



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Alabama USDA Newsletter - October 2023

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Message from the SED:

Greetings:

We have entered the season of Family and Gathering. Alabama FSA takes pause, to remember love ones, friends, and acquaintances, yours and ours, who have been touched by cancer. We celebrate caregivers, survivors, and those who have fought a good fight.

This October also marks the beginning of FSA Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24). Some of our software is still offline. Nevertheless, we are fully ready to service Alabama's producers.

Mark your calendars, USDA has extended the deadline for the [Discrimination Financial Assistance Program to January 13, 2024](#).

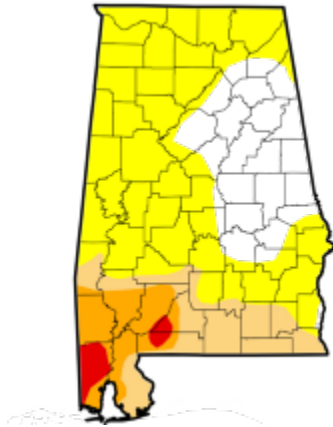
If you know a producer who has not subscribed to their local service center news bulletin please encourage them to do so. We want everyone to know about the options and opportunities available to them. These bulletins often list application deadlines, final planting dates, program updates, meetings and training opportunities, as well as current FSA loan interest rates. Subscribe on the [Farmers.gov Stay-Connected](#) page.

Lastly, you are encouraged to receive the receipt for service (RFS) provided to you following a USDA service center visit either by paper copy or via email. You can even request an RFS

following a phone call. These documents help keep track of your request and the information you receive.

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

Disaster Assistance for 2023 Livestock Forage Losses



Producers in **BALDWIN, CONECUH, ESCAMBIA, MOBILE, and MONROE** Counties are eligible to apply for 2023 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits.

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.

Apply Now for USDA Conservation Assistance



USDA encourages farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to apply now for conservation assistance. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Alabama is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which help a wide variety of producers, including urban and organic producers. To apply, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Announces 2024 Tribal Scholarships and Fellowships

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced two tribal higher education opportunities to train the next generation of agricultural professionals and strengthen ties with tribal higher education institutions. The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program offers a fast-track career path with USDA, and the Terra Preta do Indio Tribal Faculty Fellowship engages tribal college faculty with USDA resources and research. These programs reflect USDA's commitment to advance equity and remove barriers to service for tribal nations and encourage tribal workforce development. Today's announcement also marks the 29th anniversary of the day legislation was signed to give tribal colleges land-grant status.



[Read the full USDA](#) announcement

Share Your Harvesting Experience for Farmers.gov's #Harvest2023 campaign



As America's farmers harvest the crops that feed, clothe, and fuel our world, let's fill the Farmers.gov social media feed with their stories about this year's harvest season. We'd also like to see how it's going for farmers that participated in our #Plant2023 campaign in the spring.

To share your experience on @FarmersGov social media, follow these steps:

- Collect photos of what's happening on your operation as you harvest.
- If you're comfortable, we'd love to see the people that make it happen, like friends and family.
- Write an email to FP.Social@usda.gov, attach your photos/video, and tell us:
 - Your name, the location of your operation, and the name of your operation
 - Your operation's Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter pages, if you have them.
 - What are you harvesting this year?
 - Where does your harvest go? How is it used?
 - What are your personal thoughts on this year's harvest season?

Please note that by submitting your photo/video, you are granting USDA permission to use these materials for outreach and education purposes.

Remember to follow @FarmersGov on [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter), and [Instagram](#), and we look forward to sharing your story!

Dairy Margin Coverage Program Provides Critical Support for Dairy Operations

The August milk margin triggered the eighth consecutive payment for dairy producers who obtained [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) for the 2023 program year. August's income over feed margin is \$6.46 per hundredweight (cwt.) with projected DMC payments totaling \$120 million. To date, including the projected August payments, dairy producers have received more than \$1.2 billion in much needed economic support for 2023 and margin forecasts indicate the likelihood of more to come before the end of the calendar year.

DMC is a voluntary risk management program administered by USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

Additional Dairy Assistance

DMC complements other assistance available to dairy producers, including the [Milk Loss Program](#) (MLP) and the [Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program](#) (ODMAP).

