

Risk Management Agency

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Benefits for Crop Insurance

FACT SHEET
December 2020

Overview

Beginning farmers and ranchers are eligible for certain benefits designed to help as you start your operation. These benefits include:

- Exemption from paying the administrative fee for catastrophic and additional coverage policies;
- Additional 10 percentage points of premium subsidy for additional coverage policies that have premium subsidy;
- Use of the previous producer’s production history, with permission, for the specific acreage transferred to you if you were previously involved in the decision making or physical activities on any farm that produced the crop or livestock; and
- An increase in the substitute Yield Adjustment, which allows you to replace a low yield due to an insured cause of loss, from 60 to 80 percent of the applicable transitional yield (T-Yield).

Benefit Availability

It is important that you fill out the application provided by your crop insurance agent to be eligible for benefits. The application must be completed prior to the sales closing date for the benefit to be available for that crop year.



Who Is Eligible?

To qualify for beginning farmer or rancher status:

- You must be an individual. Business entities may receive benefits only if all of the substantial beneficial interest holders (10 percent or more) of the business entity qualify as beginning farmers or ranchers. For example, a son moves home to take over the family farm and incorporates with his spouse and neither have previous farming experience. Their corporation would qualify as a beginning farmer/rancher. However, if a son moves home and forms a corporation with his father, who has had an insurable interest in crops or livestock for more than 5 crop years, the corporation cannot receive beginning farmer and rancher benefits. Although the son qualifies as a beginning farmer or rancher, the father does not so the corporation cannot receive benefits; and
- You must not have actively operated and managed a farm or ranch anywhere, with an insurable interest in any crop or livestock for more than 5 crop years (10 years for Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP)). This includes an insurable interest as an individual or as a substantial beneficial interest holder (10 percent or more) in another person who has an insurable interest in any crop or livestock. You may exclude a crop year’s insurable interest if you were under the age of 18, enrolled in post-secondary studies (not to exceed 5 crop years) or on active duty in the U.S. military.

How It Works

You must apply for Beginning Farmer and Rancher benefits by your Federal crop insurance policy’s sales closing date. You are required to identify any previous farming or ranching experience and any exclusionary time periods you were under the age of 18, in post-secondary education, or active duty military. Talk to your crop insurance agent for more information.



Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What if I had beef cow-calf pairs as my 4-H project while in high school? Is that considered an insurable interest in livestock and would it count towards the 5 crop years (10 crop years for WFRP) of insurable interest for Beginning Farmer and Rancher benefits?

Answer: Owning cow-calf pairs would be considered an insurable interest in a crop or livestock. However, you may exclude any crop years of insurable interest in a crop or livestock from consideration for Beginning Farmer and Rancher benefit eligibility if the insurable interest was while you were under the age of 18 (including the crop year you turn 18), while on full time active duty in the U.S. military, or while in a post-secondary education program (the post-secondary education exclusion cannot exceed 5 years).

Question: I am attending classes at night at the local college, yet I want Beginning Farmer and Rancher premium subsidy benefits now. Do I have to wait until I graduate or stop attending class?

Answer: No, you can receive benefits while attending college or university if you do not want to exclude those years from consideration of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher 5 crop years of insurable interest.

Question: How long can I be a beginning farmer or rancher and keep my benefits?

Answer: Once you have 5 crop years (10 crop years for WFRP) of insurable interest in a crop or livestock, including having a substantial beneficial interest (10 percent interest) in another person who has an insurable interest in a crop or livestock, you are no longer entitled to Beginning Farmer and Rancher status. Once you choose and qualify for Beginning Farmer and Rancher status, it is continuous until the earlier of:

- You have had an insurable interest in a crop or livestock for more than 5 crop years (10 crop years for WFRP);
- 5 crop years of Beginning Farmer and Rancher benefits are exhausted; or
- You cancel the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Application.

Where to Buy Crop Insurance

All multi-peril crop insurance, including Catastrophic Risk Protection policies, are available from crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available online using the RMA Agent Locator: rma.usda.gov/en/Information-Tools/Agent-Locator-Page.

To download copies of this fact sheet and others, visit our online publications/fact sheets page at rma.usda.gov/en/Topics/National-Fact-Sheets.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available online at: rma.usda.gov/en/News-Room/Frequently-Asked-Questions.

This fact sheet gives only a general overview of the crop insurance program and is not a complete policy. For further information and an evaluation of your risk management needs, contact a crop insurance agent.