

**Table of Contents:**

- [From the Desk of the State Executive Director](#)
  - [Obtaining Payments Due to Deceased Producers](#)
  - [USDA Offers Disaster Assistance for Producers Facing Inclement Weather](#)
  - [Update Your Records](#)
  - [Maintaining ARC/PLC Acreage](#)
  - [USDA and FarmRaise Launch Additional Online Disaster Assistance Decision Tool for Livestock, Honey Bee and Farm-Raised Fish Producers](#)
  - [Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans](#)
  - [USDA Reminds Producers of Climate-Smart Opportunities Using Farm Loan Programs](#)
  - [FSA Outlines MAL and LDP Policy](#)
  - [Report Banking Changes to FSA](#)
  - [Current Interest Rates for September](#)
  - [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
  - [Important Dates](#)
- 

## From the Desk of the State Executive Director

The participation of every eligible producer in FSA committees are a vital link between the agricultural community and USDA. Your vote matters! The election of eligible producers to FSA county committee is important to farmers, ranchers, and foresters with large or small operations. With nearly 7,700 producers serving on more than 2,200 FSA County Committees nationwide, FSA county committees are comprised of eleven elected officials who work tirelessly within their local administrative areas. Each member serves a 3-year term, and the members apply their judgment, experience and knowledge when making local decisions that help deliver FSA programs and services.

**Important Election related dates:**

- Nov. 4, 2024: Ballots mailed to eligible voters.
- Dec. 2, 2024: Last day to return completed ballots to the USDA Service Center
- Jan. 1, 2025: Newly elected county committee members take office.

At USDA, we are here to assist producers during natural disasters, and FSA has a wide variety of programs meant to assist producers with property loss, crop damage, livestock, tree removal etc.

Livestock and perennial crop producers often have more limited risk management options available, so there are several disaster programs for them. Key programs offered by USDA's Farm Service Agency include:

- The [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) and the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that were killed or severely injured by a natural disaster or loss of feed and grazing acres.
- The [Tree Assistance Program](#) provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate or replant orchards and vineyards when storms kill or damage the trees, vines or bushes. NAP or Federal Crop Insurance often only covers the crop and not the plant.
- 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.

---

## Obtaining Payments Due to Deceased Producers

In order to claim a Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment on behalf of a deceased producer, all program conditions for the payment must have been met before the applicable producer's date of death.

If a producer earned an FSA payment prior to his or her death, the following is the order of precedence for the representatives of the producer:

- administrator or executor of the estate
- the surviving spouse
- surviving sons and daughters, including adopted children
- surviving father and mother
- surviving brothers and sisters
- heirs of the deceased person who would be entitled to payment according to the State law

For FSA to release the payment, the legal representative of the deceased producer must file a form FSA-325 to claim the payment for themselves or an estate. The county office will verify that the application, contract, loan agreement, or other similar form requesting payment issuance, was signed by the applicable deadline by the deceased or a person legally authorized to act on their behalf at that time of application.

If the application, contract or loan agreement form was signed by someone other than the deceased participant, FSA will determine whether the person submitting the form has the legal authority to submit the form.

Payments will be issued to the respective representative's name using the deceased program participant's tax identification number. Payments made to representatives are subject to offset regulations for debts owed by the deceased.

FSA is not responsible for advising persons in obtaining legal advice on how to obtain program benefits that may be due to a participant who has died, disappeared or who has been declared incompetent.

---

## 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 by the application deadline for each program. 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.

---

## Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. You should also report changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase. You should also report any changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC or other legal entity.

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their *Farm Operating Plan* on form CCC-902.

To update your records, contact your Parish USDA Service Center.

---

## Maintaining ARC/PLC Acreage

If you're enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, you must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. By signing ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts, you agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If you fail to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on your farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate your contract for the program year.

---

## USDA and FarmRaise Launch Additional Online Disaster Assistance Decision Tool for Livestock, Honey Bee and Farm-Raised Fish Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, in partnership with FarmRaise, today launched a new, online Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) Decision Tool. The USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) tool is designed to assist agricultural producers who have been impacted by natural disasters access available program support. This ELAP Decision Tool, a component of a broader disaster assistance program educational module, further expands the library of online FSA disaster and farm loan program reference resources and decision aids currently available to agricultural producers on the FarmRaise [FSA educational hub](#). The Decision Tool is a resource only and is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility.

