



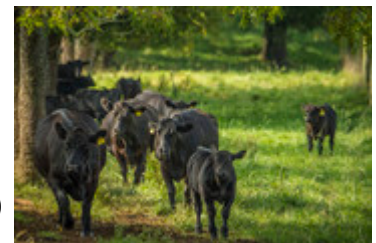
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USDA Accepts More than 2.5 Million Acres in Grassland CRP Signup

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has accepted offers for more than 2.5 million acres from agricultural producers and private landowners for enrollment through this year's Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Signup. This is double last year's enrollment and brings the total acres enrolled across all CRP signups in 2021 to more than 5.3 million acres, surpassing USDA's 4-million-acre goal. Producers and landowners submitted offers for nearly 4 million acres in Grassland CRP, the highest in the signup's history.



Florida producers enrolled 517.70 acres through this year's Grassland CRP signup. Through Grassland CRP, producers and landowners can conserve grasslands, rangelands, and pastures, while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing, or harvesting seed from the enrolled land, pursuant to approved conservation plans designed to promote thoughtful use while creating and maintaining vital habitat.

CRP and Climate Change Mitigation

Additionally, lands enrolled in CRP – including grasslands – play an important role in addressing climate change. For example, this enrollment of more than 2.5 million acres of grazing land into Grassland CRP will mitigate an additional estimated 22,000 metric tons of CO2 equivalent.

More Information

For more information on Grassland CRP or any other CRP program, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

NASS to send 2021 Hemp Acreage and Production Survey this Fall

This October, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will mail its first **Hemp Acreage and Production Survey**. The survey will collect information on the total planted and harvested area, yield, production, and value of hemp in the United States.

The Domestic Hemp Production Program established in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) allows for the cultivation of hemp under certain conditions. The Hemp Acreage and Production survey will provide needed data about the hemp industry to assist producers, regulatory agencies, state governments, processors, and other key industry entities.

Producers may complete the survey online at agcounts.usda.gov or they may complete and return the survey by mail using the return envelope provided.

Learn more about the survey at nass.usda.gov/go/hemp.

Streamlining How You Find Information on Farmers.gov

If you've been to farmers.gov before, things may look a little different from the last time you were here. We've made some changes, to improve how you find information so that you can find what you need even more easily and efficiently.

The big, green navigation bar near the top of every page – it's different now. It opens up, to show descriptions and subtopics, making it quicker and easier to figure out what's where and reduce guessing. Why? Two reasons: First, farmers.gov has grown a lot over the years and the old navigation wasn't designed for the load. Second, because you asked for it. We analyzed your comments through the "Feedback" button on the site and tested our new designs and information organization with real farmers and ranchers through surveys and live testing sessions.

Along with the new website navigation, we restructured how our pages and topics are grouped and organized to help you easily access the information you need. We also relabeled some of our existing pages using more direct language. This means that pages or information you've used before may have different labels or be in new places.

Important changes:

- The old Fund page is now called Loans. The Loans page has information and resources about USDA loans, including the Farm Loan Programs.
- The Recover page is now Protection and Recovery. This page has information to help you prepare and recover from natural disasters, and to mitigate risk for your operation.
- The Conserve page is now Conservation. This page hasn't changed much and still has information on how to implement conservation practices, improve and preserve natural resources, and address conservation concerns.

- The Manage page is now Working With Us. This page connects you with resources that tell you how USDA can help you start, expand, enhance, or improve your agricultural operation.
- The Connect page has been replaced with Your Business, a guide to USDA resources that cater to your specific operation. Information that was on the Connect page has been moved to the Contact Us page and the Get Involved page.

We are always updating farmers.gov based on your feedback and to stay up-to-date with important USDA announcements. We've recently created some new webpages, and updated some existing ones, to better equip you with the vital information you need. There are even more new pages coming soon, so stay tuned!

For farmers.gov, we don't guess what farmers and ranchers want from a website. We start by asking, then test our designs with volunteers who are also farmers and ranchers.

There's a feedback button on every page of farmers.gov. Based on your feedback, we looked for ways to make our site easier to use and to build the information that you're looking for. Live user testing sessions provide data, such as this heatmap, showing where testers tended to click during an exercise.

You helped us create the new navigation design, the new information organization, and told us how to speak using your words, and not legalese.

Check out farmers.gov today!

