

In This Issue:

- [From the Desk of Matt Russell, State Executive Director](#)
- [Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees Due August 1](#)
- [USDA Extends Deadline for Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Until August 11](#)
- [Risk Management Agency to hold Iowa Prevented Planting Listening Session](#)
- [USDA Offering Disaster Assistance for 2023 Livestock Forage Losses in 20 Iowa Counties](#)
- [Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation](#)
- [USDA Accepts Nearly 2.7 Million Acres in Grassland CRP Signup, Bringing the Program Closer to Acreage Cap](#)
- [Ask USDA Available to Answer Questions About FSA Programs](#)
- [ISU Extension and Outreach Announces 2023 Farmland Leasing and Management Workshops](#)

From the Desk of Matt Russell, State Executive Director

I visited my 88th county office today in Adel. Nine more to go, and they are all scheduled. I often stop into offices to say hi as I travel around the state, but my scheduled visit is for a sit down in the conference room with staff and sometimes County Committee members for an hour to an hour and a half conversation. Introductions are of course on the agenda. But there is also time for candid conversations. This has been an amazing part of the job of leading Iowa FSA. And a very helpful one.

We are often talking frankly about how our programs are working. We talk about the staffing needs. We talk about what's going on with farmers and the community. Our teams in our county offices do extraordinary work to empower Iowa farmers and rural communities.

A big part of that team are the county committee members. These farmer leaders are elected to serve by their fellow farmers. I haven't met all of them, but I've met over two thirds of them in these county office meetings and in our County Committee trainings at the beginning of the year. They play important roles in program implementation, staffing considerations, and program participant accountability. The county committee members are unique in federal government, elected local leaders helping deliver federal programs.

Now is the time to nominate those interested in serving. The information below provides how to nominate someone, including yourself. The deadline for nomination is August 1. Your county office is ready to help you navigate the process. The links below will help you determine if your Local Administrative Area is up for election this fall. If you farm, you may be eligible to run for this office to serve the farmers in your county. Iowa FSA encourages you to consider this opportunity.

As I finish up the last nine county office visits in the coming weeks, I continue to be filled with gratitude for this opportunity to serve in the Biden-Harris Administration. Iowa FSA continues to invest in Iowa farmers and that couldn't happen without our amazing teams of staff and elected county committee leaders. Thank you for all you do for Iowa farmers.

Matt



Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees Due August 1

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting nominations for county committee members for elections that will occur later this year. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is unveiling a new GIS tool to make it easier for producers to participate in the nomination and election processes for county committee members, who make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally.

All nomination forms for the 2023 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2023.

Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for members. LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and they may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Customers can locate their LAA through a new GIS locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Agricultural producers may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee if they:

- Participate or cooperate in a USDA program; and
- Reside in the LAA that is up for election this year.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and

qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

More Information

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election, including if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. Urban farmers should use an Nomination forms and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 6, 2023.

USDA Extends Deadline for Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Until August 11



USDA's Farm Service Agency is extending the deadline for the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) to Aug. 11, 2023. This extension gives organic dairy producers more than two additional weeks to apply for the program. ODMAP helps producers mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs, and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. This assistance will help keep organic dairy operations sustainable until markets return to more normal conditions.

Organic dairy producers should apply by August 11, 2023 at their local USDA Service Center. [Learn more.](#)

Risk Management Agency to hold Iowa Prevented Planting Listening Session

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is inviting agricultural producers from Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, and Nebraska, to participate in a special in-person listening session to provide comments on the Prevented Planting Request for Information published in the Federal Register on May 23, 2023. The event will give producers the opportunity to meet with members of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) and directly comment on their needs

and possible changes to prevented planting crop insurance coverage. The event will be held on **August 9, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. CDT** at **Northwest Research Farm, Sutherland, Iowa**. [Learn more here.](#)

USDA Offering Disaster Assistance for 2023 Livestock Forage Losses in 20 Iowa Counties

Producers in 20 Iowa counties are eligible to apply for 2023 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass, forage sorghum. The current eligible counties include: Appanoose, Cass, Davis, Harrison, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Lucas, Lyon, Mahaska, Mills, Monona, Monroe, Montgomery, Plymouth, Pottawattamie, Van Buren, Wapello, Wayne, and Woodbury.

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought. County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought. You must complete a CCC-853 and supporting documentation is required. Deadlines to apply vary by county.

For additional information about LFP, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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 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 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

USDA Accepts Nearly 2.7 Million Acres in Grassland CRP Signup, Bringing the Program Closer to Acreage Cap



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting offers for nearly 2.7 million acres from agricultural producers and private landowners through this year's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grassland signup. This program allows producers and landowners to continue grazing and haying practices while protecting grasslands and further CRP conservation efforts. Grassland CRP is part of the Biden-Harris administration's broader effort to address climate change and conserve natural resources.

Additionally, USDA has accepted more than 1 million acres through the General CRP signup, and more than 465,800 acres have been submitted through the Continuous CRP signup so far this year.

