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| US Department of Agriculture |
| **Maine USDA Service Center Newsletter**  January 2023 |
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| [**Farm Service Agency**](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2ZzYS51c2RhLmdvdi8_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.RtNlTGwEpC1JLJ9_J0rrHcnR5Mfr1AH_5_V8Aef65I0/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l)**|**[**Natural Resources Conservation Service**](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5ucmNzLnVzZGEuZ292L3dwcy9wb3J0YWwvbnJjcy9zaXRlL25hdGlvbmFsL2hvbWUvP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.7kXWdZ0mTGedeuC1jcRgBslEgBN37L48E3gYopOvl2I/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l)**|**[**Risk Management Agency**](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3JtYS51c2RhLmdvdi8_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.FdeDGeKN3cXW7qMgVB0FMy9EVuzm3Oh4LOvaYeCK8o4/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) |
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Dates to Remember

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| January 31 | Deadline to enroll in 2023 DMC |
| January 30 | 2022 [Livestock Forage Program (LFP)](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mc2EudXNkYS5nb3YvcHJvZ3JhbXMtYW5kLXNlcnZpY2VzL2Rpc2FzdGVyLWFzc2lzdGFuY2UtcHJvZ3JhbS9saXZlc3RvY2stZm9yYWdlL2luZGV4P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.XeQ1DJEyR1U4qMe_20lg9Ji4PruRyZXGNs1tAr7Ka2A/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l)  and [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP)](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mc2EudXNkYS5nb3YvcHJvZ3JhbXMtYW5kLXNlcnZpY2VzL2Rpc2FzdGVyLWFzc2lzdGFuY2UtcHJvZ3JhbS9lbWVyZ2VuY3ktYXNzaXN0LWZvci1saXZlc3RvY2staG9uZXktYmVlcy1maXNoL2luZGV4P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.LVEObnBxEC8KNsFEfA2qXKNMsueK-DD-bMwxvGzvhu8/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l)  Deadlines |
| January 31 | Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) for eligible 22 costs  |
| February 10  | Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP2) Status Certification Underserved for the 2020 Program Year Deadline |
| March 15 | [ARCPLC](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mc2EudXNkYS5nb3YvQXNzZXRzL1VTREEtRlNBLVB1YmxpYy91c2RhZmlsZXMvRmFjdFNoZWV0cy8yMDIyL2ZzYV9hcmNfcGxjX2ZhY3RzaGVldF8xMDE5MjIucGRmP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.vr7gt0oA6NOWj9aqeJ5hl1SyNFcB2a3-jiD3SN3Aiy8/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) Enrollment Deadline |
| March 15 | NAP Coverage Deadline for Spring Seeded Crops |
| June 2 | Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two and Pandemic Assistance Recovery Program (PARP) signup began January 23, 2023 |

 Rolling Out Revenue Based Disaster and Pandemic Assistance Programs

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| ny dairy freestall usda flickrFSA Working Hard to Design Programs in the Best Interest of the Producers We Serve Today, agricultural producers can begin to apply for two new important programs for revenue losses, from 2020 and 2021 natural disasters or the COVID-19 pandemic. Both programs equitably fill gaps in earlier assistance. First, you may be eligible for assistance through the [Emergency Relief Program (ERP)](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mc2EudXNkYS5nb3YvcHJvZ3JhbXMtYW5kLXNlcnZpY2VzL2VtZXJnZW5jeS1yZWxpZWYvaW5kZXg_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.JMpJzXYGn3tKrZ5mDV4TeHU2vCzR46fERZBIAV2HUQY/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) Phase Two if you experienced revenue losses from eligible natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. ERP Phase Two is for producers who didn’t receive assistance from ERP Phase One.   You may also be eligible for the [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP)](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9jb3JvbmF2aXJ1cy9wYW5kZW1pYy1hc3Npc3RhbmNlL3BhcnAtcmVsaWVmL2luZGV4P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.0HFhvuYQN0uroTlFvPYFg65GrCYDEA1g3toEEk8PWnA/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) if you experienced revenue losses in calendar year 2020. PARP is addressing gaps in previous pandemic assistance, which was targeted at price loss or lack of market access, rather than overall revenue losses.     Applications for both new programs are due June 2, 2023, and you can apply for both programs during your same appointment with USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA). Historically, FSA programs have been designed to make direct payments to producers based on a single disaster event or for a single commodity loss. For many of you, this may be the first revenue-based program that you’ve applied for with FSA. **Why revenue-based programs?** ERP Phase Two and PARP take a much more holistic approach to disaster assistance, ensuring that producers not just make it through a single growing season but have the financial stability to invest in the long-term well-being of their operations and employees. In general, ERP Phase Two payments are based on the difference in allowable gross revenue between a benchmark year, representing a typical year of revenue for the producer and the disaster year – designed to target the remaining needs of producers impacted by qualifying natural disasters and avoid duplicative payments. ERP Phase Two revenue loss is based on tax years.    For PARP, an agricultural producer must have been in the business of farming during at least part of the 2020 calendar year and had a decrease in revenue for the 2020 calendar year, as compared to a typical year. PARP revenue loss is based on calendar years. **How to Apply**  In preparation for enrollment, producers should gather supporting documentation including:   * Schedule F (Form 1040); and
* Profit or Loss from Farming or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 for ERP and for calendar years 2018, 2019 and 2020 for PARP.

