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DAVIS RO - USDA's New Shellfish Pilot Crop Insurance Program Provides Oyster Producers with More Coverage Options

News Release |
Davis, California

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 29, 2023 – Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that oyster producers are now eligible for protection against losses due to named storms, excessive heat during a low tide event, freeze during a low tide event, or low salinity due to excessive rainfall. The new Shellfish crop insurance program is an actual production history-price component (APH-PC) coverage policy for container-grown oysters commercially cultivated for the fresh half shell market. This new program will be available beginning with the 2024 crop year, and producers have until Nov. 30 to purchase this policy.

“We are always in contact with the entire agriculture community to hear their needs and provide opportunities to strengthen and expand crop insurance resources.” said Marcia Bungler, Administer of the USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA). “This policy offers our oyster producers needed protection from environmental challenges they face, and it also allows those who purchase additional levels of coverage to insure for a higher price based on personal sales records.”

For the APH-PC coverage policy, the producer selects the percentage of the average yield to insure from 50% to 75%. Additionally, the producer also selects the percentage of the crop price to insure, between 55% and 100%, as established annually by RMA. If producers purchase additional levels of coverage, they may also increase their price guarantee using their historical sales records. The program uses

county loss triggers combined with producers' sales records to confirm a loss has occurred. The insurance guarantee is based on the number of oysters expected to be harvested between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31.

Insurability requires a minimum of four years of records and a minimum seed size of four millimeters.

This new Shellfish crop insurance program is available in select counties in Alabama, California, Florida, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia.

RMA also offers crop insurance for certain aquaculture categories through crop insurance programs for Group Risk Plan oysters and cultivated clams, and the Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) plan of insurance. WFRP provides a risk management safety net for all commodities in an operation under one insurance policy.

More Information

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov or by contacting your [RMA Regional Office](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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