



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Florida USDA - March 14, 2023

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

### In This Issue:

- [Agricultural Producers Have Until March 15 to Enroll in USDA's Key Commodity Safety Net Programs](#)
  - [NRCS Hosts Two Virtual Workshops on Conservation Stewardship Program on March 16th](#)
  - [Forestry Outreach Meetings Set for March 21-23 in North Florida – Crestview, Live Oak, and Quincy](#)
  - [USDA Announces General Conservation Reserve Program Signups for 2023](#)
  - [Before You Break Out New Ground, Ensure Your Farm Meets Conservation Compliance](#)
  - [USDA Announces Signup for Conservation Incentive Contracts](#)
  - [Ask the Expert: Customer Farm Records Mapping Q&A with Gwen Uecker](#)
  - [SBA Deadline Approaching for Working Capital Disaster Loans in Parts of Georgia and Florida Due to 2022 Tornado](#)
  - [Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation](#)
  - [USDA Expands Hurricane Insurance Protection to Include Certain Tropical Storms](#)
  - [FAMU Agri-Fest 2023](#)
  - [2023 FAMU AgDiscovery Summer Youth Program Opportunity](#)
  - [Dates to Remember](#)
  - [Selected Interest Rates for March 2023](#)
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# Agricultural Producers Have Until March 15 to Enroll in USDA's Key Commodity Safety Net Programs

Agricultural producers who have not yet enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2023 crop year have until **March 15, 2023**, to elect and enroll a contract. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers these two safety net programs to provide vital income support to farmers experiencing substantial declines in crop prices or revenues.

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County or PLC, which are both commodity-by-commodity, or ARC-Individual, which covers the entire farm. Although election changes for 2023 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Additionally, if a producer has a multi-year contract on their farm and makes an election change for 2023, they will need to sign a new contract.

If producers do not submit an election by the **March 15, 2023** deadline, the election remains the same as the 2022 election for commodities on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the commodity.

In Florida, producers have completed 3,750 contracts to date, representing 82.35% of the more than 4,554 expected contracts.

Producers who do not complete enrollment by the deadline will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2023 year and will not receive a payment if triggered.

Producers are eligible to enroll farms with base acres for the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

## Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, two web-based decision tools are available to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), a tool available through the University of Illinois allows producers to estimate payments for farms and counties for ARC-CO and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), a tool available through Texas A&M University that allows producers to estimate payments and yield updates and expected payments for 2023.

## Crop Insurance Considerations and Decision Deadline

ARC and PLC are part of a broader safety net provided by USDA, which also includes crop insurance and marketing assistance loans. Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products.

Producers on farms with a PLC election have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider. However, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres for that farm.

Producers should contact their crop insurance agent to make certain that the election and enrollment made at FSA follows their intention to participate in STAX or SCO coverage. Producers have until March 15, 2023, to make the appropriate changes or cancel their ARC or PLC contract.

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact their [local USDA Service Center](#).

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## NRCS Hosts Two Virtual Workshops on Conservation Stewardship Program on March 16th

There will be two virtual opportunities to attend the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP) workshop on the same day. The first session is from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. (eastern time), and the second session (same presentation as the first session) is from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (eastern time).

**ZOOM link for both meetings:** <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/16059811148>

**AGENDA:** • CSP Versus EQIP • How to find local NRCS office • Where to find more information about CSP and EQIP • CSP Application • Producer Map – information NRCS needs • CSP Payments – minimum and maximum • CSP Eligibility requirements • Enhancements/Practices • Questions from participants

“For the last two years, we have been able to provide funding for every eligible applicant under CSP. The CSP is a unique program that offers additional conservation and financial opportunities, while financially enabling producers to sustain their current level of stewardship. We encourage producers, ranchers, and non-industrial forest landowners to attend our workshop and learn more about CSP,” said Walter Albarran, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations.

The new cut off/batching date to submit CSP Classic Applications in FY 2023 is March 24, 2023.



