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## “What’s Happening Today at FSA”

My name is Joe Aull and in December 2021, I was appointed by the Biden Administration to be the State Executive Director of the Farm Service Agency for Missouri. Most of my previous experience was in the field of Education, as a Teacher, a Coach, a Principal and a School Superintendent in Missouri Public Schools for a total of 34 years. I was also a member of the Missouri House of Representatives and served on the House Agriculture Committee for 8 years.

At the present time, don't forget that the annual Crop and Acreage Report for Spring crops is due July 15. This is a very important report, because it goes a long way in determining which FSA programs that you might qualify for in the coming year. Please contact your County FSA office for information and assistance in completing this report, and for other program information. Also, currently producers are being notified about the Emergency Relief Program (ERP), which provides financial relief for Producers that experienced crop financial loss due to a Disaster during portions of the 2020 and 2021 calendar year.

In the state of Missouri, FSA has over 400 FSA employees and 94 County FSA offices, which are spread across the State. Last year alone, the Missouri Farm Service Agency distributed \$1.4 billion in loans and other financial assistance to Farmers, Ranchers, and other Ag Producers in Missouri. In 2021 the Missouri FSA ranked 12<sup>th</sup> highest out of the 50 states in the number of Ag loans made, and 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the total amount of money loaned. Since December I have had the chance to visit some of our offices and visit with them on the needs of our producers and I hope to visit more in the upcoming months. As I travel and meet with our employees and producers I am hoping to share some of those experiences with you via videos I am calling "What's Happening Today at FSA".

This month I stopped in at the Cooper county office and visited with the CED, Randon Leathers, about crop reporting and ERP, [CLICK HERE](#) to view this brief video update.

It is truly a pleasure to serve you, and I hope that FSA can provide you with some valuable support to help make your Agricultural operation the best that it can be.

Joe Aull  
State Executive Director

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## USDA Reminds Missouri Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers in Missouri who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after planting should make an appointment with their U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. 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 Missouri:

July 15, 2022	Spring seeded crops and perennial forage
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Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your local FSA office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

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.

### **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.
- If crops are covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, acreage reports should be submitted by the applicable state, county, or crop-specific reporting deadline or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to because of a natural disaster.

Prevented planting 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.

FSA offers continuous certification for perennial forage. This means after perennial forage is reported once and the producer elects continuous certification, the certification remains in effect until a change is made. Check with FSA at the local USDA Service Center for more information on continuous certification.

### **New Option to View, Print and Label Maps on Farmers.gov**

Producers with an eAuth account linked to their USDA customer record can now access their FSA farm records, maps and common land units by logging into farmers.gov. A new feature will allow producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries. This will allow producers to view, print and label their own maps for acreage reporting purposes.

Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via form FSA-211 Power of Attorney, Business Partner Signature Authority, along with other

signature types, or as a member of a business can now access information in the farmers.gov portal.

Producers can learn how to use the farmers.gov Farm Records Mapping functionality with this [fact sheet](#) and these [video tutorials](#).

### More Information

Producers can make an appointment to report acres by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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## Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is now accepting nominations for county committee members. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for members. LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. This may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.



County committee members make important decisions about how Federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2022 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2022.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in a USDA program and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women, and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote and hold office.

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

### Urban and Suburban County Committees

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to form urban county committees as well as make other advancements related to urban agriculture, including the establishment of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. FSA established county committees specifically focused on urban agriculture. The urban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the new county committees may address areas such as food

access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost and food waste reduction.

Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Urban county committee members will provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs and serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

The following urban and suburban county committees will hold elections this year: Phoenix, Atlanta, New Orleans, Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Louis, Albuquerque, N.M., Cleveland, Portland, Ore., Philadelphia, Dallas and Richmond, Va.

USDA recently [announced six new urban county committees](#) in Chicago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles, Brooklyn, and Oakland. Elections will be held for these locations at a later date.

Learn more at [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban).

### **More Information**

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election, including if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. Urban farmers should use an [FSA-669-A-3](#) for urban county committees. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 7, 2022. Producers can find their local USDA Service Center at [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

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](https://www.usda.gov).

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

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

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

## **Program Details**

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

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

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

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

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

## **Applying for Assistance**

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

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application. The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Producers can visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator) 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://farmers.gov/food-safety) for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

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## **USDA Advances Food System Transformation with \$43 Million for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, Adds New Urban County Committees**

Funding is First Part of \$75 Million Investment to Support a Fairer Food System and Expand Access to Nutritious Food

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces significant investments to support urban agriculture, including \$43.1 million for grants and cooperative agreements as well as six new urban county committees to help deliver key USDA programs to urban producers. These actions support USDA's efforts to strengthen the food supply chain and transform the food system to be fairer, more competitive, and more resilient. Specifically, USDA is investing \$10.2 million in new cooperative agreements to expand compost and food waste reduction efforts and \$14.2 million in new grants to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects. Additionally, \$18.7 million will fund 75 worthy grant proposals from the 2021 application cycle, which was oversubscribed. Learn more [here](#).

