



United States Department of Agriculture



## Alabama USDA November Newsletter

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Alabama USDA Newsletter - November 2023

Farm Service Agency | Natural Resources Conservation Service | Risk Management Agency

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### Message from the SED:

#### Greetings:

As we all embark upon the holiday season and began to think about giving Thanks while spending time with our friends, family, and loved ones; I wanted to take this opportunity to

share with you some words of Thanksgiving!!!

I am truly thankful and grateful to not only lead the greatest state (Alabama) in the nation as SED of the Farm Service Agency, but I also get the awesome privilege of working with some of the greatest people in FSA.

These past few years in Government as well as life in general, we all have certainly had a lot thrust upon each of us and for many have already risen to the challenges and have overcome while so many are still rising to those challenges on a daily basis. This undoubtedly shows your perseverance and dedication while dealing with life's challenges and obstacles.

During the holiday season, I encourage you to lay those weights aside and focus on yourselves, your families, and focus on those things that truly make you happy and joyous.

FYI: Click here for [Current FSA Loan Interest Rates](#)



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## Funding Opportunities

### Producers Encouraged to Apply Now for USDA Conservation Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging agricultural producers and forest landowners to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices in fiscal year 2024 as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation



Stewardship Program (CSP) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which help a wide variety of producers, including urban and organic producers.

For fiscal year 2024, NRCS has \$3 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funds to invest in [climate-smart mitigation activities](#). This year, NRCS expanded the list of those activities as well as expanded priority areas for ACEP for grasslands, wetlands and farmlands at risk of conversion.

Learn more about those expansions in our [Sept. 28, 2023, news release](#).

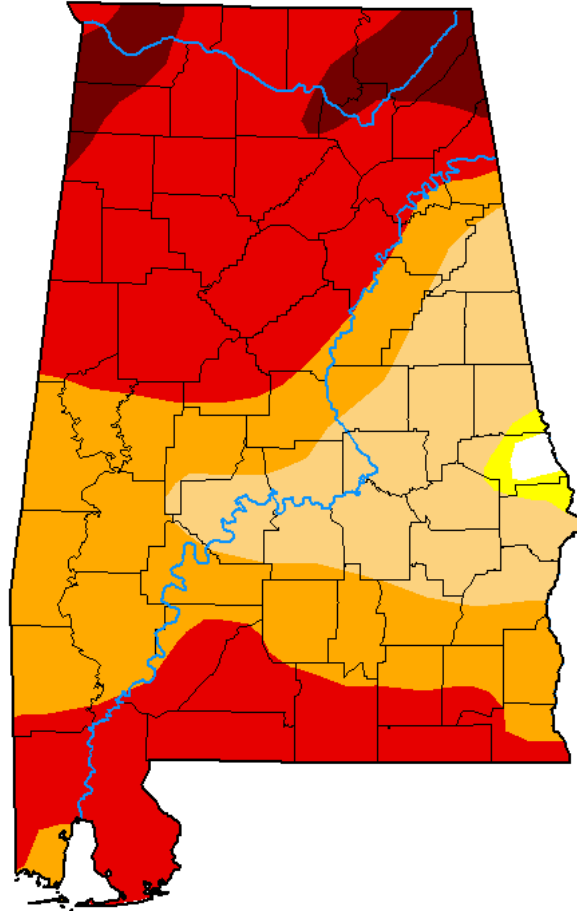
Additionally, for fiscal year 2024, NRCS has over \$2 billion in Farm Bill funding available to producers for priorities like organic and urban agriculture, soil health, water quality and quantity and wildlife habitat development. This extensive amount of funding will be used to meet producer demand for our oversubscribed programs, maximize climate benefits and help producers address their natural resource challenges.

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round. To apply for fiscal year 2024 funding, contact your [local NRCS office](#).

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## Disaster Assistance for 2023 Livestock Forage Losses

**November 14, 2023**



Producers in the following counties are eligible to apply for 2023 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits.

Baldwin	Colbert	Franklin	Lawrence	St. Clair
Bibb	Conecuh	Geneva	Limestone	Shelby
Blount	Covington	Greene	Madison	Talladega
Butler	Cullman	Hale	Marion	Tuscaloosa
Calhoun	Dale	Houston	Marshall	Walker
Cherokee	DeKalb	Jackson	Mobile	Washington
Chilton	Escambia	Jefferson	Monroe	Winston
Clarke	Etowah	Lamar	Morgan	

Coffee      Fayette      Lauderdale      Pickens

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land.