Producers should also have, or be prepared to have, the following forms on file for both ERP and PARP program participation:   * Form AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet (as applicable to the program participant);
* Form CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan for an individual or legal entity;
* Form CCC-901, Member Information for Legal Entities (if applicable); and
* Form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification.
* Form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, as certain existing permanent and ad-hoc disaster programs provide increased benefits or reduced fees and premiums.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi93b3JraW5nLXdpdGgtdXMvc2VydmljZS1jZW50ZXItbG9jYXRvcj91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.Znu45cwkVVmgV_r1qEqXgsd5Fx8K-REmcnqB56XsGHA/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l).   **Yes, FSA is stepping outside of the box.** FSA is a big proponent of agricultural producers having a say in the design, implementation and delivery of the programs that directly impact their livelihoods. We also believe that some of the most creative and useful ideas for program and process improvements come from the FSA employees who administer this assistance through our network of more than 2,100 county offices. We want to thank producers across the country, along with the entire FSA workforce, for not just thinking outside of the box but also providing their input to make sure that we can improve and enhance our programs and our approach to assistance to better and more efficiently serve all producers who need our help. Please visit your local USDA Service Center for more information on ERP Phase Two, PARP and our full portfolio of conservation, prices support, safety-net, credit and disaster assistance programs.   |

Overview of Emergency Disaster Declarations and DesignationsFarmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger.FSA administers four types of disaster designations.**USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation*** The designation process can be initiated by individual farmers, local government officials, State governors, State agriculture commissions, tribal councils or the FSA State Executive Director
* This designation is triggered by a 30-percent or greater production loss to at least one crop because of a natural disaster, or at least one producer who sustained individual losses because of a natural disaster and is unable to obtain commercial financing to cover those losses
* In 2012, USDA developed a fast-track process for disaster declarations for severe drought. This provides for a nearly automatic designation when, during the growing season, any portion of a county meets the D2 (Severe Drought) drought intensity value for eight consecutive weeks or a higher drought intensity value for any length of time as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor ([http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vZHJvdWdodG1vbml0b3IudW5sLmVkdT91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.f3cBDK7-DXLb_Ti3xdsv8MuZNOabteyuLQjrjiTZv5w/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l))

**Administrator’s Physical Loss Notification*** This designation is initiated by the FSA State Executive Director.
* The designation is triggered by physical damage and losses because of a natural disaster, including but not limited to dead livestock, collapsed buildings, and destroyed farm structures.

**Presidential Designation*** A Presidential major disaster designation and emergency declaration is initiated by the Governor of the impacted state through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
* This designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the State and local governments.

**Quarantine Designation*** This designation is requested of the Secretary of Agriculture by the FSA State Executive Director.
* A quarantine designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by the effects of a plant or animal quarantine approved by the Secretary under the Plant Protection Act or animal quarantine laws.

All four types of designations immediately trigger the availability of low-interest Emergency loans to eligible producers in all primary and contiguous counties. FSA borrowers in these counties who are unable to make their scheduled payments on any debt may be authorized to have certain set asides. Additional disaster assistance requiring a designation may also be provided by new programs in the future.For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, contact your  local USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/disaster](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LmZzYS51c2RhLmdvdi9kaXNhc3Rlcj91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.ElEGtVRX7yl0iwZ6I1JCEro-6u-XYpn44NdYclQ3uCM/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l).USDA Announces Signup for 2023 Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers   Deadline for Calendar Year 2022 Applications is Jan. 31, 2023 The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds specialty crop producers of available assistance to help cover certain costs of complying with regulatory and market-driven food safety certification requirements. Applications for the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program for eligible 2022 costs are due by Jan. 31, 2023. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will accept applications for 2023 costs from Feb. 1, 2023, to Jan. 31, 2024.  FSA is making available up to $200 million through the FSCSC program, which is part of USDA’s broader effort to transform the food system to create a more level playing field for small-scale agricultural operations and a more balanced, equitable economy for everyone working in food and agriculture.  USDA first announced and opened this program for signup in 2022, delivering 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.  **Program Details**  FSCSC assists specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023 for certifications issued on or after June 21, 2022. For each year, FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation’s eligible costs 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.
* Have paid eligible expenses related to 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