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## **Sign Up to be Counted in the 2022 Census of Agriculture by June 30**

Your voice. Your future. Your opportunity.

Sign up and be counted in the 2022 Ag Census! Agriculture producers who did not receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture and do not receive other USDA surveys or censuses have until June 30 to sign up to receive the 2022 Census of Agriculture at [nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](https://nass.usda.gov/AgCensus). This once-every-five-years data collection begins this November.

The Ag Census includes every American operation – large or small, urban or rural – from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products are produced and sold, or would normally be produced and sold, in the ag census year. This can include hobby farms with livestock, such as chickens or horses, or crops growing in the backyard or on a rooftop. The data inform policy and program decisions that directly impact producers, their operations, industries, and communities. A complete count, with every producer getting and taking the opportunity to be represented in these data, is vital.

On the [NASS Ag Census webpage](#), producers can also access frequently asked questions, explore past and current Ag Census data, access tools to help spread the word about the upcoming Ag Census, learn about Ag Census special studies, and more.

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# USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can now apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program](#) (OTECP) and [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses. Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022.

OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).
- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per category of certification costs in 2022.

This cost share for certification is available for each of these categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and State organic program fees.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. Producers have until October 31, 2022 to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center. As part of completing the OCCSP applications, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses. Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating State agencies.

Additional details can be found on the [OTECP](#) and [OCCSP](#) webpages.

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## Gear Up for the 2022 Hurricane Season

Hurricane season is officially underway, and it lasts until November 30. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts that the 2022 hurricane season will be above normal in the Atlantic and produce 14 to 21 named storms with six to 10 hurricanes and three to six major hurricanes. Additionally, NOAA predicts that the eastern Pacific hurricane season will produce 10 to 17 named storms, with four to eight hurricanes and zero to three major hurricanes.

Take precautions to prepare and protect your family and agricultural operation.



1. **Develop an Emergency Plan** - Ensure your household and employees know your hurricane plan, including meeting points, emergency contact lists, and alternate evacuation routes in case infrastructure is damaged.
2. **Remove Debris and Secure Large Objects** - Clean out culverts, ditches, and other drainage areas, especially before and during peak hurricane season to reduce water damage. Most injuries to animals, people, or structures during a hurricane are caused by flying objects. To lessen the risk, minimize the presence of equipment, supplies, and debris that may become airborne during high winds or encountered in floodwaters.
3. **Secure Important Records and Documents**- Pre- and post-hurricane documentation is extremely important for insurance compensation and recovery assistance. You'll want to have thorough records of damages and losses sustained on your farm as well as documentation of your cleanup and recovery efforts.
  - It is critical to document inventory of farm buildings, vehicles, equipment, and livestock before a disaster occurs. Take photos, videos, or make written lists with descriptions. Keep copies of this inventory in multiple places: computer, off-site in a safe location, and on a cloud-based server where information is transmitted and saved weekly.
4. **Know Your Insurance Options**- Regularly review your insurance policies with your agent to be sure you have adequate coverage, including flood insurance, for your facilities, vehicles, farm buildings, crops and livestock. Note, there are limitations on how soon insurance coverage will take effect. Generally, insurance policies will not cover damage if the policy was not in place before a disaster.
5. **Gather Supplies** - Have drinking water, canned food, a generator, batteries, a flashlight, and fuel available in case you lose power. For widespread outages, credit and debit cards may not work, so have cash handy.
6. **Access Real-time Emergency Information**- Download the FEMA app for free on the App Store and Google Play for safety tips on what to do before, during, and after disasters. Subscribe to our [text message and email service](#) to receive real-time, local operational and recovery information from the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Risk Management Agency.

On farmers.gov, the [Hurricane Webpage](#), [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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## USDA Renews People's Garden Initiative

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently planted a tree to announce the reopening of the USDA's People's Garden Initiative. People's Gardens across the country will grow fresh, healthy food and support resilient, local food systems; teach people how to garden using conservation practices; nurture habitat for pollinators and wildlife and create greenspace for neighbors. The garden at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. will be joined by 17 flagship gardens located in urban communities nationwide.

The Washington, D.C. People's Garden is growing plants in a variety of ways, from small containers to wheelchair accessible raised beds. Active beehives are on the rooftop of the USDA Whitten Building. In early spring, cool weather crops like peas, kale, collards, radishes, cilantro, parsley, carrots, lettuces, beets, chard and spinach are planted, followed by warm weather crops like beans, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, squash, and pumpkins in late spring and early summer. Conservation practices like cover crops and pollinator plantings are being used to conserve natural resources. Meanwhile, USDA has plans to launch flagship gardens in urban communities. Those cities include:

- Albuquerque, N.M.
- Atlanta, Ga.
- Chicago, Ill.
- Cleveland, Ohio
- Dallas, Texas
- Detroit, Mich.
- Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Los Angeles, Calif.
- Minneapolis, Minn.
- New Orleans, La.
- New York, N.Y.
- Oakland, Calif.
- Philadelphia, Pa.
- Phoenix, Ariz.
- Portland, Ore.
- Richmond, Va.
- St. Louis, Mo.

