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2023 Dairy Margin Coverage Deadline Extended – Jan. 31, 2023, Last Day to Enroll

USDA extended the deadline for producers to enroll in [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) and [Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage \(SDMC\)](#) for program year 2023 to Jan. 31, 2023.

DMC is a voluntary risk management program 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.

Nearly 18,000 operations that enrolled in DMC for 2022 have received margin payments for August and September for a total of \$76.3 million. At \$0.15 per hundredweight for \$9.50 coverage, risk coverage through DMC is a relatively inexpensive investment.

DMC offers different levels of coverage, even an option that is free to producers, aside from a \$100 administrative fee. Limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged, and military veteran farmers and ranchers are exempt from paying the administrative fee, if requested. To determine the appropriate level of DMC coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can use the online [dairy decision tool](#).

Supplemental DMC

Last year, USDA introduced Supplemental DMC, which provided \$42.8 million in payments to better help small- and mid-sized dairy operations that had increased production over the years but were not able to enroll the additional production. Supplemental DMC is also available for 2023. The enrollment period for 2023 Supplemental DMC is also extended to Jan. 31, 2023.

Supplemental DMC coverage is applicable to calendar years 2021, 2022 and 2023. Eligible dairy operations with less than 5 million pounds of established production history may enroll supplemental pounds.

For producers who enrolled in Supplemental DMC in 2022, the supplemental coverage will automatically be added to the 2023 DMC contract that previously established a supplemental production history.

Producers who did not enroll in Supplemental DMC in 2022 can do so now. Producers should complete their Supplemental DMC enrollment before enrolling in 2023 DMC. To enroll, producers will need to provide their 2019 actual milk marketings, which FSA uses to determine established production history.

DMC Payments

FSA will continue to calculate DMC payments using updated feed and premium hay costs, making the program more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses. These updated feed calculations use 100% premium alfalfa hay rather than 50%. For more information on DMC, visit the [DMC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Crop Insurance Deadline Nears in Florida for Fresh Market Tomato and Pecan Growers



The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Florida fresh market tomato and pecan growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage for the 2023 crop year is January 31. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the January 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 fresh

market tomatoes in Gadsden, Holmes, and Jackson counties. Coverage is available for pecans in Jefferson County.

Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2023 crop year.

RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus while continuing to support producers, working through Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) to deliver services, including processing policies, claims, and agreements. RMA staff are working with AIPs and other customers by phone, mail and electronically to continue supporting crop insurance coverage for producers. Farmers with crop insurance questions or needs should continue to contact their insurance agents about conducting business remotely (by telephone or email). More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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.

Florida Ag Landowners Reminded of Upcoming Conservation Easement Program Sign-up Deadlines

January 31 for Ag Land Easements, February 28 for Wetland Reserve Easements

Florida agricultural landowners interested in protecting their land uses with conservation values are reminded of fiscal year 2023 application deadlines, as announced by Juan C. Hernandez, state conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) in Florida. Applications for the

agency's [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP) **Agricultural Land Easements** (ALE) component, for fiscal year 2023 funding, are being **accepted only until January 31, 2023**. However, for the **Wetland Reserve Easement** (WRE) component, the sign-up deadline has been **extended until February 28, 2023**. NRCS accepts agricultural conservation easement applications year-round; however, applications received after these dates will be considered for the following fiscal year.



ACEP protects the agricultural viability and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting nonagricultural uses which negatively affect agricultural uses and conservation values. The program protects grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring or conserving eligible grazing land, and protects, restores and enhances wetlands on eligible land.

Under the **Agricultural Land Easements** (ALE) component of ACEP, permanent agricultural land easements are funded to protect the future of the nation's food supply, and to also support environmental quality, wildlife habitat, and historic preservation and protection of open spaces. Interested landowner applicants must apply through an eligible entity – such as a land trust, municipality, or State agencies. NRCS will prioritize applications that protect agricultural

uses and related conservation values of the land and those that maximize the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use.

Under the **Wetland Reserve Easement** (WRE) component of ACEP, landowners may apply directly to NRCS for a conservation easement to restore wetlands impacted by agriculture. Wetland Reserve Easements provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, protect biological diversity, provide resilience to climate change, and provide opportunities for limited recreational activities.

Land eligible for agricultural easements includes cropland, grassland, and pastureland. Non-industrial, private forest land may be enrolled when associated with active agricultural land. Native American Tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs are eligible to partner with NRCS to purchase conservation easements.

Enrolling agricultural land helps secure the future of the nation's food supply, prevents it from being developed or going to a non-agricultural use, and provides public benefits including environmental quality, historic preservation, wildlife habitat, and protection of open space.

Not sure how to begin? Visit our Florida ACEP [website](#) for information on ACEP benefits, how to apply, all the forms you will need, and more. **Contact your [local NRCS office](#) to apply for ALE by January 31 and WRE by February 28.** To speak to someone about filling out eligibility forms with the [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) in Florida](#), contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Announces Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans to provide up to \$200 million in assistance for specialty crop producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 or 2023. USDA's new [Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops](#) (FSCSC) program will help to offset costs for specialty crop producers to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements, which is part of USDA's broader effort to transform the food system to create a more level playing field for small and medium producers and a more balanced, equitable economy for everyone working in food and agriculture.

Specialty crop operations can apply for assistance for eligible expenses related to a 2022 food safety certificate issued on or after June 21, 2022, beginning June 27, 2022. USDA is delivering FSCSC to provide critical assistance for specialty crop operations, with an emphasis on equity in program delivery while building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions. Vilsack made the announcement from Hollis, N.H., where he toured a local, family-owned farm and highlighted USDA's efforts to help reduce costs for farmers and support local economies by providing significant funding to cut regulatory costs and increase market opportunities for farmers in New Hampshire and across the nation.

