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State Executive Director Comments

This time of year is usually an active time in our county offices with acreage reporting happening for many of Minnesota's crops. If you have not done so, please get into your local [FSA Service Center](#) to complete your crop acreage reporting, or work with our staff to file electronically. Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant but were unable to because of excess moisture or precipitation. [Prevented planted acreage](#) must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date. While



the deadline for spring crops is July 15, it is helpful for our staff if you get in as early as possible.

FSA [County Committees](#) are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs. The nomination period for the 2024 County Committee Election will begin next Monday, June 17, and all nominations must be received by August 1. If you or someone you know is interested in serving on your local FSA County Committee, [please put a nomination forward!](#)

Agricultural producers and private landowners can now sign up for the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (Grassland CRP). The signup runs through June 28. Grassland CRP is a voluntary working lands conservation program that enables participants to conserve grasslands and provide important conservation benefits for wildlife, soil health and carbon sequestration, all while continuing most grazing and haying practices. Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [FSA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program.

Our county offices across the state are participating in a “Seeds of Success” challenge this summer to utilize creativity in cultivating seeds for the future of Minnesota FSA. Staff may be reaching out to local Extension offices, 4-H groups, and FFA chapters to see how they can assist in activities over the upcoming months. If you’re looking for volunteers to help with county fairs, town festivals, livestock shows, etc., consider your [local FSA](#) staff!

This month we would like to highlight Alisha Klemme, student intern for the Minnesota FSA State Office in St. Paul. Alisha just finished her junior year of college at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities where she is studying Animal Science, Agriculture Food Business Management, and Spanish. Growing up in Plymouth, Wisconsin on her family’s small Hereford cow-calf operation, Alisha was highly active in 4-H and FFA spending many summers showing cattle at the regional, state, and national levels. She is an active member of the University of Minnesota Livestock Judging Team, Block and Bridle, Gopher Dairy Club, and Lamda Delta Phi Sorority. We hope you have a great summer, Alisha!

It was great to be in the Moorhead area this week, visiting farms and attending some of the events around Ag Tech Week. There is plenty of innovation going on across the operations we have in Minnesota, and I continue to be impressed with our farmers and their ability to adapt. I hope you all see FSA as a partner through your work in innovation.

Respectfully,
Whitney Place

Minnesota FSA is Hiring

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is an exciting and rewarding place to start, build, and/or continue your career. Be part of our team and support the well-being of Minnesota agriculture and the American public.

FSA's diverse culture and benefits allow for a healthy balance between your career and home life. In addition to a generous salary, FSA offers a friendly and professional working environment with a diverse workforce, flexible hours/work schedules, and other family-friendly

benefits such as: paid vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, retirement and supplemental savings plan, a wide array of health, dental, vision, and life insurance plans, flexible spending accounts, twelve weeks of paid parental leave with FMLA eligibility, and long-term care insurance. Working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will afford you the opportunity to contribute to projects that positively impact the lives of over 300 million people. Explore a career with the USDA at www.usajobs.gov.

New job openings are posted on a regular basis. Interested individuals can search for career opportunities based upon keywords and/or specific locations as well as create search profiles and job announcement notifications. Currently, Minnesota FSA is seeking candidates to perform work in support of Minnesota agriculture and farmers in a number of locations across the state. Individuals who are interested in applying for these job opportunities will need to apply online at www.usajobs.gov. Applicants may enter the appropriate job announcement number below into the keyword search or click on the applicable link(s).

Program Technician:

- **Mora, MN** - Kanabec County
[FSACO-12428389-24-MN-KM](#)
Application period: 6/3/2024 to 6/24/2024
- **Breckenridge, MN** - Wilkin County
[FSACO-12427567-24-MN-KM](#)
Application period: 6/3/2024 to 6/24/2024
- **Roseau, MN** - Roseau County
[FSACO-12428438-24-MN-KM](#)
Application period: 6/3/2024 to 6/24/2024
- **Redwood Falls, MN** - Redwood County *25% recruitment incentive
[FSACO-12440537-24-MN-KM](#)
Application period: 6/17/2024 to 7/8/2024

Farm Loan Analyst:

- **Marshall, MN** - Lyon County
[FSA -24-12436122-DE-MN-GNB](#)
Application period: 6/10/2024 to 6/24/2024

Farm Loan Manager:

- **Benson, MN** - Swift County
[FSA -24-12438251-DE-MN-GNB](#)
Application period: 6/10/2024 to 6/24/2024

Questions? Please visit the job posting linked above for additional information.



