



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Florida USDA - August 11, 2023

[Farm Service Agency](#) | [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) | [Risk Management Agency](#)

### In This Issue:

- [Crop Insurance Deadline Nears in Florida for Strawberry Growers](#)
- [Inflation Reduction Act Section 22007 – Discrimination Financial Assistance Program](#)
- [USDA Seeks Proposals by September 4 for Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership](#)
- [USDA Invests \\$7.4 Million in 25 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Efforts](#)
- [USDA Encourages You to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [Flower Hill Institute Hosting Webinar on Linkage Requirements](#)
- [NRCS Delivering Climate Solutions through the Inflation Reduction Act](#)
- [The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys](#)
- [NRCS Announces \\$75 Million to Assist Producers Transitioning to Organic as Part of USDA’s Organic Transition Initiative](#)
- [Report Banking Changes to FSA](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [Selected Interest Rates for August 2023](#)

---

## Crop Insurance Deadline Nears in Florida for Strawberry Growers



The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Florida strawberry growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage for the 2024 crop year is August 31. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the **August 31** sales closing date to do so.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy. Coverage is available for strawberries in Hardee, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Polk counties.

Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2024 crop year. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available online using the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Producers can use the [RMA Cost Estimator](#) to get a premium amount estimate of their insurance needs online. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov).

---

## **Inflation Reduction Act Section 2207 – Discrimination Financial Assistance Program**

On July 7, USDA and its partner vendors announced the opening of the application period for Section 2207 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which directs USDA to provide financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. The opening of the application process is an important step in delivering on USDA's commitment of providing financial assistance to those who have faced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs. The application process is open now and will close on October 31. Borrowers will have the option to apply for assistance online via [2207apply.gov](http://2207apply.gov) or through a paper-based form.

Details about the program, including an application and e-filing portal, are available at [2207apply.gov](http://2207apply.gov). The website includes an English and Spanish language application that applicants can download or submit via an e-filing portal, information on how to obtain technical assistance in-person or virtually, and additional resources and details about the program. Applicants can also call the free call center at 1-800-721-0970, or visit one of several dozen brick-and-mortar offices the program has set up around the country. Locations are provided on the program website and vendors will update the local events schedule with more information as it becomes available. It is important to note that filing an application is FREE and does not require a lawyer.

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination by USDA in its farm loan programs prior to January 1, 2021, and/or are currently debtors with assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was the subject of USDA discrimination that occurred prior to January 1, 2021, are eligible for this program.

Under the planned timeline, applications will be reviewed in November and December, with payments reaching recipients soon thereafter. Importantly, applicants should know that the

application process is not on a first come, first served, basis. All applications received or postmarked before the October 31 deadline will be considered.

To support producers throughout the application process, USDA is ensuring that organizations with extensive experience conducting outreach to farm organizations are able to support individuals who may be eligible for the program. These groups include [AgrAbility](#), the [Farmer Veteran Coalition](#), [Farmers' Legal Action Group](#), [Federation of Southern Cooperatives](#), [Intertribal Agriculture Council](#), [Land Loss Prevention Program](#), [National Young Farmers Coalition](#), and [Rural Coalition](#).

In standing up this program, USDA has become aware of some lawyers and groups spreading misleading information about the discrimination assistance process, pressuring people to sign retainer agreements, and asking people to fill out forms with private and sensitive information. The official application process and filling out an application is **free** and does not require a lawyer.

For more information, please visit [22007apply.gov](https://22007apply.gov). If you want to get weekly updates on the program's events and progress, there's a button there to subscribe to a weekly newsletter.

---

## USDA Seeks Proposals by September 4 for Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership



Partners may submit [Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership](#) project proposals through Sept. 4. The USDA NRCS and U.S. Forest Service seek proposals for Joint Chiefs' projects that will mitigate wildfire risk, protect water quality, improve wildlife habitat, restore forest ecosystems and ultimately contribute to USDA's efforts to combat climate change. Proposals must be submitted by Sept. 4 for fiscal year 2024 funding.

Learn more here: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/usda-seeks-proposals-for-joint-chiefs-landscape-restoration-partnership-0>

---

## USDA Invests \$7.4 Million in 25 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Efforts

---

USDA is investing \$7.4 million in 25 selected grants that support urban agriculture and innovative production. Selected grant recipients, including community gardens and nonprofit farms, will increase food production and access in economically distressed communities, provide job training and education, and allow partners to develop business plans and zoning proposals. These grants build on \$40 million in projects funded since 2020 and are part of USDA's broad support for urban agriculture through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). Funding limits only allowed USDA to select the top scoring 10% of the applications reviewed. This year, USDA received more than 300 applications, which is twice last year's applications. Read more here: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/biden-harris-administration-announces-investments-in-urban-agriculture-food-and-market-access>



---

## 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 [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit [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.

---

## Flower Hill Institute Hosting Webinar on Linkage Requirements

Flower Hill Institute provides nationwide outreach, education, and technical assistance services to historically underserved farmers and ranchers through a cooperative agreement with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The next Office Hours are scheduled for August 23rd at 3:00 CDT and the topic is Linkage requirements - Crop insurance and NAP. Click this link to register: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtf-ysrzlrGdQkio3LLMebUITaP\\_6cfx8s](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtf-ysrzlrGdQkio3LLMebUITaP_6cfx8s) All are welcome to attend but must preregister.