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## Forestry Outreach Meetings Set for March 21-23 in North Florida – Crestview, Live Oak, and Quincy



NRCS Acting State Conservationist Nathan Fikkert, NRCS District Conservationists, and Florida County Foresters will present program updates and answer questions for all invited area landowners, contractors, and forestry consultants during three forestry outreach meetings set for March 21-23 in North Florida at the following locations:

### CRESTVIEW, Florida

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023 – 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.\*\*** UF/IFAS Extension Okaloosa County Auditorium 3098 Airport Road, Crestview, FL 32539 \*\*meal provided (meal served at 5:30 p.m., meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.) **Point of contact:** Darryl Williams, 850-533-1389, [darryl.williams@usda.gov](mailto:darryl.williams@usda.gov)

### LIVE OAK, Florida

**Wednesday, March 22, 2023 - 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** North Florida Research and Education Center (NFREC) - Suwanee Valley 8202 County Road 417, Live Oak, FL 32060 \*\*finger food & appetizer provided **Point of contact:** Amy Smith, 386-362-2622 ext. 3, [amy.smith@usda.gov](mailto:amy.smith@usda.gov)

### QUINCY, Florida

**Thursday, March 23, 2023 – 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.** North Florida Research and Education Center 155 Research Rd, Quincy, FL 32351 \*\*no meal or food provided **Point of contact:** Michael Felton, 850-627-6365 ext. 106, [michael.felton@usda.gov](mailto:michael.felton@usda.gov)

*Individuals who require special accommodations should contact USDA one to two weeks prior to the date of the event (see above locations for contact person).*

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## USDA Announces General Conservation Reserve Program Signups for 2023

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Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin applying for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup starting **February 27 through April 7, 2023**. CRP is a cornerstone voluntary conservation program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a key tool in the Biden-Harris administration's effort to address climate change and help agricultural communities invest in the long-term well-being of their land and natural resources.



Producers and landowners enrolled more than 5 million acres into CRP through signups in 2022, building on the acceptance of more than 3.1 million acres in the [largest Grassland CRP signup in history](#). There are currently 23 million acres enrolled in CRP, with 1.9 million set to expire this year. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is aiming to reach the 27-million-acre cap statutorily set for fiscal year 2023.

### **General CRP**

General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Additionally, General CRP includes a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to help increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping producers and landowners establish trees and permanent grasses, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands.

### **Continuous CRP**

Under Continuous CRP, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. The Climate-Smart Practice Incentive is also available in the Continuous signup.

FSA offers several additional enrollment opportunities within Continuous CRP, including the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers Initiative (CLEAR30), the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The CLEAR30 Initiative, which was originally piloted in twelve states in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watershed, has been expanded nationwide, allowing producers and landowners to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices. Under this administration, FSA also moved SAFE practices back to the Continuous CRP signup, giving producers and landowners more opportunities to participate in the initiative. Through the FWP, producers and landowners can enroll land in CRP as part of their efforts to restore previously farmed wetlands and wetland buffers, to improve both vegetation and water flow.

This administration has also made significant improvements to CREP, which leverages federal and non-federal funds to target specific State, regional or nationally significant conservation concerns. Specifically, USDA made significant improvements to CREP to reduce barriers and make the program more accessible to a broad range of producers and new types of partners.

These updates included flexibility for partners to provide matching funds in the form of cash, in-kind contributions, or technical assistance, along with an investment in additional staff to work directly with partners. Through CREP, for the first time ever, three Tribal Nations are now

partnering with USDA to help conserve, maintain, and improve grassland productivity, reduce soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat.

### **Grassland CRP**

FSA will announce the dates for Grassland CRP signup in the coming weeks. Grassland CRP is a working lands program, helping landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as working grazing lands.

Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and provides important carbon sequestration benefits to deliver lasting climate outcomes.

### **How to Sign Up**

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before their deadlines.

Producers with expiring CRP acres can use the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.

### **More Information**

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits.

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## **Before You Break Out New Ground, Ensure Your Farm Meets Conservation Compliance**



The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the conversion of land from native vegetation to commodity crop production after December 23, 1985. As part of the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, if you’re proposing to produce agricultural commodities (crops that require annual tillage including one pass planting operations and sugar cane) on land that has been determined highly erodible and that has no crop history prior to December 23, 1985, that land must be farmed in

accordance with a conservation plan or system that ensures no substantial increase in soil erosion.

Eligibility for many USDA programs requires compliance with a conservation plan or system on highly erodible land (HEL) used for the production of agricultural commodities. This includes Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan, disaster assistance, safety net, price support, and conservation programs; Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs; and Risk Management Agency (RMA) Federal crop insurance.



Before you clear or prepare areas not presently under production for crops that require annual tillage, you are required to file Form AD-1026 “Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification,” with FSA indicating the area to be brought into production. The notification will be referred to NRCS to determine if the field is considered highly erodible land. If the field is considered HEL, you are required to implement a conservation plan or system that limits the erosion to the tolerable soil loss (T) for the predominant HEL soil on those fields.