USDA Announces Grassland Conservation Reserve Program General Signup for 2024



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can now sign up for the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (Grassland CRP). The signup runs from June 3 through June 28, 2024. Grassland CRP, offered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), is a voluntary working lands conservation program that enables participants to conserve grasslands and provide important conservation benefits for wildlife, soil health and carbon sequestration, all while continuing most grazing and haying practices.

More than 2.3 million acres from agricultural producers and private landowners were accepted through the 2023 Grassland CRP signup. That signup reflects the continued success and value of investments in voluntary, producer-led, working lands conservation programs. The current total participation in Grassland CRP is 8.64 million acres, which is part of the 24.8 million acres enrolled in CRP opportunities overall.

On Nov. 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024 (Pub. L. 118-22), which generally extended the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334), more commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill, through Sept. 30, 2024. This extension allows authorized programs, including CRP, to continue operating.

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before the June 28 deadline.

Other CRP Options

FSA is also accepting applications for the [Continuous CRP](#) signup, which opened in January 2023. Under this enrollment, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the

year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

Additionally, FSA also offers financial assistance to producers and landowners enrolled in CRP to improve the health of their forests through the [Forest Management Incentive](#) (FMI), which can help participants with forest management practices, such as brush management and prescribed burning.

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

USDA Reminds Minnesota Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers in Minnesota should make an appointment with their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to complete [crop acreage reports](#) before the applicable deadline after planting is complete.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch, its intended use and location. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in Minnesota:

- July 15, 2024: Beans, grass seed, perennial forage, and all other spring-seeded crops.
- November 15, 2024: Fall-seeded grains and RMA insured apiculture.

To file a crop acreage report, producers need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety
 - Intended crop use
 - Number of crop acres
 - Map with approximate crop boundaries
 - Planting date(s)
 - Planting pattern, when applicable
 - Producer shares
 - Irrigation practice(s)
 - Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable
-

- Other required information

Acreage Reporting Details

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or crop harvesting begins.

Prevented Planted Acreage

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant but were unable to because of a natural disaster, including excess moisture/precipitation or drought. Prevented planted acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA).

FSA recently updated policy that applies to prevented planted acreage due to drought. To certify prevented planted acreage due to drought, all of the following must apply:

- The area that is prevented from being planted has insufficient soil moisture for seed germination on the final planting date for non-irrigated acreage.
- Prolonged precipitation deficiencies that meet the D3 or D4 drought intensity level as determined by the U.S. Drought Monitor.
- Verifiable information must be collected from sources whose business or purpose is recording weather conditions as determined by FSA.

Continuous Certification Option for Perennial Forage

Agricultural producers with perennial forage crops have the 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 FSA certifies their acreage report. Examples of perennial forage include mixed forage, birdsfoot trefoil, chicory/radicchio, kochia (prostrata), lespedeza, perennial peanuts and perennial grass varieties.

Once the continuous certification option is selected, the certified acreage will roll forward annually with no additional action required by the producer in subsequent years unless the acreage report changes.

Farmers.gov Portal



Producers can access their FSA farm records, maps, and common land units through the farmers.gov customer portal. The portal allows producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries within farm records mapping. Producers can view, print and label their maps for acreage reporting purposes. Level 2 eAuthentication or login.gov access that is linked to a USDA Business Partner customer record is required to use the portal.

Producers can visit farmers.gov/account to learn more about creating an account. Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via an FSA-211 *Power of Attorney* form, Business Partner Signature Authority or as a member of a business can now access information for the business in the farmers.gov portal.

More Information

For questions, producers should call their FSA county office. To find their FSA county office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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 Is Accepting CRP Continuous Enrollment Offers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#).

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

For more information, including a list of acceptable practices, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp.

FSA Offers Safety Net Programs for Honeybee Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers two programs that have specific safety net benefits for producers of honeybees and honey. The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) assist producers when disasters impact honey production or damage or destroy colonies, hives or honeybee feed.



NAP is designed to reduce financial losses when natural disasters result in lower yields or crop losses, including honey. NAP coverage is equivalent to catastrophic insurance, meaning it covers up to 50 percent of a producer's normal yield (must have at least a 50 percent loss) at 55 percent of the average market price. The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

You must apply for NAP coverage by Dec. 31 prior to the year for which you're seeking coverage.

ELAP covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses (the physical structure) and honeybee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.

You must notify FSA within 30 calendar days of changes in the total number of colonies or when honeybees are moved to another county.

