

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Benefits for Crop Insurance

Fact Sheet



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 to 15 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

To be eligible for benefits, you must fill out the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Application provided by your crop insurance agent. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher 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 10 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 10 crop years. 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 10 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 10 crop years 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 in a post-secondary education program (the post-secondary education exclusion cannot exceed 10 years), or while on active duty in the U.S. military.

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 10 crop years of insurable interest.

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

Answer: Once you have 10 crop years 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 10 crop years;
- 10 crop years of Beginning Farmer and Rancher benefits are exhausted; or
- You cancel the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Application.

Where to Buy Crop Insurance

Contact a crop insurance agent to see how Federal crop insurance can meet the specific needs of your operation. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available online at rma.usda.gov/agent-locator.

More Information

Producers can learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov or by contacting their RMA Regional Office.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available online at rma.usda.gov/about-crop-insurance/frequently-asked-questions

RMA fact sheets give only a general overview of Federal crop insurance programs, not complete policies. For further information and an evaluation of your risk management needs, contact a crop insurance agent.