[ELAP](#) is designed to address losses not covered by other FSA disaster assistance programs. The program provides recovery assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honey bee, and farm-raised fish losses due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition,

including drought, blizzards, disease, water shortages and wildfires. ELAP covers grazing and feed losses, transportation of water and feed to livestock and hauling livestock to grazing acres due to an eligible loss condition. ELAP also covers certain mortality losses, due to an eligible condition, for livestock including honey bees and farm-raised fish as well as honey bee hive losses.

## **New FarmRaise Tools and Resources**

[FarmRaise](#), in partnership with FSA, recently launched their online, [educational hub](#) – the FarmRaise | FSA Educational Hub – comprised of videos, tools and interactive resources that enable USDA cooperators and agricultural producers to learn about and access major FSA programs.

A new addition to the hub, the ELAP Decision Tool helps eligible producers impacted by qualifying natural disasters and other eligible causes of loss better understand program eligibility and application requirements, learn about record-keeping and supporting loss documentation requirements and track the steps needed before applying for program benefits. The document generated by the ELAP Decision Tool can be used to support the ELAP application process, but it is not a program application. Producers will need to complete and submit the ELAP Application to their local FSA county office. Upon request, applicants may be asked to provide additional supporting documentation per the program requirements.

Through use of the ELAP Decision Tool, producers can segment by loss type (honey bee, farm-raised fish and livestock). This enables easier navigation, as guided by the tool, to assistance available to meet specific disaster recovery needs. After entering the type of loss, identifying the loss condition and entering their inventory and loss information, producers are guided through a worksheet that helps identify required loss documentation — documentation (i.e., pictures, receipts, truck logs, etc.) that can be uploaded through the ELAP tool and sent directly to the producer's local FSA county office, or producers can provide a copy of the tool-generated worksheet summary document when they visit their local FSA county office to complete and submit the required ELAP application.

## **Additional FarmRaise Resources**

The [previously announced](#) Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Decision Tool, also available through the FarmRaise | FSA Educational Hub, assists livestock producers who suffered losses from eligible adverse weather events and other causes of loss as well as cooperators who are helping disaster-impacted livestock producers navigate available federal disaster assistance programs. The LIP Decision Tool gives producers guidance on what is needed to gather and submit required loss documentation, reducing the amount of time needed to complete applications and enabling FSA county office staff to deliver much-needed assistance faster. Using the LIP Decision Tool is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility.

In addition to the new ELAP Decision Tool and the LIP Decision Tool, the [FarmRaise | FSA Educational Hub](#) offers several, easily navigated farm loan programs how-to videos designed to introduce producers to FSA's many farm loan programs options and guide them through the application process.



More FSA program resources and tools will continue to be added to the [FarmRaise | FSA Educational Hub](#). Cooperators and agricultural producers are encouraged to visit the [FarmRaise | FSA Educational Hub](#) often to access all available educational resources.

---

## 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 Parish USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](https://fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).

---

## USDA Reminds Producers of Climate-Smart Opportunities Using Farm Loan Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that Farm Loan Programs can be used to support a variety of climate-smart agriculture practices, which build on many practices that farmers and ranchers already use, like cover cropping, nutrient management and conservation tillage.

Climate-smart agricultural practices generate significant environmental benefits by capturing and sequestering carbon, improving water management, restoring soil health and more. Farm loan funding complements other tools to help producers adopt climate-smart practices, such as FSA's [Conservation Reserve Program](#), [crop insurance options](#) that support conservation, and [conservation programs](#) offered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

FSA offers [multiple types of loans](#) to help farmers and ranchers start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. These loans can provide the capital needed to invest in climate-smart practices and equipment including the establishment of rotational grazing systems, precision agriculture equipment or machinery for conversion to no-till residue management. Additionally, for programs like Conservation Reserve Program and NRCS conservation programs where USDA and the producer share the implementation cost, a farm loan could be used for the producer's share, if consistent with the authorized loan purpose.

