



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/farm-bill-crop-insurance-options>

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K-State agricultural economists explain farm bill and crop insurance options

Deadlines near for farmers to make important business decisions

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Kansas State University agricultural economists are encouraging farmers to make time now to fully think through their options in advance of upcoming deadlines for federal farm and crop insurance programs that can offer financial assistance.

Farm economist Robin Reid said the deadline for two of those programs – Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage – was pushed back a month this year to April 15. The deadline to apply for crop insurance remains March 15.

ARC provides payments to farmers when the actual county revenue for their base crop acres is less than a guarantee based on historical yields and prices. PLC is a program that provides payments when the actual price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price.

The programs have been in place since 2014 to protect U.S. farmers from significant income losses due to fluctuations in crop prices or revenue shortfalls.

“One interesting factor going into farmers’ decisions on ARC or PLC this year is that we have higher prices as far as the benchmarks and guarantees than we’ve had in a long time,” Reid said. “That’s because these prices are based on what has happened in the market for the last five or six years.”

The current election for ARC and PLC programs’ coverage for farmers is based on 2025 harvested crops, Reid said, “so the marketing year for these crops does not start until further down the road.”

For example, the marketing year for wheat begins June 1. The marketing year for corn, soybeans and grain sorghum begins Sept. 1 and will not end until Aug. 31, 2026.

“There are a lot of unknowns about where our commodity prices will go in that timeframe, and that’s what makes the current decision on ARC and PLC very difficult for farmers,” Reid said.

K-State agricultural economist Jenny Ifft, who is also the Flinchbaugh Agricultural Policy Chair in the university’s [Department of Agricultural Economics](#), said farmers also have options to purchase county-level crop insurance on top of their individual insurance coverage, but “they’re going to cost more” and often don’t pay out until the year after the crop is harvested.

The Supplemental Coverage Option begins to pay when a county-based loss falls below 86% of its expected level. The Enhanced Coverage Option, which has only been available since 2021, provides additional county-based coverage for a portion of the underlying crop insurance policy deductible. Farmers have a choice to purchase an ECO that pays at 90% or 95% trigger levels.

“These programs are designed so that the producer comes out ahead in the long run, but you are going to be paying a higher premium, and might go a couple years without a payment,” Ifft said.

“The potential benefits are that if a producer wants a higher coverage level, using SCO or ECO can be more affordable than bringing your underlying policy up to an 85% coverage level. Also, the SCO and ECO are more sensitive to price declines, so they’re going to provide more price protection than underlying revenue protection policies that most producers use.”

Reid and Ifft recently spoke at length about crop insurance options for farmers on the weekday radio program, [Agriculture Today](#), produced by K-State Research and Extension and [available online](#). They also presented on the topic during K-State’s Winter Wednesday Webinar series on Feb. 12; [the recording is available online](#).

[Ongoing updates from K-State’s Department of Agricultural Economics](#) regarding crop insurance and many other topics are available at <https://agmanager.info>.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Agriculture Today, <https://agtodayksu.libsyn.com>

Winter Wednesday Webinar Series: Making Farm Program and Crop Insurance Decisions for 2025, <https://www.agmanager.info/events/2025-winter-wednesday-webinars>

K-State Department of Agricultural Economics (AgManager), <https://agmanager.info>

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Story by:
Pat Melgares
785-532-1160
melgares@ksu.edu

More information:

Robin Reid
785-532-0964
robinreid@ksu.edu

Jenny Ifft
jiff@ksu.edu