Gear Up for the 2021 Hurricane Season: Prepare and Recover with USDA

Hurricane season is underway, and it lasts until November 30. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts that the 2021 hurricane season will be above normal in the Atlantic and produce 13 to 20 named storms with six to 10 hurricanes and three to five major hurricanes. The eastern Pacific hurricane season will produce 12 to 18 named storms, with five to 10 hurricanes and two to five major hurricanes.

USDA is here to help you prepare for and recover from hurricane events.

Take precautions to prepare and protect your family and operation.

- **Develop an Emergency Plan** - Ensure your household and employees know your hurricane plan, including meeting points, emergency contact lists, and alternate evacuation routes in case infrastructure is damaged.
- **Remove Debris and Secure Large Objects** - Clean out culverts, ditches, and other drainage areas, especially before and during peak hurricane season to reduce water damage. Most injuries to animals, people, or structures during a hurricane are caused by flying objects. To lessen the risk, minimize the presence of equipment, supplies, and debris that may become airborne during high winds or encountered in floodwaters.
- **Secure Important Records and Documents** - Pre- and post-hurricane documentation is extremely important for insurance compensation and recovery assistance. You'll want to have thorough records of damages and losses sustained on your farm as well as documentation of your cleanup and recovery efforts.

It is critical to document inventory of farm buildings, vehicles, equipment, and livestock before a disaster occurs. Take photos, videos, or make written lists with descriptions. Keep copies of this inventory in multiple places: computer, off-site in a safe location, and on a cloud-based server where information is transmitted and saved weekly.

- **Know Your Insurance Options** - Regularly review your insurance policies with your agent to be sure you have adequate coverage, including flood insurance, for your facilities, vehicles, farm buildings,

crops and livestock. Note, there are limitations on how soon insurance coverage will take effect. Generally, insurance policies will not cover damage if the policy was not in place before a disaster.

For counties within or adjacent to the area of sustained hurricane-force winds, the Risk Management Agency's (RMA) Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index (HIP-WI) covers a portion of your underlying crop insurance policy's deductible. HIP-WI covers 70 crops and is available in counties near the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic, and Hawaii.

- **Gather Supplies** - Have drinking water, canned food, a generator, batteries, a flashlight, and fuel available in case you lose power. For widespread outages, credit and debit cards may not work, so have cash handy.
- **Access Real-time Emergency Information** - Download the FEMA app for free on the App Store and Google Play for safety tips on what to do before, during, and after disasters.

[Learn more about how USDA can help you recover.](#)

USDA Offers Disaster Assistance for Producers Facing Inclement Weather

Severe weather events create significant challenges and often result in catastrophic loss for agricultural producers. Despite every attempt to mitigate risk, your operation may suffer losses. USDA offers several programs to help with recovery.

Risk Management

For producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP), we want to remind you to report crop damage to your crop insurance agent or the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

If you have crop insurance, contact your agency within 72 hours of discovering damage and be sure to follow up in writing within 15 days. If you have NAP coverage, file a Notice of Loss (also called Form CCC-576) within 15 days of loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

Disaster Assistance

USDA also offers disaster assistance programs, which is especially important to livestock, fruit and vegetable, specialty and perennial crop producers who have fewer [risk management options](#).

First, the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) and [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that died as a result of a qualifying natural disaster event or for loss of grazing acres, feed and forage. And, the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) provides assistance to producers of grazed forage crop acres that have suffered crop loss due to a qualifying drought. Livestock producers suffering the impacts of drought can also request [Emergency Haying and Grazing](#) on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres.

Next, the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate and replant tree, vines or shrubs loss experienced by orchards and nurseries. This complements NAP or crop insurance coverage, which cover the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases.

For LIP and ELAP, you will need to file a Notice of Loss for livestock and grazing or feed losses within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days. For TAP, you will need to file a program application within 90 days.

Documentation

It's critical to keep accurate records to document all losses following this devastating cold weather event. Livestock producers are advised to document beginning livestock numbers by taking time and date-stamped video or pictures prior to after the loss.

Other common documentation options include:

- Purchase records
- Production records
- Vaccination records
- Bank or other loan documents
- Third-party certification

Other Programs

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore damaged farmland or forests.

Additionally, FSA offers a variety of loans available including emergency loans that are triggered by disaster declarations and operating loans that can assist producers with credit needs. You can use these loans to replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, or refinance farm-related debts, and other needs.

Meanwhile, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial resources through its [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) to help with immediate needs and long-term support to help recover from natural disasters and conserve water resources. Assistance may also be available for emergency animal mortality disposal from natural disasters and other causes.