FSA calculates FSCSC payments for each category of eligible costs. FSA set a higher payment rate for underserved farmers and ranchers, which includes socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran producers who have a CCC-860 on file with FSA.  FSA will issue payments at the time of application approval for 2022 and after the application period ends for 2023. The 2023 application period opens Feb. 1, 2023, and closes Jan. 31, 2024. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.  **Applying for Assistance**  Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the application, [FSA-888](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9zaXRlcy9kZWZhdWx0L2ZpbGVzLzIwMjItMDYvZmFybWVyc2dvdi1mb3JtLWZzYTg4OC0wNjE2MjAyMi5wZGY_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.IyTJQn42mxGRwLz6zhOEEIeZlIlCPUtDcWHE1JKbcM8/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l). 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/service-locator](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LmZhcm1lcnMuZ292L3NlcnZpY2UtbG9jYXRvcj91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.B4rIyDf7Id3mc4dc6J8nVk7-dANDEXgZe2GX7WxrcdY/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) to find their local FSA office. Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to assist. Producers can visit [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9wYW5kZW1pYy1hc3Npc3RhbmNlL2Zvb2Qtc2FmZXR5P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.QOFIltVyepb3cE_imhuZaKYCNTrctnL5kKXJ3tSp3QA/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.   USDA Releases Nationwide Farmer, Rancher and Forest Manager Prospective Customer SurveyYou can now take a nationwide survey to help the USDA improve and increase access to its programs and services for America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest managers. The survey includes new and existing customers. USDA encourages all agricultural producers to take the survey, especially those who have not worked with USDA previously. The survey gathers feedback on programs and services available through USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA).The survey is available online at [farmers.gov/survey](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9jb250YWN0L3N1cnZleT91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.sEoYaG4M4OF8r_Ni_5OjjjiC06HV2r3yn9taKrJkPBI/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l), and you should complete it by March 31, 2023.Stakeholder organizations are also encouraged to share the survey link through their networks. The survey is available in 14 different languages including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hmong, Korean, Navajo, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.In addition to the online survey, the FPAC Business Center, which is administering the survey, will also mail 11,000 printed surveys to various local state stakeholder organizations and farmers markets.USDA Reminds Producers of Continuous Certification Option for Perennial Forage  The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds agricultural producers with perennial forage crops of an option to report their acreage once, without having to report that acreage in subsequent years, as long as there are no applicable changes on the farm. Interested producers can select the continuous certification option after USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) certifies their acreage report.    An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses, including perennial crops like mixed forage, birdsfoot trefoil, chicory/radicchio, kochia (prostrata), lespedeza, perennial peanuts and perennial grass varieties. To access many USDA programs, producers must file an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage.The perennial crop continuous certification process requires a producer to initially complete an acreage report certifying the perennial crop acreage. The producer may select the continuous certification option any time after the crop is certified.  Once the continuous certification option is selected, the certified acreage will roll forward annually and does not require additional action on the producer’s part in subsequent years unless the acreage report changes.   Once a producer selects continuous certification, then continuous certification is appliable to all fields on the farm for the specific crop, crop type and intended use. If continuous certification is selected by any producers sharing in the crop, then the continuous certification is appliable to fields in which the producer has a share for the specific crop, crop type and intended use.   Producers can opt out of continuous certification at any time. The continuous certification will terminate automatically if a change in the farming operation occurs.  **How to File a Report**  To file a crop acreage report, producers need to provide:    * Crop and crop type or variety.
* Intended use of the crop.
* Number of acres of the crop.
* Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
* Planting date(s).
* Planting pattern, when applicable.
* Producer shares.
* Irrigation practice(s).
* Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
* Other information as required.

