

Stanly Soil & Water Conservation

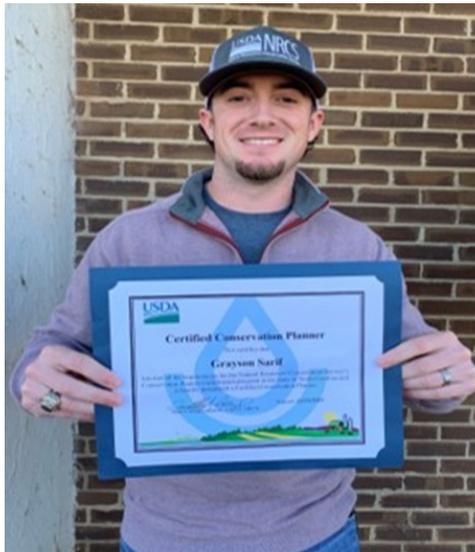
Happy New Year!

Conservation Information

Recognizing Our Current Leaders in Conservation...

Grayson Sarif

Grayson Sarif began his conservation career in April 2014, with the Stanly Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). While employed by the SWCD, he worked closely with the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), offering his technical support and actively collaborating with locally led conservation efforts. Grayson was employed by the SWCD until his selection as the NRCS Soil Conservationist in Union County in August 2015. He has been an instrumental resource in delivering conservation planning and technical assistance, advising private landowners in the sound management and sustainable use of the natural resources. Grayson was promoted to a Resource Soil Conservationist in 2019 and continues to offer his technical expertise within this team and throughout the Piedmont region of North Carolina.



Grayson obtained his National NRCS Certified Conservation Planner designation in June of 2020, becoming the first NC NRCS employee to have completed the new National Certified Planner requirements in our state. A special and noteworthy accomplishment! Throughout his six plus years in the conservation field, he contributes his success to working with many knowledgeable senior employees that have helped him along the way to achieve this notable career milestone. **Congratulations Grayson and continue to lead by example!**

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/nc/home/>

WINTER EDITION 2021

District Board Members

Curtis Furr	Chairman
Jody Smith	Treasurer
Chester Lowder	Supervisor
Gerald McSwain	Supervisor
Howard Moose	Supervisor

District Board Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. at the Stanly County Agri-Civic Center. All meetings are open to the public.

District and NRCS Staff

Rebecca Brickner Interim Cost Share Technician
Rita Little Admin/Education Coordinator
Josh Pratt Soil Conservationist
Lin Taylor Civil Engineer Technician

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



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 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. 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.

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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.



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, or contact your local USDA Service Center. Producers can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364.

Ag Cost Share Programs Available

Soil and Water Conservation Districts implement four cost share programs, all of which share a common goal of increasing water quality. These programs include the Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP), the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The District accepts applications year round for each of these programs. Applications are ranked based on various criteria and conservation concerns. The highest ranking application is considered for assistance to install best management practices.



ACSP-The major cause of water quality problems in the area is non-point source pollution. Damage to our water resources comes from soil erosion, excessive fertilizer use, animal waste contamination, and improper use of agricultural chemicals. The Agriculture Cost Share Program helps address non-point source pollution.



AgWRAP-The Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program was recently created in order to address water quantity issues. Producer concerns include water to be used for cropland irrigation, and livestock watering. Multiple best management practices are available to help producers increase their water use efficiency, availability and storage.



CREP-The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is available to protect environmentally sensitive cropland and marginal pasture land long term. This is accomplished through 10, 15, and 30 year conservation easements.

For more information on the services and how to apply come by our office, email Rebecca Brickner at rbrickner@stanlycountync.gov or call 704-986-3059.

USDA Announces CRP General Signup 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.

USDA Non-Discrimination Policy

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Stanly SWCD prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communication at (202) 720-2791. To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340 (Voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD).

USDA Offers Secure New Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online



Farmers and ranchers working with USDA’s Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.

