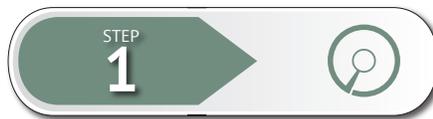


5 Steps to Meet Conservation Compliance



Overview

To be eligible to receive many USDA benefits, including loans, disaster assistance, federal crop insurance premium subsidies and conservation assistance, you must comply with requirements for highly erodible lands and wetlands. The purpose of the conservation compliance provisions is to reduce soil loss on erosion-prone lands and protect wetlands. Use these steps to ensure you're compliant.



See if Conservation Compliance Applies to You: Conservation compliance applies to any person seeking benefits from certain USDA programs, including [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) loans and disaster assistance, [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#) and FSA conservation programs, and Risk Management Agency (RMA) crop insurance premium subsidies for the 2016 reinsurance year, which runs from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

If you grow commodity crops and you have wetlands or highly erodible land, you may need additional assistance from FSA and NRCS to meet conservation compliance provisions. Commodity crops include any crop planted and produced by annual tilling of the soil, including one-trip planters or sugarcane.



See if You Are in Compliance: You must file form [AD-1026](#) to initiate the compliance process. If you are uncertain whether you have previously filed the form, [contact your local FSA office](#) to see if you have the form on file and are in compliance with the provisions. If you plan to participate in crop insurance, you must file form AD-1026 by June 1.



Complete the Form AD-1026: Form [AD-1026](#) is a compliance certificate used to:

- Inform you of highly erodible land and wetlands requirements;
- Certify compliance with those requirements;
- Identify you and anyone else who needs to complete the form; and
- Provide authorization for USDA representatives to service your determination request and check compliance.

Reminder: Farmers seeking federal crop insurance premium subsidies for the 2016 reinsurance year must comply by June 1 by filing form AD-1026. The 2014 Farm Bill relinked crop insurance premium subsidies with conservation compliance.

Any person seeking a USDA program benefit must complete, sign and file form AD-1026 with FSA. Additionally, any [affiliated person](#) who has a separate farming interest must also complete, sign and file form AD-1026. When you file form AD-1026, you are certifying that you will not:

- Plant or produce an agricultural commodity on highly erodible land without following an NRCS approved conservation plan or system;
- Plant or produce an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland; or
- Convert a wetland to make the production of an agricultural commodity possible.

Once the form is accurately completed and filed, it remains effective, and a person does not have to refile or update the form again, unless there are changes to the operation or new activities that occur that affect the person's certification. The form is not specific to a particular crop. It covers all land that a producer farms.

If you have already filed form AD-1026 and are still in compliance, you have already met your filing requirement, and no further action is needed.



Get in Compliance, if Needed:

If your land does need a [highly erodible land or wetlands determination](#), FSA will forward your form AD-1026 to NRCS, the agency responsible for making determinations. Determining whether you have highly erodible land is a simple process based on soil types. Determining whether you have wetlands on your property is a bit more complicated. In many instances, a field visit is needed to look at the soils, plants and hydrology of the site in question.

If needed, NRCS will work with you to develop a conservation plan for protecting highly erodible fields. This plan describes the conservation practices that may be needed to control soil erosion on highly erodible fields.

If you have wetlands on your land, you have a number of options, including leaving the wet areas unaltered, enrolling the land in a voluntary conservation program if eligible, and mitigating for wetland losses.



Ensure Your Farm Stays in Compliance:

You remain in compliance by following the provisions of form AD-1026, any conservation plan you have, and any allowable wetland management options.

Want to learn more?

Be sure to check out USDA's [nrcs.usda.gov/compliance](#), which has [frequently asked questions](#), fact sheets and many other resources.

Don't forget: you must be in compliance by June 1 to be eligible for federal crop insurance premium subsidies.

[nrcs.usda.gov](#)
[fsa.usda.gov](#)
[rma.usda.gov](#)