**More Information**   Producers can contact their local FSA office to see if their crops are eligible for continuous certification or to make an appointment. Producers can make an appointment to report acres by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi93b3JraW5nLXdpdGgtdXMvc2VydmljZS1jZW50ZXItbG9jYXRvcj91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.7pk_trqY11KztLDzy5KvkclXfKM2O760W4xtIEzC3Zg/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l).    Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their OperationFarmers 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://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9mdW5kP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.OFHBf8MNqduBV_xXkGsSg6NxQTXhtapRlg_vqM1ysXo/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) 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://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9yZWNvdmVyL2Rpc2FzdGVyLWFzc2lzdGFuY2UtdG9vbD91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkjc3RlcC0xIn0.3mFq0giW8_tyM2oSCk3AEU9WvMf64py8Hwz_MzvqUnQ/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [farmers.gov](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi8_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.gih7KdDbf0TQ3YikTSyco1NCJwEKZR2Z-X6Ixi0nO6Y/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l).USDA Offers Options for Signing and Sharing Documents OnlineFarmers and ranchers working with USDA’s Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer’s personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9zZXJ2aWNlLWNlbnRlci1sb2NhdG9yP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.-EAY0hdym3IJdveKGzw5n2R0YY95A-o5RjDPLpQKOyU/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you’re interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.Visit [farmers.gov/mydocs](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi9teWRvY3M_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.mvzul7s2yhBKQlwXPnuMB-7AM6bqqE2GxudlB5Yt37k/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online. USDA Issues Additional Pandemic Assistance Payments for Underserved ProducersThe U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is currently making automatic Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) top-up payments to underserved farmers and ranchers. Payments will be based on the 2020 program certification on form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification.Producers who have not previously certified to their status for the 2020 program year have until Feb. 10, 2023, to submit form CCC-860 to be eligible for the additional payments. Contact your local [USDA Service Center](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mYXJtZXJzLmdvdi93b3JraW5nLXdpdGgtdXMvc2VydmljZS1jZW50ZXItbG9jYXRvcj91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.PAYiN0m1ayPLmuZiMwgYpFDvy0Qb1m-aWQiDNM_VeTI/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) for more information. Farmers Can Now Make 2023 Crop Year Elections, Enroll in Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs Agricultural producers can now change election and enroll in the [Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mc2EudXNkYS5nb3YvcHJvZ3JhbXMtYW5kLXNlcnZpY2VzL2FyY3BsY19wcm9ncmFtL2luZGV4P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.aIr4Yr9jtEMYT-DVX9FErD1gGWlklM7iIvclp8Z7NAE/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) programs for the 2023 crop year, two key safety net programs offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Signup began Oct. 17, 2022, and producers have until March 15, 2023, to enroll in these two programs. Additionally, USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) has started issuing payments totaling more than $255 million to producers with 2021 crops that have triggered payments through ARC or PLC.  **2023 Elections and Enrollment**   Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual (ARC-IC), which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2023 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2023, they must sign a new contract.    If producers do not submit their election by the March 15, 2023 deadline, their election remains the same as their 2022 election for crops on the farm.  Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.     Covered commodities include 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.    **Web-Based Decision Tools**   In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:   * [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator,](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2Zhcm1kb2NkYWlseS5pbGxpbm9pcy5lZHUvMjAxOS8wOC9pbnRyb2R1Y2luZy10aGUtZ2FyZG5lci1mYXJtZG9jLXBheW1lbnQtY2FsY3VsYXRvci5odG1sP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.mgfRV6RL4EjGNMi7VdqU-0bbdUrlNR7Y55H_dfsACaI/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) 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,](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5hZnBjLnRhbXUuZWR1Lz91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.bZkD-1fmQ4YCiGkZSOt23dEaw44z6bBxu6PrHSprBkM/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) a tool available through Texas A&M that allows producers to obtain basic information regarding the decision and factors that should be taken into consideration such as future commodity prices and historic yields to estimate payments for 2022.