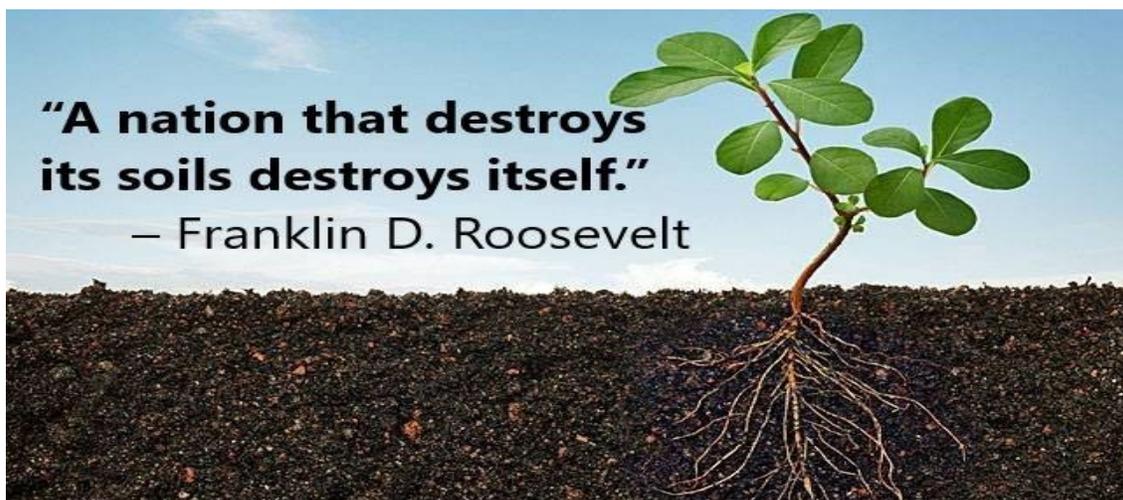
OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer’s personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you’re interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

Visit farmers.gov/mydocs to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

To learn more about program flexibilities and Service Center status during the coronavirus pandemic, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.



Rule Change Helps Producers Implement More Conservation Activities



USDA released the final rule for its Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

CSP provides many benefits, including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements, and increased resilience to adverse weather. CSP is for working lands, including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, non-industrial private forest land, and agricultural land under Indian tribe jurisdiction.

Based on feedback from 600 comments on the interim rule, NRCS made the following changes in the final rule include:

- Added emphasis to enhancing soil health as a way that program participants can achieve program goals.
- Allowed for more than one contract renewal but extend the two-year program ineligibility period to include those who apply for renewal and are not selected.
- Increased payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations.
- Introduced a new supplemental payment for advanced grazing management.
- Created a one-time payment for developing a comprehensive conservation plan.
- Provided specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production activities.

NRCS state offices announce sign-up periods for CSP. Additionally, existing CSP participants may have an opportunity to renew their contracts in the first half of the fifth year of their five-year contract. For more information on how to sign up for CSP in your state, visit your state website from nrcs.usda.gov, or contact your local NRCS field office at 704-982-5114 Ext. 3.

USDA Updates Conservation Provisions for Highly Erodible Land and Wetlands

USDA published its final rule on determining whether land is considered highly erodible or a wetland, integrating input from the public and making updates in accordance with the 2018 Farm Bill. This final rule follows a focused effort by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve consistency and use of science in making determinations.

To be eligible for most USDA programs, producers must be conservation compliant with the highly erodible land and wetland provisions. These provisions aim to reduce soil loss on erosion-prone lands and to protect wetlands for the multiple benefits they provide.

The final rule was made available for public inspection today, and it will be published tomorrow in the Federal Register. This follows an interim final rule published Dec. 7, 2018.

This final rule confirms most of the changes made by the December 2018 interim final rule and makes these additional updates:

1. Adding the requirement of the 2018 Farm Bill that USDA will make a reasonable effort to include the affected person in an on-site investigation conducted prior to making a wetland violation technical determination.
2. Further clarifying how wetland hydrology is identified for farmed wetlands and farmed wetland pasture.
3. Adding clarification to the consideration of best-drained condition for wetland hydrology in keeping with the definition of prior converted cropland.