For NAP, you must notify FSA within 15 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent. For ELAP, you must file a notice of loss and application for payment by Jan. 30, 2025.

To learn more about programs for honey and honeybee producers, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Ask the Expert: A Q&A on Farm Storage Facility Loans

In this *Ask the Expert*, Toni Williams answers questions about how Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFLs) provide low-interest financing to help producers build or upgrade commodity storage facilities. Toni is the Agricultural Program Manager for FSFLs at the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Toni has worked for FSA for more than 32 years and is responsible for providing national policy and guidance for Farm Storage Facility Loans.

What are Farm Storage Facility Loans?

Farm Storage Facility Loans provide low-interest financing for eligible producers to build or upgrade facilities to store commodities.

The FSFL program was created in May 2000 to address an existing grain shortage. Historically, FSFLs benefitted grain farmers, but a change in the 2008 Farm Bill extended the program to fruit and vegetable producers for cold storage. An additional change extended the program to washing and packing sheds, where fresh produce is washed, sorted, graded, labeled, boxed up, and stored before it heads to market. Since May 2000, FSA has made more than 40,000 loans for on-farm storage.

Eligible facility types include grain bins, hay barns, bulk tanks, and facilities for cold storage. Drying and handling and storage equipment including storage and handling trucks are also eligible. Eligible facilities and equipment may be new or used, permanently affixed or portable.

To read the full blog visit farmers.gov/blog/ask-the-expert-qa-on-farm-storage-facility-loans-with-toni-williams.

FSA Offers Disaster Assistance for Qualifying Tree, Bush and Vine Losses



If you're an orchardist or nursery tree grower who experienced losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2024, you must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent. TAP provides financial assistance to help you replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster, plus an adjustment for normal mortality. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of

acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which you can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 1,000 acres annually.

USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators

Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit

Producers 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 USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

USDA to Provide More Than \$3 Billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2022 Natural Disasters

The U. S Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide more than \$3 billion to commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2022. Eligible impacted producers can apply for financial assistance through the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) 2022](#). The program will help offset the financial impacts of crop yield and value losses from qualifying disasters occurring in 2022.



Background

On Dec. 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the *Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328)* that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by eligible natural disasters that occurred in calendar year 2022.

ERP 2022 covers losses to crops, trees, bushes and vines due to qualifying, calendar year 2022 natural disaster events including wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought and related conditions.

ERP 2022 program benefits will be delivered to eligible producers through a two-track process. FSA intends to make both tracks available to producers at the same time. This two-track approach enables USDA to:

- Streamline the application process.
- Reduce the paperwork burden on producers.
- Proactively include provisions for underserved producers who have not been well served by past emergency relief efforts.
- Encourage producer participation in existing risk management programs to mitigate the impacts of future severe weather events.

It's important to note that disaster-impacted producers may be eligible for ERP 2022 assistance under one or both tracks. To avoid duplicative benefits, if a producer applies for both tracks, the Track 2 payment calculation will take into account any payments received through Track 1.

ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 1

ERP 2022 Track 1 leverages existing federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data as the basis for calculating payments for eligible crop producers who received indemnities through these risk management programs.

Although FSA is sending pre-filled ERP 2022 Track 1 application forms to producers who have crop insurance and NAP data already on file with USDA, producers indemnified for losses resulting from 2022 natural disasters do not have to wait to receive the application before requesting ERP 2022 assistance. Effective Oct. 31, 2023, producers can apply for ERP 2022 benefits whether they have received the pre-filled application or not. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP 2022 Track 1 payment.

USDA estimates that ERP Track 1 benefits will reach more than 206,000 producers who received indemnities for losses covered by federal crop insurance and more than 4,500 producers who obtained NAP coverage for the 2022 crop year.

ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 2

Track 2 is a revenue-based certification program designed to assist eligible producers who suffered an eligible decrease in revenue resulting from 2022 calendar year disaster events when compared with revenue in a benchmark year using revenue information that is readily available from most tax records.

In cases where revenue does not reasonably reflect a normal year's revenue, Track 2 provides an alternative method for establishing revenue. Likewise, Track 2 affords producers of crops that are used within an operation and do not generate revenue from the sale of the crop a method for establishing revenue for the purpose of applying for ERP 2022 benefits. Producers are not required to submit tax records to FSA unless requested by the County Committee if required for an FSA compliance spot check.

Although not required when applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, applicants might find the following documents useful to the process:

- Schedule F (Form 1040)
- *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023.