**2021 Payments and Contracts**  ARC and PLC payments for a given crop year are paid out the following fall to allow actual county yields and the Market Year Average prices to be finalized. This month, FSA processed payments to producers enrolled in 2021 ARC-CO, ARC-IC and PLC for covered commodities that triggered for the crop year.   For ARC-CO, producers can view the [2021](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3ZpZXcub2ZmaWNlYXBwcy5saXZlLmNvbS9vcC92aWV3LmFzcHg_c3JjPWh0dHBzJTNBJTJGJTJGd3d3LmZzYS51c2RhLmdvdiUyRkFzc2V0cyUyRlVTREEtRlNBLVB1YmxpYyUyRnVzZGFmaWxlcyUyRmFyYy1wbGMlMkYyMDIxJTJGZXhjZWwlMkZhcmNjb18yMDIxX2RhdGEueGxzeCUzRnV0bV9tZWRpdW0lM0RlbWFpbCUyNnV0bV9zb3VyY2UlM0Rnb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSZ1dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkmd2RPcmlnaW49QlJPV1NFTElOSyJ9.wMTBWsAlyLsAglN8Ij1AjB7t5ou3UbozpliCdUNISOg/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) ARC-CO Benchmark Yields and Revenues online database, for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity. For PLC, payments have triggered for rapeseed and peanuts. For ARC-IC, producers should contact their local FSA office for additional information pertaining to 2021 payment information, which relies on producer-specific yields for the crop and farm to determine benchmark yields and actual year yields when calculating revenues.  **By the Numbers**  In 2021, producers signed nearly 1.8 million ARC or PLC contracts, and 251 million out of 273 million base acres were enrolled in the programs.  For the 2022 crop year signed contracts surpassed 1.8 million, to be paid in the fall of 2023, if a payment triggers. Since ARC and PLC were first authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and reauthorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, these safety-net programs have paid out more than $34.9 billion to producers of covered commodities.  **Crop Insurance Considerations**   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.    **More Information**    For more information on ARC and PLC, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5mc2EudXNkYS5nb3YvcHJvZ3JhbXMtYW5kLXNlcnZpY2VzL2FyY3BsY19wcm9ncmFtL2luZGV4P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.WKe-851VCtaW2K4p22cTjrZJukGm_b9gEVTRexeznZo/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LmZhcm1lcnMuZ292L3NlcnZpY2UtY2VudGVyLWxvY2F0b3I_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.6jRMIDFgtQvik_VlL9YpjjnFQcf3QRjtwTJ0SDxAoJc/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l).   USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale OperatorsOptions Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to CreditProducers can apply for a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers EZ Guarantee Loans use a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved, and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to $100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.A new category of lenders will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to $50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to $100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.For more information about the available types of FSA farm loans, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LmZzYS51c2RhLmdvdi9wcm9ncmFtcy1hbmQtc2VydmljZXMvZmFybS1sb2FuLXByb2dyYW1zL2luZGV4P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.jD2STM4-u7m06S-3CcFA3qMCRwKKODW9w_sgS3sWxPw/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l).Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting/event/function should contact Mary Anne Coffin at 207-990-9140 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. |
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| **Farm Service Agency**Sherry Hamel, 207-990-9140State Executive Director sherry.hamel@usda.govWebsite:  [www.fsa.usda.gov/me](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/me) |  **Natural Resources Conservation Service**Matt Walker, 207- 990-9585State Conservationist matt.walker@usda.govWebsite:  [www.me.nrcs.usda.gov](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMzAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzAxMjYuNzA0NjY0OTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2djYzAyLnNhZmVsaW5rcy5wcm90ZWN0aW9uLm91dGxvb2suY29tLz9kYXRhPTA0JTdDMDElN0MlN0NlY2YxM2I5OWY5N2E0ZDA0NjFlZjA4ZDk1ZTUyYTM4MiU3Q2VkNWIzNmU3MDFlZTRlYmM4NjdlZTAzY2ZhMGQ0Njk3JTdDMCU3QzAlN0M2Mzc2NDQ1MzEyODczOTk5MDYlN0NVbmtub3duJTdDVFdGcGJHWnNiM2Q4ZXlKV0lqb2lNQzR3TGpBd01EQWlMQ0pRSWpvaVYybHVNeklpTENKQlRpSTZJazFoYVd3aUxDSlhWQ0k2TW4wJTNEJTdDMTAwMCZyZXNlcnZlZD0wJnNkYXRhPWslMkZHVVNFJTJCeHlRemM2bWNZNUZ2ck0lMkZGbHNud1dGOVZWWFJ1ZzNBT0VOQkUlM0QmdXJsPWh0dHAlM0ElMkYlMkZ3d3cubWUubnJjcy51c2RhLmdvdiUyRiUzRnV0bV9tZWRpdW0lM0RlbWFpbCUyNnV0bV9zb3VyY2UlM0Rnb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSZ1dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.Z1DpJjUgKkUWK0szo0-RWpACcXay50PB8HXyp3q1Mao/s/1519276657/br/153492040754-l)  |
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