Relocating the provision that wetland determinations can be done on a tract, field, or sub-field basis in order to improve clarity.

NRCS has recently updated its conservation compliance webpages, adding highly erodible land and wetland determination resources for agricultural producers by state. Learn more about conservation compliance on the NRCS website.

Farmers Help America Keep Soil Healthy

1. Our lives are dependent on healthy soil. Healthy soil gives us clean air and water, bountiful crops and forests, productive grazing lands, diverse wildlife and beautiful landscapes. It's the reason why USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service experts are in your community and across the nation.
2. Soil is composed of air, water, organic matter and minerals. A community of organisms – functioning as a soil food web – lives all or parts of their lives in soil. More individual organisms are in a teaspoon of soil than there are people on earth. Increasing soil organic matter typically improves soil health, since organic matter improves several critical functions of soil.
3. To improve the health of their soil, more and more farmers and ranchers are keeping soil covered, reducing disturbance activities such as tilling, keeping plants growing throughout the year, and diversifying the crops they're planting in a rotation. Taking these steps allow farmers and ranchers to help reduce erosion while increasing the soil's ability to provide nutrients and water to the plant at critical times during the growing season.
4. When producers focus on improving soil health, they often have larger harvests, lower input costs, optimized nutrient use, and improved crop resilience during drought years like last year. In heavy rainfall years, healthy soil holds more water, reducing runoff that helps avert flooding downstream.
5. And because healthy soil allows for greater water infiltration and less erosion, nutrients and pesticides stay on the farm where they benefit crops, and are far less likely to be carried off the farm into streams and lakes where they can cause harm.
6. NRCS helps farmers install conservation practices such as cover crops to maintain and improve soil health – all of which can lead to productive, profitable and sustainable farming and ranching operations for generations to come.

For more information, contact your Stanly County USDA Service Center at 704-982-5114 Ext. 3 or visit nrcs.usda.gov.



Association Holds Annual Meeting

The 77th Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts was held virtually on January 4-5, 2021.

This multi-day event serves as the forum for development of association policy and action. The agenda also offers important training opportunities for district supervisors, district staff, and all members of the conservation partnership.

NCASWCD President, Chris Hogan presided over the opening session at 8:30 a.m. on Monday.

Steve Troxler, NC Ag Commissioner, was next on the agenda. He thanked everyone for persevering and carrying on through the difficulties of the past year, looking forward to a better year to come.

A Memorial Service for those passing during the past year was led by Marvin Cavanaugh, Chaplain.

At 9:30 a.m. an online election was held. Voting was for the 2nd Vice President office.

Committee meetings and break-out sessions commenced at 10:00 a.m. via Webex video conferencing.

Tuesday morning began with the call to order by Chris Hogan, NCASWCD President, at 8:30 a.m. Next, Blount Knowles, 1st Vice President, presided over a short business session.

Myles Payne, Past Pres/Chair, presented the nominating committee report. Partnership reports from the North Carolina Conservation District Employees' Association, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, the NC Soil & Water Conservation Foundation, the NC Grange, and NC Farm Bureau. After a break, the swearing in of officers and area chairs brought the annual meeting to a close.

2022 Annual Meeting

"It is our hope to be together for a face-to-face Annual Meeting in 2022. The dates will be January 9-11, 2022. We will continue to monitor the epidemic and plan accordingly for next year. The Association thanks each of you for participating in this year's Annual Meeting. Though it is not the format we hoped for, the business of the Association is vital to assure we continue to set our priorities and elect the leadership for upcoming year. Soil and Water Districts having proven over our 83 year history that we will meet the challenges and continue to deliver service."

http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/professional_development/documents/2021AnnualMeetingProgram.pdf



Out of the long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil.

