Prevented Planting and Drought

What is prevented planting (PP)?

Prevented planting (PP) is the failure to plant an insured crop by the final planting date or during the late planting period, as applicable. To qualify, you must be prevented from planting by an insured cause of loss that is general to the surrounding area. Final planting dates and late planting periods vary by crop and by area.

PP coverage is available for most annual crops and covers drought, failure of the irrigation water supply, and failure or breakdown of irrigation facilities when due to an insurable cause of loss and when occurring during the PP insurance period. In general, an insured cause of loss must have occurred on eligible acreage within the PP insurance period. To be eligible, your acreage must meet all applicable policy provisions.

What is the PP insurance period?

For new insureds, the PP insurance period begins on the sales closing date for the insured crop in the county for the crop year the producer's application is accepted.

For carryover insureds (producers who had insurance for the crop in the previous crop year), the PP insurance period begins on the sales closing date for the previous crop year.

Please view the Fact Sheet – PP Drought.

How do I qualify for a PP payment?

In order to qualify for a PP payment you must have eligible acres available for planting and an insurable cause of loss must have occurred within the PP insurance period.

Example, the corn sales closing date is March 15, 2021, for the 2021 crop year. You are a carryover insured and an insurable cause of loss occurs on or after March 15, 2020. If all other PP eligibility requirements have been met, you could receive a PP payment.

Example, the corn sales closing date is March 15, 2021, for the 2021 crop year. You are a new insured and complete a corn application for the 2021 crop year on March 1, 2021. An insured cause of loss, such as drought, occurs on or after March 15, 2021, and prevents you from planting corn by the final planting date. Then you could be eligible for a PP payment. If an insurable cause of loss occurred prior to March 15, 2021, this cause of loss would be outside the PP insurance period and you would not be eligible for a PP payment.

What are my options when dealing with drought conditions?

You should base your decision whether to plant using agronomically sound and well-documented drought management practices. For example, you may choose to:

- Plant fewer irrigated acres based on the amount of adequate irrigation water available and claim PP on the remaining acreage for which adequate water is not available;
- Plant and report the acreage without adequate water as non-irrigated if a non-irrigated practice is available for the crop in your county and do not claim PP on the irrigated and non-irrigated acreage;
- Not plant the acreage if adequate water is not available and claim a PP payment;
- Plant and report the acreage as uninsurable if a non-irrigated practice is not available for the crop in the county; or
- Not plant and claim PP if a non-irrigated practice is the only practice available for the crop in the county. You will need to provide additional documentation to your insurance company.

What documentation do I need to provide to my insurance company if I am prevented from planting due to drought for acres insured by a non-irrigated practice?

For non-irrigated acreage to qualify for PP due to drought, you must prove, and your insurance company must verify, that there is insufficient soil moisture for germination or progress to maturity. You must submit verifiable documentation acceptable to the insurance company of a prolonged period of dry weather general in the area. The insurance company will verify that there is insufficient soil moisture on the Final Planting Date (FPD).

Is PP available if I typically irrigate my acres?

PP is available for irrigated acreage when there is a reasonable expectation of having adequate water at the time coverage begins and there was an insurable cause of loss during the PP insurance period. You may qualify if:

- You are unable to prepare land for irrigation using an established method;
- Irrigation equipment or facilities breakdown or are destroyed due to an insurable cause of loss; or
- There is a failure of the irrigation water supply.

What is reasonable expectation of adequate water supply?

This term means if you had no reason to know or suspect at the time coverage began that the amount of irrigation water for the upcoming crop year may be limited or reduced. No reasonable expectation exists if you knew, or had reason to know, the amount of irrigation water may be reduced before coverage begins for the crop year.

I have been informed that there may be reduced irrigation water availability from the local authority. If my irrigation water availability is restricted, what are my insurance alternatives for spring-planted irrigated crops for the 2021 crop year?

To insure your crop as irrigated you must apply the quantity of water needed at the appropriate times to produce, at a minimum, the yield used to determine the production guarantee or amount of insurance. The yield used to determine the production guarantee is also known as your Actual Production History (APH) approved yield.
If you intend to apply less water than the minimum needed to establish your irrigated practice APH yield on the irrigated acreage planted to the insured crop, regardless of the reason, you have the following options:

- Apply the amount of water needed to produce the irrigated APH yield on a reduced number of acres and report the remaining acres as non-irrigated, if coverage is available in the county actuarial documents for a non-irrigated practice of the crop;
- Apply less water to the total acreage than used to establish your irrigated APH yield and report the total acreage as non-irrigated, if coverage is available in the county actuarial documents for a non-irrigated practice of the crop; or
- Apply the amount of water needed to produce the irrigated APH yield on a reduced number of acres and leave the remaining acres idle and report them as PP, if eligible.

I historically plant 1/3 of my acres to irrigated corn, 1/3 of my acres to irrigated sunflowers, and 1/3 of my acres to irrigated dry beans. If my irrigation water availability is restricted, am I required to distribute water at the same rate and acreage for the crop year?

You have the flexibility to rotate to a lower water use crop and insure that crop under an irrigated practice if you can demonstrate you have enough water to allow all of the crop to make normal progress toward maturity and produce the approved yield. In the question above, you can plant more acres of dry beans that require less water and distribute the saved water to sunflowers or corn. If you can prove you had enough water to meet the definition of irrigated practice, you can insure all the acres as irrigated.

What records should I keep supporting my PP claim if I am notified my water allocation will be reduced?

You must keep and provide all documentation to your crop insurance company as requested regarding the amount of water you will receive for the crop year and any justification provided for any reduced water allocation.

Documentation of water shortfalls must be verified from information provided by local irrigation authorities responsible for water allocations such as State Departments of Water Resources, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cooperative Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or other sources responsible for collection of water data or regulation of water resources. These sources are also used to document whether all or a portion of the acres could be irrigated if average precipitation had occurred within the PP insurance period.

In the 2020 crop year, the area was hit by a severe drought and it reduced the irrigation water supply for the current crop year (2021). The local authorities say normal precipitation will not recharge the normal supply of irrigation water. The authority reduces the normal water allocation by 50 percent. How many acres qualify for PP?

PP is available for the reduced number of acres only.

Example: 100-acre field. Authorities expect normal precipitation will provide irrigation water for 50 acres. PP coverage will be available for 50 acres only.