In addition, prior to removing trees or conducting any other land manipulations that may affect wetlands, remember to update form AD-1026, to ensure you remain in compliance with the wetland conservation provisions.

Prior to purchasing or renting new cropland acres, it is recommended that you check with your local USDA Service Center to ensure your activities will be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions.

For additional information on highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation compliance, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#).

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## USDA Announces Signup for Conservation Incentive Contracts

### *Applications accepted through March 24*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Florida announced new Fiscal Year 2023 funding is available for [Conservation Incentive Contracts](#) (CIC), through the [Environmental Quality Incentive Program](#) (EQIP). While applications for EQIP-CIC are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by March 24, 2023, to be considered for the 2023 ranking funding period. EQIP-CIC expands resource benefits for Florida producers through incentive conservation practices such as wildlife management, cover crops, nutrient management, conservation crop rotations, and prescribed grazing and more. EQIP-CIC is designed to help producers improve their level of conservation and earn benefits of longer-term conservation enhancements. All applicants must have farm records established with USDA’s [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA). Advance payment options are available for historically underserved producers. NRCS has 34 field offices throughout Florida with teams ready to help landowners with conservation programs. [Contact your local NRCS field office](#) for more information.



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## Ask the Expert: Customer Farm Records Mapping Q&A with Gwen Uecker

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In this Ask the Expert, Gwen Uecker answers a few questions about USDA's farmers.gov customer portal. Gwen serves as the Team Lead for the Program Delivery Division (PDD), Common Processes Branch for the Deputy Administrator of Farm Program within Farm Service Agency (FSA). She helps lead PDD's effort to provide personalized customer information via farmers.gov.



A farmers.gov account provides self-service opportunities to FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) customers via a secure authenticated access process.

### **What is the value of Customer Farm Records Mapping and why should producers use farmers.gov?**

Customer Farm Records Mapping (cFRM) provides you with self-help options and access to FSA data from home 24/7. For example, you do not have to wait for FSA to mail out maps for acreage reporting or make a special trip to the office to pick up your maps. You can print farm tract maps directly from farmers.gov.

New features include the ability to import precision agriculture planting boundaries and create labels containing crop information that can be printed on-farm tract maps. The maps can then be provided to FSA at the local USDA Service Center for completing the annual crop acreage report. You can use the draw tools to determine acres in a drawn area. The drawn area can be printed on a map and provided to the Service Center, a third party such as a chemical applicator, or exported as a feature file for use in other geospatial applications.

In addition, you can "Switch Profile" to view cFRM data for individuals or entities you are authorized to act on behalf of. This means you can view and print maps for your entity's farms. Producers can also view and print farm records details, including base and yield information (FSA-156EZ).

The FSA Farm Records Mapping page is accessed by clicking the blue "View Farm Records" button from the farmers.gov LAND tab.

To read the full blog visit [Ask the Expert: Customer Farm Records Mapping Q&A with Gwen Uecker | Farmers.gov](#).

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## **SBA Deadline Approaching for Working Capital Disaster Loans in Parts of Georgia and Florida Due to 2022 Tornado**

The [U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) is reminding small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private nonprofit organizations that **April 10** is the filing deadline for federal working capital loans in parts of Georgia and **Florida** due to a tornado that occurred April 6, 2022.

Low-interest disaster loans are available in the counties of Brooks, Colquitt, Cook, Lowndes and Thomas in Georgia; and **Hamilton, Jefferson and Madison in Florida**.

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Under this declaration, the SBA's [Economic Injury Disaster Loan \(EIDL\)](#) program is available to eligible farm-related and nonfarm-related entities that suffered financial losses as a direct result of this disaster. Apart from aquaculture enterprises, SBA cannot provide disaster loans to agricultural producers, farmers and ranchers.

The loan amount can be up to \$2 million with interest rates of **2.94** percent for small businesses and **1.875** percent for private nonprofit organizations, with terms up to 30 years. The SBA determines eligibility based on the size of the applicant, type of activity and its financial resources. Loan amounts and terms are set by the SBA and are based on each applicant's financial condition. These working capital loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, and other bills that could have been paid had the disaster not occurred. The loans are not intended to replace lost sales or profits.

Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via the SBA's secure website at [DisasterLoanAssistance.sba.gov/ela/s/](https://DisasterLoanAssistance.sba.gov/ela/s/) and should apply under SBA declaration # **17572**.

Disaster loan information and application forms may also be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (if you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services), or by sending an email to [DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov](mailto:DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov). Loan applications can be downloaded from the SBA's website at [sba.gov/disaster](https://sba.gov/disaster). Completed applications should be mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

Submit completed loan applications to SBA no later than **April 10, 2023**.

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## Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation



Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](https://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

### **About Farmers.gov**

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](https://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov).

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## **USDA Expands Hurricane Insurance Protection to Include Certain Tropical Storms**

Farmers may now be eligible for further protection against damaging tropical storms. After hearing directly from agricultural producers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expanding its Hurricane Insurance Protection-Wind Index (HIP-WI) Endorsement with a Tropical Storm Option. USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) will offer this option for the 2023 crop year.

[HIP-WI](#) was first available for purchase for the 2020 hurricane season and covers a portion of the deductible of the underlying crop insurance policy when the county, or an adjacent one, is hit with sustained hurricane-force winds from a named hurricane based on data from the National Hurricane Center at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

RMA has now added the Tropical Storm Option to this endorsement for damage caused by strong weather systems not categorized as hurricanes. The option would cover named tropical storms, as reported by NOAA with maximum sustained winds exceeding 34 knots and

precipitation exceeding six inches over a four-day period. Both the wind trigger and precipitation trigger must occur for an indemnity to be paid.

The HIP-WI endorsement, including the new Tropical Storm Option, are available in [select counties](#) in Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia.

During the past three years, HIP-WI has been a successful risk management tool for many in effected areas, with nearly \$550 million paid in indemnities to date. As an example, 2022's Hurricane Ian resulted in almost \$300 million in indemnity of which about \$260 million is attributed to HIP-WI.

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](http://rma.usda.gov) or by contacting your [RMA Regional Office](#).

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## FAMU Agri-Fest 2023

Thursday, April 6, 2023

Florida A&M University/Research and Extension Center  
4259 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy, FL 32352

Florida A&M University will be hosting an educational workshop designed to assist socially disadvantaged, minority producers, and small farm producers on various topics.

The workshop topics include:

- Regenerative Agriculture
- Weed Management
- Smart Irrigation
- Marketing and Recording
- Exhibitors and more!

Pre-registration is not required. For more information, please contact:

- Dr. Carmen Lyttle-N'guessan, program manager CAFS/FAMU, at: (850) 412-5363; [carmen.lyttlenguessa@famuedu](mailto:carmen.lyttlenguessa@famuedu)
- Worrel Dedrick, facilitator CAFS, at: (850) 405-51555; [worrell.diedrick@famuedu](mailto:worrell.diedrick@famuedu)
- Almando Morain, facilitator CAFS, at: (850) 350-6392; [almandokessy1.morain@famuedu](mailto:almandokessy1.morain@famuedu)
- Jamesia Henderson, facilitator CAFS, at: (305) 431-9065

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# 2023 FAMU AgDiscovery Summer Youth Program Opportunity

June 11-24, 2023

FAMU AgDiscovery is an opportunity for students to explore agricultural sciences and learn about careers in animal-related disciplines, including veterinary medicine.

Students will gain experiential learning through workshops, laboratory and field exercises, field trips, and various cultural and teambuilding activities.

The program helps students to understand better or refine their career paths and apply for early admission to FAMU.



## Application Deadline: March 31, 2023

To apply or for more information, visit: [www.aphis.usda.gov/agdiscovery](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/agdiscovery).

### Contact:

Carmen Lyttle-N'guessan, Ph.D.: 850-412-5363

Glen Wright, DVM: 850-599-8433

Cooperative Extension Program: 850-599-3546

<https://cafs.famu.edu/outreach/AgDiscovery.php>

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## Dates to Remember

Mar 30 - EXTENDED Deadline to file a notice of loss for LIP

May 1 - EXTENDED deadline to file a LIP application for payment for losses from Hurricane Ian

June 2 - Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP)

June 2 - Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two

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## Selected Interest Rates for March 2023

Farm Operating - Direct	4.750%
Farm Operating - Microloan	4.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.750%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	4.750%

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Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing 2.750%  
Farm Ownership - Down Payment 1.500%  
Emergency Loan - Amount of Actual Loss 3.750%

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## Florida USDA

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