— *Hugh Hammond Bennett* —

Noninsured Crop Coverage Helps Producers Manage Risks



The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) helps you manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters. The eligible or "noninsured" crops include agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance.

You must be enrolled in the program and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop in the crop year in which the loss incurred to receive program benefits following a qualifying natural disaster.

NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested.

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.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

NAP Service Fees

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.

NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans

Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, "*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.*"

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, contact your Stanly County USDA Service Center at 704-982-5114 Ext. 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Important Dates:

Sunday, March 14 Daylight Saving Time begins.

Friday, April 2 Agri-Civic Center is closed in observance of Good Friday.

Thursday, April 22 Earth Day 2021.

Enrollment Begins for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs for 2021



Agricultural producers can now make elections and enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2021 crop year. The signup period opened Tuesday, Oct. 13. These key U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) safety-net programs help producers weather fluctuations in either revenue or price for certain crops, and more than \$5 billion in payments are in the process of going out to producers who signed up for the 2019 crop year.

Enrollment for the 2021 crop year closes March 15, 2021.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price.

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

2021 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the entire farm, for the 2021 crop year. Although election changes for 2021 are optional, enrollment (signed contract) is required for each year of the program. If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2021, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2021, the election defaults to the current election for crops on the farm from the prior crop year.

For crop years 2022 and 2023, producers will have an opportunity to make new elections during those sign-ups. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

2019 Crop Year ARC and PLC Payments

FSA began processing payments last week for 2019 ARC-County (ARC-CO) and PLC on covered commodities that met payment triggers on farms enrolled for the 2019 crop year. In addition to the \$5 billion now in process, FSA anticipates it will issue additional payments by the end of November for 2019 commodities covered under ARC-Individual (ARC-IC) and additional commodities that trigger PLC and ARC-CO payments for which rates have not yet been published

Producers who had 2019 covered commodities enrolled in ARC-CO can visit the ARC and PLC webpage for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity. For farms and covered commodities enrolled in 2019 PLC, the following crops met payment triggers: barley, canola, chickpeas (small and large), corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, long and medium grain rice, peanuts, seed cotton and wheat.

Oats and soybeans did not meet 2019 PLC payment triggers.

2019 PLC payment rates for the following covered commodities have not been determined: crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sesame seed, sunflower seed and temperate Japonica rice. Payment rates for these commodities will be announced at a later date.

Continued on next page...

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, the University of Illinois tool that offers farmers the ability to run payment estimate modeling for their farms and counties for ARC-County and PLC.

ARC and PLC Decision Tool, the Texas A&M tool allows producers to analyze payment yield updates and expected payments for 2021. Producers who have used the tool in the past should see their username and much of their farm data already available in the system.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, including two online decision tools that assist producers in making enrollment and election decisions specific to their operations, visit the ARC and PLC webpage.

For additional questions and assistance, contact your local USDA service center at 704-982-5114 Ext. 2.

Erosion Control Materials Available

Landowners and producers are encouraged to take advantage of another service provided by the Stanly SWCD. Erosion control materials are now in stock and available for purchase.



8' x 112.5' Double Net Straw Blanket
\$28.00 each



4' x 180' Single Net Excelsior Blanket
\$38.00 each



6" x 1" 11 gauge Sod Staples
\$30.00 box of 1000
Or 4¢ each



Wood Stake 1.5" x 1.5"
\$16.00/bundle of 25
or 75¢ each



Straw Wattle

12 in. x 10 ft. \$25.00



26032-C Newt Road
Agri-Civic Center
Albemarle, NC 28001
704-986-3059

www.stanlycountync.gov/soil-and-water

Mission Statement

The mission of Stanly Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide education, information and technical assistance to citizens of Stanly County for the conservation of our soil and water resources.

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Steve Edwards, Manager

Mauney's
Feed Mill, Inc.

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704-463-1331

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Stanly County Farm Bureau

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