Additional Resources

Additional details – including payment calculations – can be found on our [NAP](#), [ELAP](#), [LIP](#), and [TAP](#) fact sheets. On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help you determine program or loan options.

While we never want to have to implement disaster programs, we are here to help. To file a Notice of Loss or to ask questions about available programs, contact your local USDA Service Center. All [USDA Service Centers](#) are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments because of the pandemic.

Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Under WHIP+ and/or QLA

If you received a payment under the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLA) for crop production and/or quality losses occurring in 2018, 2019, or 2020 crop years, you are required to meet linkage requirements by obtaining federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level, or higher, for both the 2022 and 2023 crop years.

When applying for WHIP+ or QLA, form FSA-895 (Crop Insurance and/or NAP Coverage Agreement) was submitted acknowledging the requirement to obtain federal crop insurance, if available, or NAP coverage if federal crop insurance is not available. The coverage requirement is applicable to the physical location county of the crop that received WHIP+ and/or QLA benefits.

Producers should not delay contacting their federal crop insurance agent or local county FSA Office to inquire about coverage options, as **failure to obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will result in the required refund of WHIP+ benefits received on the applicable crop, plus**

interest. You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by [visiting the RMA website](#).

For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center at or visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport.

Progression Lending from FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loans are considered progression lending. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Our goal is to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. FSA staff will advise borrowers on developing strategies and a plan to meet your goals and graduate to commercial credit. FSA borrowers are responsible for the success of their farming operation, but FSA staff will help in an advisory role, providing the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

USDA, Partners Unveil New Fire Mapping Tool with National Wildfire Management Implications

USDA recently unveiled the new Southeast FireMap, a fire mapping tool for the Southeastern United States that enables resource managers to improve their regional or local approaches to managing wildfire risk and fire management needs through targeted prescribed burns and training. Fire management helps improve forest ecosystem health, increases timber values, reduces the risk of wildfire damage to life and property, reduces ticks and other pests, protects drinking water, and renews healthy ecosystems supporting wildlife habitat, especially in fire-dependent longleaf pine forests.

The SE FireMap version 1.0 decision support tool will map all detectable fires, including managed prescribed burns and wildfires, across nine states. The map and associated tools aim to improve fire management in

urban and rural communities through remote sensing and will track both prescribed fire and wildfires throughout Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. This is especially impressive as nearly 80% of the southeastern U.S. is in private ownership and this represents the first regional effort to map fires greater than 2.5 acres across the region, regardless of ownership.

The SE FireMap version 1.0 is a Google Earth Engine product and data sharing is available for conservation and community planning purposes. To see the mapping products or request data sharing, visit the partnerships' [Wildland Fire portal](#) or the [SE FireMap](#) page.

UPCOMING:

Local Working Groups Set Conservation Priorities in Florida

FL Ag producers, conservation groups, public invited to local working group meetings to prioritize natural resource concerns & make recommendations to NRCS. Find your meeting here.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/fl/technical/stc/?cid=nrcseprd1616815>

USDA to Provide Relief to Small Producers, Processors, Distributors, Farmers Markets Impacted by COVID-19

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Agricultural Marketing Service](#) (AMS) announced it will soon publish Requests for Applications (RFAs) for the Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grants program to support agricultural stakeholders who haven't yet received substantial federal financial assistance in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. This grant program will provide assistance to small businesses in certain commodity areas, including small scale specialty crop producers, food processors, manufacturers, distributors and farmers markets.

A [grant forecast](#) is now available to help potential applicants determine their eligibility and to prepare to apply for funding. Eligible entities should visit the PRS grant portal at usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov for complete information on the program, including how to obtain a free of charge DUNS Number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) **BEFORE** applying for this program. On September 23, USDA will issue another announcement indicating that entities may submit their applications through the grant portal; entities will need their DUNS number to submit an application.

Visit usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov or the [AMS website](#) to learn more.

Dates to Remember

September 17 - [Pandemic Assistance to Livestock Producers for Animal Losses deadline](#)

Sept. 30 - [Applications due for financial assistance](#) to improve water quality in [Long Pond Slough watershed](#).

October 11 - Federal Holiday Observed. Offices Closed.

October 12 - [CFAP 2 deadline](#)

October 15 - [Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers deadline](#)

Selected Interest Rates for September 2021

Farm Operating - Direct	1.875%
Farm Operating - Microloan	1.875%

Farm Ownership - Direct	3.000%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	3.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	2.500%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loan - Amount of Actual Loss	2.875%



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