Program Details

FSCSC will assist specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and related expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023. For each year, FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing their certification, as well as a portion of their related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small business or very small business; and have paid eligible expenses related to the 2022 (issued on or after June 21, 2022) or 2023 certification.

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
- Training

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each category of eligible costs. A higher payment rate has been set for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers. Details about the payment rates and limitations can be found at farmers.gov/food-safety.

Applying for Assistance

The FSCSC application period for 2022 is June 27, 2022, through January 31, 2023, and the application period for 2023 will be announced at a later date. FSA will issue payments at the time of application approval for 2022 and after the application period ends for 2023. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application. The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means.

Producers can visit farmers.gov/food-safety for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

U.S. Small Business Administration to Offer Disaster Loans with No Interest and No Payments for First Year

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](http://www.sba.gov) helps power the American dream of business ownership. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow, expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.



SBA disaster loans offer individuals and businesses direct access to affordable financial assistance to help fully repair or replace disaster-damaged property. By offering affordable loans with no interest and no payments for the first year, and low fixed-interest rates for the remaining 30-year term, SBA is maximizing disaster survivors' likelihood of a successful recovery and minimizing further financial hardship.

Businesses and private nonprofit organizations of any size may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets. For small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private nonprofit organizations, the SBA offers [Economic Injury Disaster Loans \(EIDLs\)](#) to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any physical property damage.

Disaster loans up to \$200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace disaster damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$40,000 to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed personal property.

To be considered for all forms of disaster assistance, applicants should register online at DisasterAssistance.gov or download the FEMA mobile app. If online or mobile access is unavailable, applicants should call the FEMA toll-free helpline at 800-621-3362. Those who use 711-Relay or Video Relay Services should call 800-621-3362.

Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/ela/s/>.

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. Loan applications can be downloaded from the SBA's website at 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.

USDA Reminds Sponsors to Request Emergency Watershed Protection Assistance by January 27 for Communities Damaged by Hurricane Ian



Communities that experienced damage after Hurricane Ian can still seek assistance through the [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#), offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS). Community sponsors are reminded that requests for EWP assistance related to Hurricane Ian are due to NRCS by **January 27, 2023**.

“EWP provides immediate assistance to communities to mitigate potential hazards to life and property resulting from disasters – particularly the severe erosion and flooding that can occur following hurricanes,” said Juan C. Hernandez, State Conservationist for NRCS in Florida. “We can work with a local sponsor to help a damaged watershed so that lives and property are protected while preventing further devastation in the community.”

Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, or any federally recognized Native American Tribe or Tribal organization. A [sample letter of request for EWP assistance](#) is available for sponsors on the NRCS Florida website.

Through EWP, the NRCS provides assistance to local government sponsors, for the cost of addressing watershed impairments or hazards such as debris removal and streambank stabilization. Sponsors typically must submit a formal request to the NRCS state conservationist by postal mail or email within 60 days of the natural disaster occurrence or 60 days from the date when access to the sites become available. However, because of the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Ian, a waiver was granted by USDA to extend sponsors’ time to request EWP assistance to 120 days. For more information, contact a local NRCS office at: <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can also help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

USDA Invests Nearly \$4.7 Million in Wetland Mitigation Banks



USDA is awarding nearly \$4.7 million in funding for the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program (WMBP), a grant program that supports the development of mitigation banks for the restoration, creation or enhancement of wetlands to compensate for unavoidable impacts to wetlands at another location. This year's awards prioritized projects in states with

large amounts of wetlands as well as large numbers of producers with wetland determination requests. The awarded funding adds to the more than \$17 million that has been provided to 16 partners in 11 states since 2016. Read more here: [USDA Invests Nearly \\$4.7 Million in Wetland Mitigation Banks | Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

FAMU Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Workshop

Friday, February 24, 2023

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

Florida A&M University, in collaboration with the University of Georgia, is working together in conjunction with USDA Service Center Agencies such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to increase participation of Underserved Landowners in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

To increase the participation of underserved landowners in CRP. The project aims to improve understanding, identify challenges faced by underserved landowners, and formulate solutions for overcoming barriers to increase their participation in CRP. To this end, a series of workshops are being developed targeting Jefferson, Wakulla, Leon, Gadsden, Liberty, Calhoun, and Jackson Counties in the Florida Panhandle. Our first workshop will be on Friday, February 24, 2023, at the FAMU Research and Extension Center, 4259 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy, FL, from 8:30 AM to 4 PM. Lunch will be served.

The workshop activities include:

- An introduction to CRP
- Perspectives, processes, and challenges of getting into CRP
- Factors affecting CRP enrollment
- CRP practices & ecosystem benefits
- Heirs property and resolution
- Possible solutions for increasing underserved landowners' participation in CRP

Underserved landowners are beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, females, and military veterans.

No cost to register. To reserve a spot, please click [HERE](#). For more information, please contact: Alex Bolques, alejandro.bolques@famuedu, 850-421-6521

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.

Contact:

Carmen Lyttle-N'guessan, Ph.D.: 850-412-5363
Glen Wright, DVM: 850-599-8433
Cooperative Extension Program: 850-599-3546
<https://cafs.famuedu/outreach/AgDiscovery.php>

Dates to Remember

Jan 20 - Deadline to file an ELAP notice of loss for losses from Hurricane Ian

Jan 31 - Dairy Margin Coverage Program (DMC)

Jan 31 - Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program

Mar 2 - Deadline to file an ELAP application for payment for losses from Hurricane Ian

Selected Interest Rates for January 2023

Farm Operating - Direct 5.125%

Farm Operating - Microloan	5.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.250%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	5.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	3.250%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loan - Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%



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