Top states include:

- Colorado, 430,899 acres;
- Nebraska, 417,865 acres; and
- South Dakota, 325,443 acres.

Grassland CRP leverages working lands practices to improve biodiversity and conserve environmentally sensitive land. To target conservation in key geographies, USDA prioritizes land within two National Priority Zones: the Greater

Yellowstone Ecosystem, and the Dust Bowl area. FSA accepted more than 911,000 acres in these two zones. Land enrolled in these zones will contribute to broader USDA conservation efforts through [Working Lands for Wildlife](#) by conserving working grasslands and other lands that underpin iconic big game migrations.

Grasslands enrolled in CRP help sequester carbon in vegetation and soil, while enhancing resilience to drought and wildfire. Meanwhile, producers can still conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land, which supports agricultural production.

Broadening Reach of Program As part of the Agency's Justice40 efforts, producers and landowners who are historically underserved, including beginning farmers, limited-resource producers, and military veterans, received 20 additional ranking points to enhance their offers. From more than 6,400 underserved producers, USDA accepted offers of more than 1.8 million acres, about 74% of those who submitted applications.

Additionally, USDA is working to broaden the scope and reach of Grassland CRP by leveraging the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP) to engage underserved communities. CREP is a partnership program that enables states, Tribal governments, and non-profit entities to partner with FSA to implement CRP practices and address high priority conservation and environmental objectives. Interested entities are encouraged to contact FSA.

More Information

Producers can still make an offer to participate in CRP through the [Continuous CRP signup](#), which is ongoing, by contacting FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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](#).

Ask USDA Available to Answer Questions About FSA Programs

Ask USDA is now available as a tool for FSA customers to ask questions about FSA programs and services.

Ask USDA, available at [ask.usda.gov](#) is similar to AskFSA, which was decommissioned Sept. 21, but it also provides information for all USDA programs. Ask USDA allows USDA customers to search for and read answers about FSA programs and services in the same location as they read about other USDA programs and services.

Customers are able to submit questions through email, chat, and phone if they need more information. This improved customer service approach provides a one-stop shopping experience that covers all of USDA's many programs.

Farmland
LEASING &
MANAGEMENT
Workshops

ISU Extension and Outreach Announces 2023 Farmland Leasing and Management Workshops

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is hosting multiple farmland leasing meetings during July and August at various times and locations throughout Iowa. The annual meeting is offered to address questions that Iowa land owners, tenants or other interested individuals have about leasing farmland.

Core components of the 2023 program will be land values and cash rent trends, land ownership and tenure, methods for determining a fair rental rate, the latest legal updates that impact farm leases and land ownership, and communication between tenants or landowners.

The recently released Iowa Farmland Ownership and Tenure Survey indicates 58% of Iowa farmland is leased, with the majority of farmland leases being cash rental arrangements. "The goal of these programs is to share resources and information with Iowa farmland owners and tenants and strengthen leasing relationships," says Ann Johanns, extension program specialist. "Improved communication and better understanding of the other party in lease negotiations creates stronger relationships that benefit Iowa agriculture across the state."

A 100-page workbook to compliment the program topics includes resources regarding land leasing agreements such as surveys, sample written lease agreement and termination forms, along with many other publications.

Find local options for meetings and webinars

The leasing meetings being held across Iowa are facilitated by farm management specialists with ISU Extension and Outreach. A listing of the ISU Extension and Outreach [county offices hosting meetings](#).

Participants are encouraged to pre-register for the location they plan to attend, walk-in attendants may have higher registration costs. To pre-register, call or e-mail the local County Extension Office host site.

Two virtual options are offered this year, a northeast Iowa focused webinar, along with a statewide webinar. The webinar option in past years have been a welcome addition for out-of-state landowners, or those who are not able to attend a program in-person. Topics from the in-person leasing program will be presented by farm management specialists, with the opportunity to ask questions. Paid registrations have access to the live event, webinar recording and electronic version of the 100-page workbook.

8/25/2023 9:00 AM [Northeast Iowa Webinar](#)

8/29/2023 9:00 AM [Statewide Webinar](#)

The [Ag Decision Maker leasing section](#) provides useful materials for negotiating leases, information on various types of leases, lease forms and newly updated [Decision Tools](#).



Join Our Team

**We are
hiring**

**BE A PART
OF OUR
STORY**

Farm Service Agency

fsa.usda.gov
usajobs.gov

Iowa Farm Service Agency

10500 Buena Vista Court
Des Moines, IA 50322

Phone: 515-254-1540

Matt Russell, Executive Director

Iowa State Committee

Wendy Johnson, Chair


Kayla Koether

Ryan Marquardt

Mark Recker

Seth Watkins

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).

 **SHARE**

USDA Farm Service Agency



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:
[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Help](#)

This email was sent to amandahartman@hotmail.com using GovDelivery Communications Cloud on behalf of: Farmers.gov · 1400 Independence Avenue SW · Washington, D.C. 20250

