinarian. Positive domestic cases are handled by APHIS and its partners. States that have confirmed cases of Avian Influenza should work closely with USDA-APHIS on surveillance, reporting and control efforts. Disposal methods will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the flock, space requirements, associated costs, local conditions, and applicable laws/regulations.

The United States has the strongest Avian Influenza surveillance program in the world, where we actively look for the disease and provide fair market value compensation to affected producers to encourage reporting.

If you do not raise domestic birds or have a poultry operation but you encounter sick or dead wild birds, please use bio-safety measures, and report your findings through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, this strain of Avian Influenza is a low risk to the public. While the transmission rate from animals to humans is low, it is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be shared between species. To learn more about Avian Influenza and to remain up to date on the latest related news and information, you can visit the [USDAAPHIS webpage](#).

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

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. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

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

For Alaska, 2022 Spring deadlines for crop year 2023 coverage:

The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of **March 15, 2022**:

Spring planted annual crops (vegetables)

For Alaska, 2022 Fall deadlines for crop year 2023 coverage:

The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of **September 01, 2022**:

Floriculture (Peonies), Aquaculture, Turf Grass

The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of **September 30, 2022**:

Perennial Grass Forage (Perennial Grasses intended use seed), Honey

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery, to predict insurance premium costs.

USDA Expands Farmers.gov to Include Farm Records

Producers with farmers.gov accounts can now access farm records and maps online, the latest self-service feature added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website.

You can quickly and easily access your land information in real time by desktop computer, tablet or phone. Capabilities include:

- View, print and export detailed farm records such as cropland, base acres, yields, CRP acres, land ownership details, and much more;
- View, print and export farm/tract maps that can be provided to lenders, chemical or fertilizer providers, and FSA for reporting acreage and crop insurance agents; and

- Export common land unit (field) boundaries as ESRI shapefiles.

The ability to access these records on demand without a visit to the service center saves you time and money.

[Farmers.gov](#) now includes the most popular functionalities from FSAFarm+, the FSA portal for producers, while providing enhanced functionality and an improved user experience. A new enhancement expands the scope of accessibility to include farmers and ranchers who are members of an entity, as well as people with a power of attorney form (FSA-211) on file with FSA.

Managing USDA Business Online

Using farmers.gov, producers, entities and those acting on their behalf can also:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign conservation documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices, plans and contracts.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View farm loan and interest information (producers only).

Future plans include adding the ability to import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture planting boundaries.

To access your information, you'll will need a [USDA eAuth account](#) to login to farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit [farmers.gov](#) and sign into the site's authenticated portal via the [Sign In/Sign Up link](#) at the top right of the website. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.

In addition to the self-service features available by logging into farmers.gov, the website also has ample information on USDA programs, including pandemic assistance, farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs and crop insurance. Recently, USDA updated the navigation and organization of the site as well as added some new webpages, including "[Get Involved](#)," "[Common Forms](#)," and "[Translations](#)." [Learn more about these changes](#).

Progression Lending from FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loans are considered progression lending. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Our goal is to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. FSA staff will advise borrowers on developing strategies and a plan to meet your goals and graduate to commercial credit. FSA borrowers are responsible for the success of their farming operation, but FSA staff will help in an advisory role, providing the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information about farm loans, please contact the Northern County FSA office at 907-895-4242 ext 150 and the Southern County FSA Office at 907-761-7773 or visit www.usda.gov.

USDA Expands Local, Electronic Communication Options for Producers

USDA is expanding our online communications platform that the Farm Service Agency (FSA) has used for years to now include local information from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), and other USDA agencies.

Subscribers will now receive important information on FSA, NRCS and RMA programs, eligibility requirements, deadlines, and more.

You're currently subscribed to the Northern and Southern County USDA Service Center newsletter and updates. News will continue to be sent via e-mail right to your home or farm office, or to your smartphone – allowing you to receive immediate notification of USDA news that applies to your agricultural operation.

You can also subscribe to text alerts from the Northern County USDA Service Center by texting AKDeltaJunction to 372-669 or Southern County USDA Service Center by texting AKPalmer to 372-669. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

For more information visit farmers.gov/working-with-us/stay-connected or for subscription assistance contact the Northern County USDA Service Center at 907-895-4242 or the Southern County USDA Service Center at 907-761-7773.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings and/or events should contact the Northern County FSA Service Center, at (907) 895-4242, ext. 150, Southern County FSA Service Center, at (907) 761-7773, or dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunication relay services.

Alaska State Farm Service Agency

800 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy., Suite 216
Palmer, AK 99645

Phone: 907-761-7738
Fax: 907-761-7789

Northern County FSA Service Center

PO Box 585

Delta Junction, AK 99737

Phone: 907-895-4242 ext. 150

Fax: 855-711-9095

Hours:

Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

www.fsa.usda.gov/ak

Southern County FSA Service Center

800 E Palmer-Wasilla Hwy. Ste 216

Palmer, AK 99645

Phone: 907-761-7773

Fax: 907-761-7789

County Committee Meetings

Northern Co June 14, 10:00 a.m.

Southern Co June 14, 7:30 a.m.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).

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