Track 2 targets gaps in emergency relief assistance for eligible producers whose eligible losses were not covered by crop insurance or NAP including revenue losses too small (shallow loss) to be covered by crop insurance.

Producers interested in applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, should contact their local FSA county office. Additional reference resources can be found on FSA's [emergency relief website](#).

Additional Required Forms

For both ERP 2022 tracks, all producers must have certain required forms on file with FSA within 60 days of the ERP 2022 deadline. FSA started accepting applications on Oct. 31, 2023. The application deadline has not yet been determined and will be announced at a later date. If not already on file, producers can update, complete and submit required forms to FSA at any time.

Required forms:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, *Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs* (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, if applicable, for the 2022 program year.

- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.

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 the status of their forms can contact their local FSA county office.

Future Insurance Coverage Requirements

All producers who receive ERP 2022 payments must purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, in the next two available crop years as determined by the Secretary. Purchased coverage must be at the 60/100 coverage level or higher for insured crops or at the catastrophic coverage level or higher for NAP crops.

More Information

ERP 2022 eligibility details and payment calculation factor tables are available on the [emergency relief website](#), in the [ERP Track 1](#) and [ERP Track 2](#) fact sheets and through your local [FSA county office](#).

USDA Opens Application Period for Composting and Food Waste Reduction Cooperative Agreements

Local and tribal governments and eligible groups can apply by September 4

USDA is accepting applications for [Composting and Food Waste Reduction \(CFWR\)](#) pilot projects for fiscal year 2024. The cooperative agreements, using remaining funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, are jointly administered by USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Selected projects will develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans and are part of USDA's broader efforts to support urban agriculture.



USDA Awards \$50 Million to Support Farmworkers and Agricultural Employers

Awards will help improve the resiliency of the U.S. food supply chain by addressing agriculture labor challenges and instability.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is awarding \$50 million to 141 awardees in 40 states and Puerto Rico, through the Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP Program), reaching 177 unique agricultural operations and over 11,000 workers. The awards will help improve the resiliency of the U.S. food supply chain by addressing agriculture labor challenges and instability, strengthen protections for farmworkers, and expand legal pathways for labor migration. This program delivers on a commitment made as part of the [Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#) and furthers the Administration's commitment to a regional approach to migration in the hemisphere.

USDA announced the FLSP Program in September 2023, in coordination with other federal agencies, to help address workforce needs in agriculture; promote a safe and healthy work environment, as well as ethical recruitment for farmworkers; and support lawful migration pathways for workers, including expansion of labor pathways for workers from Northern Central America, through the H-2A visa program. FLSP was designed with significant input from immigration, labor, and agricultural stakeholders – informed by the experiences of farmworkers and farmers themselves.

The FLSP Program grants will support a range of required and elective supplemental commitments to expand benefits and protections for all employees. Examples of awardee commitments include:

- Establishing robust pay-related benefits that have the potential to raise earnings for thousands of workers, as well as provide them more time with their families or taking
-

care of their health through policies such as personal and paid sick time off, and mid-season vacation leave;

- Markedly improving working and living conditions by strengthening employer-employee engagement, such as establishing Collaborative Working Groups with robust farmworker representation and partnerships with external organizations that have longstanding experience collaborating with farmworkers;
- Providing additional worker-friendly benefits, such as advancement and management training opportunities, driver's license training, no-cost English classes for employees, and additional recreation spaces in housing facilities;
- Supporting Know-Your-Rights-and-Resources training sessions for all workers to ensure they understand their legal rights as workers in the United States;
- Participation in Worker-driven Social Responsibility programs – a proven model for improving workplace environments – such as the Fair Food Program;
- Disclosing recruitment practices and advancing ethical, safe recruitment practices that are essential to protecting workers from illegal fees, undue debt, exploitation, and even human trafficking;
- 60 percent of employer awardees that plan to utilize the H-2A visa program committed to recruiting workers from Northern Central America.

[View the complete list of awardees](#)

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In 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 www.usda.gov.

Minnesota USDA Farm Service Agency

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To find contact information for your local USDA Farm Service
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Lee Crawford
Calvin Gellatly
Angela Hanson
Daniel Mahoney
Glenn Schafer

Minnesota State Committee:
Eunice Biel, Committee Chairperson
Hannah Bernhardt, Committee Member
Kurt Blomgren, Committee Member
Lisa Brunner, Committee Member
Tim Velde, Committee Member

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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).



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