



New Commodity Program Base Acres

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This article summarizes information in the US *Federal Register* of January 12, 2026 that addresses the addition of up to 30 million new commodity base acres effective for the 2026 crop year, making them eligible for ARC (Agriculture Risk Coverage) and PLC (Price Loss Coverage) benefits. One purpose of this article is help you formulate questions. Please direct them to FSA (Farm Service Agency) as specifics matter and this article summarizes what are often detailed procedures and rules. Other *farmdoc daily* articles on the new base acre provision were posted on July 1 and July 11, 2025.

Owners Make Base Allocation Decisions, Producers Elect and Enroll

FSA does not have discretion to alter this.

New base acres are automatically added to eligible farms unless an owner requests to not add them. FSA is under no obligation to notify other owners if a base allocation rejection is filed

Farmers who have not reported plantings to FSA in the past will be allowed to do so and thus have new base acres. Acres already reported to FSA cannot be modified.

Eligibility for New Base Acres

1. At least one current covered commodity (see list at the end of the article) must have been planted or have been prevented from being planted because of drought, flood, or other natural disaster or condition beyond the farmer's control in at least one year during 2019-2023.

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Planted plus prevent planted acres are “planted and considered planted” (P&CP) acres. P&CP is limited to the initial planted or prevent planted crop, except for crops planted in an FSA approved double-crop sequence. Otherwise, a subsequent planting is not P&CP acres.

and

2. For an individual FSA farm, total P&CP acres must exceed total 9/30/2024 base acres for all covered commodities, excluding unassigned generic cotton base. Total P&CP acres are:

2019-2023 average (all 5 years) of P&CP acres for covered commodities **plus lesser of**

- a. 15% of total FSA farm acres

Total acres equal total cropland acres minus acres enrolled in a federally funded conservation program that restricts production of agricultural commodities except CRP (Conservation Reserve Program).

- or** b. 2019-2023 average (all 5 years) of eligible noncovered commodities P&CP FSA farm acres.

Eligible noncovered commodities are all other crops except

1. current covered commodities
2. tobacco (consistent with other Commodity Credit Corporation programs),
3. cannabis that does not meet the definition of hemp,
4. commodities reported as tree, bush, vine, grass, idle, or fallow,
5. cover crops reported as cover crops, and
6. CRP and other conservation program acres ineligible for dual payments.

Notes:

Eligibility of hay acres varies. Alfalfa and other mixed forage acres reported as hay on an FSA acreage report are eligible non-covered commodities. Grass hay acres are not eligible. It is suggested you check with FSA if you had hay acres during 2019-2023.

Forage and silage acres of a current covered commodity are eligible as the covered commodity.

Sugar cane and sugar beets are eligible non-covered commodities.

New Base Acres = [(Total P&CP acres calculated as above) plus (unassigned generic base acres) minus (total base acres as of 9/30/2024)]

Unassigned base acres (see note at the end of the article) are converted first to covered commodity base acres, on an acre-for-acre basis. If unassigned base exceeds allowable new base, the difference remains unassigned base.

A current FSA farm with base acres but does not qualify for new base retains its current base acres.

Assignment of Base Acres and Base Yields

No new covered commodities are created. New base acres are added to base acres of current covered commodities planted on an FSA farm over crop years 2019-2023 using this ratio:

[(2019-2023 average (all 5 years) of a given covered commodity P&CP acres) to (2019-2023 average (all 5 years) of all covered commodities P&CP acres)]

Other than under an established practice with FSA of double cropping covered commodities, an owner must elect what covered commodity on the same acre is used.

An FSA farm’s current PLC yield is used for any new base acre. If the farm has no PLC yield for the covered commodity, average PLC yield for the county in which the farm is situated or a yield for a similarly situated farm is used.

Limits

An FSA farm’s total base acres cannot exceed the FSA farm’s total acres.

New US base acres are capped at 30 million. If the US cap is effective, an across-the-board, pro-rated reduction is applied to all eligible new base acres.

FSA New Base Acre Examples (from US *Federal Register*, Volume 91, Number 7, 1/12/2026, pages 1045-1046)

2019–2023 Planting History: 25 acres planted to a covered commodity (CC) each year, 25 acres planted to an eligible non-covered commodity (ENCC) each year.

Case I: Current Base Acres = 0

5-year Average Planting History (25 acres (5-year sum of CC P&CP Acres divided by 5) + (lesser of 7.5 acres (15% of total acres) or 25 acres (5-year sum of total ENCC P&CP acres divided by 5))) = 32.5 acres

Maximum potential new base acres = 32.5 [32.5 (5-year average planting history) minus 0 (current base)]

Case II: Current Base Acres = 10

5-year Average Planting History (25 acres (5-year sum of CC P&CP Acres divided by 5) + (lesser of 7.5 acres (15% of total acres) or 25 acres (5-year sum of total ENCC P&CP acres divided by 5))) = 32.5 acres

Maximum potential new base acres = 22.5 [32.5 (5-year average planting history) minus 10 (current base)]

Notes:

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

Unassigned Base Acres: The 2014 Farm Bill made base acres of upland cotton as of 9/30/2013 “generic base acres.” They were not eligible for ARC and PLC benefits. The *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018* ([Pub. L. 115-123](#)) authorized seed cotton as a covered commodity. Under this authorization, if a covered commodity, including seed cotton, was not planted or prevented from being planted on the farm during the 2009-2016 crop years, “generic base acres” became “unassigned base acres.” They are not eligible for ARC or PLC benefits. For a discussion of generic base acres at the time of its implementation, see [83 FR 40653](#).