

January 6, 2021



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# BULLETIN

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## North Dakota FSA eNews

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is temporarily restricting in-person visits for USDA Service Centers in North Dakota because of elevated rates of coronavirus community spread, but USDA employees will continue to assist agricultural producers with programs and services.** While all of the Service Centers across North Dakota will be physically closed to visitors, **FSA and NRCS remains open for business.** Throughout the pandemic, USDA's work with producers has continued and the agency remains committed to serving our customers.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, and Service Center staff members from FSA and NRCS will continue to work with producers by phone, email, and digital tools like Microsoft Teams, Box, and OneSpan. Producers can learn more about how to leverage these digital offerings by visiting <https://www.farmers.gov/mydocs>.

Producers wishing to conduct business with the FSA, NRCS, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead to confirm and schedule appointments. More information on Service Center status can be found at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status>, and contact information for local Service Centers is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator>.

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## Important Upcoming Deadlines

**January 18, 2021:** Offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**January 30, 2021:** Deadline for 2020 LFP Applications

**February 12, 2021:** Deadline to enroll land in CRP General Signup 56

**February 15, 2021:** Offices closed in observance of Presidents' Day

**March 5, 2021:** Deadline to apply for the Quality Loss Assurance Program

**March 15, 2021:** ARC/PLC Enrollment Deadline

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## USDA CRP General Signup Begins, and Ends February 12

Agricultural producers and private landowners interested in the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) can sign up for the popular program beginning, **Jan. 4, 2021, until Feb. 12, 2021.** The competitive program, administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

Through CRP, farmers and ranchers establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Farmers and ranchers who participate in CRP help provide numerous benefits to their local region and the nation's environment and economy. CRP general signup is held annually and is competitive; general signup includes increased opportunities for wildlife habitat enrollment through the [State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement](#) (SAFE) initiative.

New cropland offered in the program must have been planted for four out of six crop years from 2012 to 2017. Additionally, producers with land already enrolled but expiring on Sept. 30, 2021, can re-enroll this year. The acreage offered by producers and landowners is evaluated competitively; accepted offers will begin Oct. 1, 2021.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. The program marked its [35-year anniversary](#) in December 2020. Program successes include:

- Preventing more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, which is enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks.
- Reducing nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95% and 85%, respectively.
- Sequestering an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road.
- Creating more than 3 million acres of restored wetlands while protecting more than 175,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, which is enough to go around the world seven times.
- Benefiting bees and other pollinators and increasing populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, grasshopper sparrows, and many other birds.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will continue to work with our producers by phone, email, and using online tools. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## Quality Loss Assistance Now Available for Eligible Producers Affected by 2018, 2019 Natural Disasters

**Signup begins- TODAY- Jan. 6, 2021**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced that signup for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program will begin- today- **Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021**. Funded by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, this new program provides assistance to producers who suffered eligible crop quality losses due to natural disasters occurring in 2018 and 2019. **The deadline to apply for QLA is Friday, March 5, 2021.**

### Eligible Crops

Eligible crops include those for which [federal crop insurance](#) or [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) coverage is available, except for grazed crops and value loss crops, such as honey, maple sap, aquaculture, floriculture, mushrooms, ginseng root, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, and turfgrass sod.

Additionally, crops that were sold or fed to livestock or that are in storage may be eligible; however, crops that were destroyed before harvest are not eligible. Crop quality losses occurring after harvest, due to deterioration in storage, or that could have been mitigated, are also not eligible.

Assistance is based on a producer's harvested affected production of an eligible crop, which must have had at least a 5% quality loss reflected through a quality discount; or for forage crops, a nutrient loss, such as total digestible nutrients.

### **Qualifying Disaster Events**

Losses must have been a result of a qualifying disaster event (hurricane, excessive moisture, flood, qualifying drought, tornado, typhoon, volcanic activity, snowstorm, or wildfire) or related condition that occurred in calendar years 2018 and/or 2019.

Assistance is available for eligible producers in counties that received a qualifying Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or Secretarial Disaster Designation because of one or more of the qualifying disaster events or related conditions.

Lists of counties with Presidential Emergency Disaster Declarations and Secretarial Disaster Designations for all qualifying disaster events for 2018 and 2019 are available [here](#). For drought, producers are eligible for QLA if the loss occurred in an area within a county rated by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) as having a D3 (extreme drought) or higher intensity level during 2018 or 2019.

Producers in counties that did not receive a qualifying declaration or designation may still apply but must also provide supporting documentation to establish that the crop was directly affected by a qualifying disaster event.

To determine QLA eligibility and payments, FSA considers the total quality loss caused by all qualifying natural disasters in cases where a crop was impacted by multiple events.

### **Applying for QLA**

When applying, producers are asked to provide verifiable documentation to support claims of quality loss or nutrient loss in the case of forage crops. For crops that have been sold, grading must have been completed within 30 days of harvest, and for forage crops, a laboratory analysis must have been completed within 30 days of harvest.

Some acceptable forms of documentation include sales receipts from buyers, settlement sheets, truck or warehouse scale tickets, written sales contracts, similar records that represent actual and specific quality loss information, and forage tests for nutritional values.

### **Payments Calculations and Limitations**

QLA payments are based on formulas for the type of crop (forage or non-forage) and loss documentation submitted. Based on this documentation FSA is calculating payments based on the producer's own individual loss or based on the county average loss. More information on payments can be found on [farmers.gov/quality-loss](https://farmers.gov/quality-loss).

FSA will issue payments once the application period ends. If the total amount of calculated QLA payments exceeds available program funding, payments will be prorated.

For each crop year, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive, directly or indirectly, is \$125,000. Payments made to a joint operation (including a general partnership or joint venture) will not exceed \$125,000, multiplied by the number of persons and legal entities that comprise the ownership of the joint operation. A person or legal entity is ineligible for QLA payment if the person's or legal entity's average Adjusted Gross Income exceeds \$900,000, unless at least 75% is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities.

### **Future Insurance Coverage Requirements**

All producers receiving QLA Program payments are required to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available crop years at the 60% coverage level or higher. Wildlife and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) participants who already met the WHIP+ requirement to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage are considered to have thereby met the requirement to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage for QLA. If eligible, QLA participants may meet the

insurance purchase requirement by purchasing [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection](#) coverage offered through USDA's Risk Management Agency.

### More Information

For more information, visit [farmers.gov/quality-loss](http://farmers.gov/quality-loss), or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364.

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### Questions?

Please contact your local [FSA Office](#).

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