MLP covers milk that was dumped or removed, without compensation, from the commercial milk market due to qualifying weather events and the consequences of those weather events that inhibited delivery or storage of milk (e.g., power outages, impassable roads, infrastructure losses, etc.) during calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

USDA recently announced a second round of payments for dairy producers through ODMAP, providing an additional \$5 million to help dairy producers with marketing costs to mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. FSA has already paid out \$15 million in the first round of payments for eligible producers, bringing total ODMAP payments to \$20 million.

More Information

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and view other farm records data and customer information by [logging into their farmers.gov account](#). Producers without an account can [sign up](#) today.

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](#).

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



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.

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.

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 Launches Program to Support Agricultural Employers and Farmworkers, Aiming to Increase Economic and Supply Chain Resilience as Part of President Biden’s Investing in America Agenda



The Biden-Harris Administration announced that agricultural employers can begin to apply for a pilot program designed to improve the resiliency of the food and agricultural supply chain by addressing workforce challenges farmers and ranchers face. USDA, in coordination with other federal agencies, is announcing up to \$65 million in grants available for the Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP Program).

The program will help address workforce needs in agriculture, promote a safe and healthy work environment for farmworkers, and aims to support expansion of lawful migration pathways for workers, including for workers from Northern Central America, through the Department of Labor’s seasonal H-2A visa program.

The FLSP Program seeks to advance the following Administration priorities:

- **Address current workforce needs in agriculture:** Based on stakeholder input, USDA identified that agricultural employers have experienced increased challenges finding an adequate supply of workers, which threatens our domestic capacity to produce a safe and robust food supply. This pilot program will help address these challenges by expanding the potential pool of

workers, and enhancing employers' competitiveness by improving the quality of the jobs they offer.

- **Reduce irregular migration, including from Northern Central America through the expansion of regular pathways:** While U.S. agricultural operations seek additional workers, the Biden-Harris Administration has committed to promote the expansion of regular migration pathways, as part of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection. The FLSP offers an opportunity to support this commitment, with economic benefits for foreign workers and their families, and professional and economic development opportunities for communities that send their workers to participate in the H-2A program.
- **Improve working conditions for farmworkers:** A stable and resilient food and agricultural sector relies on attracting and retaining skilled agricultural workers, and strong working conditions are critical to achieve that goal. Through this pilot program, USDA will support efforts to improve working conditions for agricultural workers, both U.S. and H-2A workers. The pilot will help ensure that workers know their rights and the resources available for them, and will promote fair and transparent recruitment practices.

Eligibility for this competitive grant program is limited to domestic agricultural employers who 1) anticipate meeting all Department of Labor (DOL) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulatory requirements for the H-2A program, including demonstrated effort to effectively recruit U.S.-based workers and hire all willing, able, and qualified U.S. workers; and 2) commit to, and indicate capacity to fulfill all Baseline Requirements, as well as any selected (supplemental) commitments that entail additive worker benefits and protections. Eligible employers include fixed-site employers, joint-employers, agricultural associations, and H-2A labor contractors.

The maximum award amount is \$2,000,000 and the minimum amount is \$25,000 per grant agreement (including any sub-awardees). Award amounts will be determined based on the projected number of full-time equivalent (FTE) agricultural employees, desired award level, as well as the competitive nature of the application. Consistent with the H-2A requirements, applicants must demonstrate insufficient availability of a U.S.-based workforce. The grant window for each recipient is 24 months, allowing producers to use the grant over the course of two agricultural production seasons.

Applications for the FLSP program must be received on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 28, 2023. More information about the application process can be found here: www.ams.usda.gov/flsp.

Silvopasture Can Help Diversify Ag Operations & Expand Income





Harming your land is never part of the plan, but without proper grazing practices, the land's productivity could decline. Improving your land's quality can start with good grazing management techniques. One popular grazing technique is silvopasture, a grazing system that combines trees, forage and livestock as a single practice on the same acreage.

Silvopasture can help with critical issues including lack of income, economic risks, lack of income diversity in timber or livestock,

controlling weeds and providing shade and shelter. Using silvopasture, you can start creating and enhancing wildlife habitat by establishing a diverse blend of plant species. When these plants attract wildlife, this helps increase income opportunities for hunting leases.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide technical and financial assistance to help you create a silvopasture system on your land. The assistance includes help with planting trees and pruning, building fences, fertilizing, multiple row plantings and other activities. For more information, contact your County USDA Service Center at or visit nrcs.usda.gov.

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. Scan the QR code for a direct link.

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



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

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