Some additional ways farm loans can be leveraged to invest in climate-smart agriculture practices or equipment include:

- **Precision Agriculture Equipment** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment like GPS globes, monitors, or strip till fertilizer equipment.
- **Cover Crops** - Eligible producers could use an Annual Operating Loan for seed costs.
- **No/Reduced Till** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment.
- **Livestock Facility Air Scrubber or Waste Treatment** - Eligible producers could use a Farm Ownership Loan for capital improvements to livestock facilities.
- **Cross Fencing** - Eligible producers could use an Annual or Term Operating Loan to purchase fencing and installation equipment

Visit the [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry webpage on farmers.gov](#) to learn more and see detailed examples of how an FSA farm loan can support climate-smart agriculture practices.

---

## FSA Outlines MAL and LDP Policy

Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey. MALs provide you with interim financing after harvest to help you meet cash flow needs without having to sell your commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar and extra-long staple cotton.



FSA is now accepting requests for 2024 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest. Requests for loans and LDPs shall be made on or before the final availability date for the respective commodities.

Commodity certificates are available to loan holders who have outstanding nonrecourse loans for wheat, upland cotton, rice, feed grains, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, large and small chickpeas), peanuts, wool, soybeans and designated minor oilseeds. These certificates can be purchased at the posted county price (or adjusted world price or national posted price) for the quantity of commodity under loan, and must be immediately exchanged for the collateral, satisfying the loan. MALs redeemed with commodity certificates are not subject to Adjusted Gross Income provisions.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, you must have form [CCC-633EZ, Page 1](#) on file at your local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested.

Marketing loan gains (MLGs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are no longer subject to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant rules.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions state that if your total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds \$900,000, then you're not eligible to receive an MLG or LDP. You must have a valid CCC-941 on file to earn a market gain of LDP. The AGI does not apply to MALs redeemed with commodity certificate exchange.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, contact your Parish USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## 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.

---

## Current Interest Rates for September

Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for September 2024 are as follows:

- [Farm Operating Loans](#)(Direct): 5.250%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#)(Direct): 5.500%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#)(Direct, Joint Financing): 3.500%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#)(Down Payment): 1.500
- [Emergency Loan](#)(Amount of Actual Loss): 3.750%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. To access an interactive online, step-by-step guide through the farm loan process, visit the [Loan Assistance Tool](#) on [farmers.gov](#).

Commodity and Storage Facility Loans:

- [Commodity Loans](#)(less than one year disbursed):5.625%.
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#):
  - Three-year loan terms: 4.000%
  - Five-year loan terms: 3.875%
  - Seven-year loan terms: 3.875%
  - Ten-year loan terms: 4.000%
  - Twelve-year loan terms: 4.125%
- [Sugar Storage Facility Loans](#)(15 years): 4.250%

---

## Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies, it's important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.

Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans. Contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

---

## Important Dates

- **Sept. 30, 2024:** Last day for all Aquaculture producers to certify their acreage for 2025

- **Sept. 30, 2024:** NAP Sales Closing Date -Grazing/Forage, Strawberries, and most fall seeded vegetable crops
- **Oct. 31, 2024:** Organic Certification Cost Share Program application deadline
- **Nov.15, 2024:** Acreage reporting deadline for fall seeded ryegrass and small grains for grazing
- **Dec. 15, 2024:** Acreage reporting deadline for fall seeded small grains
- **Jan. 30, 2025:** Deadline to apply for 2024 Farm-Raised Fish Losses through Emergency Livestock Assistance Program

## Louisiana FSA State Office

**3737 Government Street  
Alexandria, LA 70508  
Phone: 318-473-7721  
Fax: 1-844-325-6942**

Ronald C. Guidry, Jr. State Executive  
Director  
[Ronald.Guidry@usda.gov](mailto:Ronald.Guidry@usda.gov)

Christine Normand, Administrative Officer  
[christine.normand@usda.gov](mailto:christine.normand@usda.gov)

Terrick Boley, Farm Loan Program Chief  
[terrick.boleyn@usda.gov](mailto:terrick.boleyn@usda.gov)

DeWanna Pitman, Farm Program Chief  
[dewanna.pitman@usda.gov](mailto:dewanna.pitman@usda.gov)

### LOUISIANA STATE FSA COMMITTEE

Julie Baker-Richard-Chairperson

Brian Guidry-Member

Monica Hernandez-Member

Kristy Jones-Member

Willis Nelson-Member

The STC is scheduled to meet the second Tuesday of each month at the LA State Office, 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71302 unless the meeting is conducted virtually. Anyone wishing to attend should verify the meeting will take place as scheduled, by calling 318/473-7721.