---

## NRCS Delivering Climate Solutions through the Inflation Reduction Act



The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) of 2022 represents the single largest investment in climate and clean energy solutions in American history. It provides \$19.5 billion from fiscal years 2023 to 2027 for climate smart agriculture through several of the conservation programs that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) implements. Last February, NRCS announced it was making \$850 million of those funds available in fiscal year 2023 for its oversubscribed conservation

programs – the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

NRCS is well on its way to implementing IRA in fiscal year 2023, and we're planning for 2024 and beyond. In past years, producer demand for conservation assistance through these programs has outpaced available funding. We're excited that many producers can now benefit from this additional funding, and we're preparing for the additional help they will need to implement these climate change mitigation practices.

**Locally, we're getting funding out to individual producers, and we're improving and streamlining programs to make it easier to sign up.**

- So far in fiscal year (FY) 2023, NRCS is ahead of historical rates in obligating financial assistance for conservation programs and has obligated more than
-

19,500 contracts, compared to an average of just over 12,000 at this same time over the last 4 years.

- Since announcing the availability of FY 2023 IRA funds in February, we have had over 10,000 applications for IRA in EQIP and CSP—and that number is growing every day. We're currently receiving an average of 29 IRA applications per hour for CSP and EQIP combined.

Producers need to know that NRCS accepts applications for our conservation programs year-round. And, no matter when they apply, their application will automatically carry over for consideration in future funding cycles. We encourage producers to apply now so that they can take advantage of this opportunity for additional funding over the next few years. To receive consideration for the current funding cycle in FY23, producers should apply by their [state's program ranking dates](#).

We expect to announce funding recommendations for ACEP soon. The national ranking date for ACEP closed on March 17, 2023, and we received over \$174 million in request for the \$65 million of available funding. And, as part of the ongoing effort to streamline our conservation programs, ensure that they are more convenient to utilize, and to help strengthen IRA implementation, we announced [improvements to ACEP](#) on May 9.

### **We're getting funding out to partners.**

We are also getting funding out to partners through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, a partner-driven program that leverages partner resources to advance innovative projects that address issues such as climate change. On May 19, we announced that applications were being accepted through August 18, 2023, for RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). Projects selected under this funding opportunity may be awarded through either Farm Bill 2018 or IRA funding, however applications for RCPP climate-related projects will receive priority consideration for IRA funding.

These and many other efforts are continuing in 2023 and beyond. NRCS will continue to keep partners and producers informed about new funding opportunities, recruitment efforts, partnerships available, and plans for IRA implementation in the years ahead.


---

## **The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys**

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.



NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at [nass.usda.gov/Publications](https://nass.usda.gov/Publications) and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at [youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be).

---

## NRCS Announces \$75 Million to Assist Producers Transitioning to Organic as Part of USDA's Organic Transition Initiative

USDA announced its \$75 million investment in conservation assistance for producers transitioning to organic production. As part of the multi-agency [Organic Transition Initiative \(OTI\)](#), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will dedicate financial and technical assistance to a new organic management standard and partner with new organic technical experts to increase staff capacity and expertise.



The investment, which includes funds from the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), will help build new and better markets and income streams, strengthen local and regional food systems and increase affordable food supply for more Americans, while promoting climate-smart agriculture and ensuring equity for all producers.

### Direct Farmer Assistance

NRCS will dedicate \$70 million to assist producers with a [new organic management standard](#) under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

NRCS will help producers adopt the new organic management standard, which allows flexibility for producers to get the assistance and education they need such as attending workshops or requesting help from experts or mentors. It supports conservation practices required for organic certification and may provide foregone income reimbursement for dips in production during the transition period.

Higher payment rates and other options are available for underserved producers including socially disadvantaged, beginning, veteran, and limited resource farmers and ranchers.

### How to Apply

Eligible producers include farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and other producers beginning or in the process of transitioning to organic certification. NRCS will announce state-specific deadlines later this year, after which producers can apply through NRCS at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

### Notice of Funding for Seven New Positions

NRCS will dedicate \$5 million to partner with six organic technical experts through five-year agreements. The organic experts will develop regional networks and support NRCS staff who

provide services to USDA customers. These services include hosting hands-on organic training and fielding organic-related staff questions. One organic research position will support this network. A [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), which closed on June 11, 2023, outlined requirements for proposals from regional organizations and partners.

For more information, visit [farmers.gov/organic](https://farmers.gov/organic).

---

## Report Banking Changes to FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to receive timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for any reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2019 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2020. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

---

## Dates to Remember

Aug 11 - FSA Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)

Sept 30 - RMA Margin Protection Insurance Plan

Oct 31 - FSA Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

---

## Selected Interest Rates for August 2023

Farm Operating - Direct	4.875%
Farm Operating - Microloan	4.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.000%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	5.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	3.000%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loan - Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%

---





## Florida USDA

4500 NW 27th Ave  
Gainesville, FL 32606

Phone: 352-338-3400

**FSA State Executive Director**  
Deborah Tannenbaum  
[deborah.tannenbaum@usda.gov](mailto:deborah.tannenbaum@usda.gov)

**NRCS State Conservationist**  
Juan Hernandez  
[juan.hernandez@usda.gov](mailto:juan.hernandez@usda.gov)

**RMA Regional Office Director**  
Davina Lee  
[davina.lee@usda.gov](mailto:davina.lee@usda.gov)

### Subscribe to updates from Farmers.gov

Email Address  e.g. name@example.com

### Share Bulletin



POWERED BY

**GOVDELIVERY**

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Cookie Statement](#) | [Help](#)