County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire.

You must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than Jan. 30, 2024, for 2023 losses.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact your County USDA Service Center by visiting [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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## USDA Encourages You to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines



The Farm Service Agency encourages you to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by [visiting the RMA website](#).

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics

and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Beginning, underserved, veterans and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop contact your county USDA Service Center by visiting [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at [USDA's online Agent Locator](#). You can use the [USDA Cost Estimator](#) to predict insurance premium costs.

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## Houston County (Dothan) FSA Office Is Hiring

The Houston County Farm Service Agency (FSA) office in Dothan is hiring a full time, temporary Program Technician (PT). The deadline to apply is **December 1, 2023**.

Duties include general office activities supporting FSA programs administered at the field level. Successful applicants must be reliable, have a professional attitude and enjoy working with the public.

If you are interested or know of someone who might be interested, please share this information with them. Here is the direct link to the position with information on how to apply: <https://www.usajobs.gov/job/761052100>.



**Applications must be completed through USAJOBS no later than close of business December 1, 2023.**

Contact Joya Magee at [Joya.Magee@usda.gov](mailto:Joya.Magee@usda.gov) if you have specific questions regarding the position.

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[Read the full USDA](#) announcement

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## 2023 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Open

**2023 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

<b>JUN. 15, 2023</b> Beginning of nomination period. Forms available at <a href="https://fsa.usda.gov/elections">fsa.usda.gov/elections</a> .	<b>AUG. 1, 2023</b> Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.	<b>NOV. 6, 2023</b> Ballots mailed to eligible voters.	<b>DEC. 4, 2023</b> Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.	<b>JAN. 1, 2024</b> Newly elected county committee members take office.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin mailing ballots this week for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [county and urban county committee elections](#) to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the country.

Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas for these committee members who make important decisions about how Federal farm programs are administered locally. Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots postmarked by Dec. 4, 2023, for those ballots to be counted.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Additionally, producers who are not of legal voting age, but supervise and conduct farming operations for an entire farm, are eligible to vote in these elections.

For purposes of FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian Tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned or held in trust by the U.S. for the Tribe, even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land. Tribal agricultural landowners 18 years and older can contact their local FSA county office to register to vote.

Each committee has from three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms, and at least one seat representing a Local Administrative Area is up for election each year. Committee members help ensure inclusive representation on committees and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their jurisdiction.

Ballots must be postmarked or delivered in person by close of business Dec. 4, 2023, to be counted. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2024. Producers can find out if their Local Administrative Area is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from their local FSA county office.

Visit [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) for more information on county committee elections.

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## Farmers.gov Local Dashboard Now Available for Producers in Alabama

**Access local data to assist with your farming operation including weather forecasts and up-to-date commodity pricing**

Farmers in ALABAMA can now access county specific farming data and USDA resources all in one place via the new farmers.gov local dashboard. Your new farmers.gov local dashboard includes farming data and USDA resources including USDA news, commodity pricing, weather forecasts, historical climate data, past storm events, USDA service center locator and additional state resources for ALABAMA and your county. The dashboard transforms complex data sets into easy-to-read charts and graphs to help you quickly find information that matters to you. [Find Your Local ALABAMA Dashboard](#)

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## USDA to Provide More Than \$3 Billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2022 Natural Disasters



### Emergency Relief Program (ERP) 2022

The U. S Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide more than \$3 billion to commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2022. Eligible impacted producers can apply for financial assistance through the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) 2022](#). The program will help offset the financial impacts of crop yield and value losses from qualifying disasters occurring in 2022.



## Background

On Dec. 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the *Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328)* that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by eligible natural disasters that occurred in calendar year 2022.

ERP 2022 covers losses to crops, trees, bushes and vines due to qualifying, calendar year 2022 natural disaster events including wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought and related conditions.

ERP 2022 program benefits will be delivered to eligible producers through a two-track process. FSA intends to make both tracks available to producers at the same time. This two-track approach enables USDA to:

- Streamline the application process.
- Reduce the paperwork burden on producers.
- Proactively include provisions for underserved producers who have not been well served by past emergency relief efforts.
- Encourage producer participation in existing risk management programs to mitigate the impacts of future severe weather events.

It's important to note that disaster-impacted producers may be eligible for ERP 2022 assistance under one or both tracks. To avoid duplicative benefits, if a producer applies for both tracks, the Track 2 payment calculation will take into account any payments received through Track 1.

### ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 1

ERP 2022 Track 1 leverages existing federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data as the basis for calculating payments for eligible crop producers who received indemnities through these risk management programs. Although FSA is sending pre-filled ERP 2022 Track 1 application forms to producers who have crop insurance and NAP data already on file with USDA, producers indemnified for losses resulting from 2022 natural disasters do not have to wait to receive the application before requesting ERP 2022 assistance. Effective Oct. 31, 2023, producers can apply for ERP 2022 benefits whether they have received the pre-filled application or not. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP 2022 Track 1 payment.

USDA estimates that ERP Track 1 benefits will reach more than 206,000 producers who received indemnities for losses covered by federal crop insurance and more than 4,500 producers who obtained NAP coverage for the 2022 crop year.

### ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 2

Track 2 is a revenue-based certification program designed to assist eligible producers who suffered an eligible decrease in revenue resulting from 2022 calendar year disaster events when compared with revenue in a benchmark year using revenue information that is

readily available from most tax records. In cases where revenue does not reasonably reflect a normal year's revenue, Track 2 provides an alternative method for establishing revenue. Likewise, Track 2 affords producers of crops that are used within an operation and do not generate revenue from the sale of the crop a method for establishing revenue for the purpose of applying for ERP 2022 benefits. Producers are not required to submit tax records to FSA unless requested by the County Committee if required for an FSA compliance spot check.

Although not required when applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, applicants might find the following documents useful to the process:

- Schedule F (Form 1040)
- *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023.

Track 2 targets gaps in emergency relief assistance for eligible producers whose eligible losses were not covered by crop insurance or NAP including revenue losses too small (shallow loss) to be covered by crop insurance.

Producers interested in applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, should contact their local FSA county office. Additional reference resources can be found on FSA's [emergency relief website](#).

### **Additional Required Forms**

For both ERP 2022 tracks, all producers must have certain required forms on file with FSA within 60 days of the ERP 2022 deadline. Producers can apply for ERP 2022 starting Oct. 31, 2023. The application deadline has not yet been determined and will be announced at a later date. If not already on file, producers can update, complete and submit required forms to FSA at any time.

Required forms:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, *Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs* (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, if applicable, for the 2022 program year.
- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.


Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm the status of their forms can contact their local FSA county office.

### Future Insurance Coverage Requirements

All producers who receive ERP 2022 payments must purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, in the next two available crop years as determined by the Secretary. Purchased coverage must be at the 60/100 coverage level or higher for insured crops or at the catastrophic coverage level or higher for NAP crops.

### More Information

ERP 2022 eligibility details and payment calculation factor tables are available on the [emergency relief website](#), in the [ERP Track 1](#) and [ERP Track 2](#) fact sheets and through your local [FSA county office](#).



## Inflation Reduction Act 22006

### Assistance for Distressed Borrowers

Since October 2022, USDA has provided approximately \$1.5 billion in immediate assistance to more than 25,000 financially distressed direct and guaranteed FSA loan borrowers.


#### Cash Flow-Based Assistance

- For direct Farm Loan Programs (FLP) borrowers who missed a recent installment or are unable to make an upcoming installment between August 1, 2022 and January 15, 2024.
- FSA will make a one-time credit to the borrower's account in the amount of the missed or upcoming installment due on all direct FLP loans.


#### Extraordinary Measures Assistance

- For direct farm loan borrowers who took certain extraordinary measures between February 28, 2020 through October 18, 2022 to avoid delinquency on their loans. This includes monetizing assets, incurring additional debt, or deferring other essential payments, resulting in reduced farm and household viability.
- FSA will provide a direct payment equal to what was used to make the payments to FSA, with a maximum payment being the full amount of the installment paid. Borrowers may also be eligible to receive a payment covering their next direct FLP loan installment if they have not received prior IRA Section 22006 installment assistance.

#### How to Request Assistance




In person at a local FSA county office (ask to speak with an FSA Farm Loan team member for details).



Send in a direct request at [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov). Scan the QR code for a direct link.

**ALL REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 31, 2023.**



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## Alabama USDA

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Davina Lee

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**CONTACT US:**

[Farm Service Agency](#)

[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

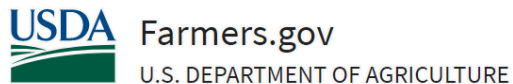
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