USDA plans to expand the initiative to other communities later this year. School gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural and urban areas can be recognized as a "People's Garden" if they:

- Benefit the community by providing food, green space, wildlife habitat, education space.
- Are a collaborative effort. This can include groups working together with USDA agencies, food banks, Girl Scouts, Master Gardeners, conservation districts, etc.
- Incorporate conservation management practices, such as using native plant species, rain barrels, integrated pest management, xeriscaping.
- Educate the public about sustainable gardening practices and the importance of local, diverse, and resilient food systems providing healthy food for the community.

USDA originally launched the People's Garden Initiative in 2009. It's named for the "People's Department," former President Abraham Lincoln's nickname for USDA, which was established during his presidency in 1862. To watch these gardens grow, visit

our [People's Garden Webpage](#) or follow the hashtag #PeoplesGarden on USDA's social media channels.

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## Farmers, Homeowners Can Help Pollinators Prosper

Why are pollinators so important? That's easy - Food. One out of three bites of food can be attributed to these important creatures – such as bees, butterflies, moths, birds, beetles, bats, and a few other small mammals. Pollinators provide crucial assistance to fruit, vegetable and seed crops as well as other plants that produce fiber, medicine and fuel. For many plants, without the help of pollinators, they would be unable to reproduce.

But as you may know, pollinators are in trouble. Many are seeing decreasing populations because of habitat loss, disease, parasites, and indiscriminate pesticide use. But there's good news. There are simple ways you can help. It can be as easy as selecting high-quality pollinator plants for your garden. To find the best plants for your area, visit the websites of NRCS partners at the Xerces Society Pollinator Conservation Program or Pollinator Partnership.

If you operate a farm or ranch, NRCS can help you create habitat for pollinators. This not only benefits pollinators, but also provides ample perks for the farmers and ranchers, too. More pollinators can increase crop yields. Pollinators can be increased by planting wildflowers in and around fields and choosing the right cover crops. NRCS offers more than three dozen conservation practices that assist in building healthier landscapes for pollinators. NRCS can also help fund the implementation of these practices.

Habitats used by pollinators attract beneficial insects (insects that eat crop pests), and they may provide habitat for other wildlife, reduce soil erosion, and improve water quality. As you can see, pollinators and healthy habitat for pollinators help keep the ecosystem healthy. In fact, if you are putting in conservation practices to prevent soil erosion or protect stream banks, consider including wildflowers, shrubs and trees that support pollinators.

For more information, contact your [Local Service Centers Directory](#), [NRCS \(usda.gov\)](#), or visit [nrcs.usda.gov/pollinators](https://nrcs.usda.gov/pollinators). Missouri NRCS is also a member of the Missouri Monarchs Collaborative. Learn more about the collaborative and how to support monarch butterflies at [Missourians for Monarchs \(mofor monarchs.org\)](https://mofor monarchs.org).

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## Prairie Strips Capture Nutrients & Sediment at Edge of Farm Fields

Healthy soil and plentiful nutrients are key ingredients to productive farms and ranches. But when they move off farms and ranches, they can harm streams and rivers. High concentrations of nutrients in water, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, can be harmful to humans, animals and plants. When the runaway nutrients reach estuaries, they can lead to hypoxic zones, or oxygen-depleted waters.

You can take proactive steps to keep nutrients and soil in their proper places – on the land and out of waterways. Many producers implement filter strips – a belt of plants – at the edge of crop fields and pastures. Producers station these strips in environmentally sensitive areas on a farm or ranch, especially near ditches and other waterways. The strips slow the speed of water flowing over fields following a rainstorm, allowing for the plants to capture sediment and nutrients. The best plants for filter strips have stiff stems and are dense near the ground.

Prairie strips not only help the environment, but they can help the producer, too. They provide habitat for wildlife and pollinators. It's always helpful to lure pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, to a farm because the more pollinators – the better the harvest.

NRCS can help you incorporate conservation practices like filter strips on your farm or ranch. For more information, contact your [Local Service Centers Directory | NRCS \(usda.gov\)](#).

NRCS Missouri's partner, Missouri Prairie Foundation also has wonderful information at <https://moprairie.org/prairie-strips/>

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## **USDA to Allow Producers to Request Voluntary Termination of Conservation Reserve Program Contract**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will allow Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants who are in the final year of their CRP contract to request voluntary termination of their CRP contract following the end of the primary nesting season for fiscal year 2022. Participants approved for this one-time, voluntary termination will not have to repay rental payments, a flexibility implemented this year to help mitigate the global food supply challenges caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and other factors. Today, USDA also announced additional flexibilities for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

FSA is [mailing letters to producers](#) with expiring acres that detail this flexibility and share other options, such as re-enrolling sensitive acres in the CRP Continuous signup and considering growing organic crops. Producers will be asked to make the request for voluntary termination in writing through their local USDA [Service Center](#).

If approved for voluntary termination, preparations can occur after the conclusion of the [primary nesting season](#). Producers will then be able to hay, graze, begin land preparation activities and plant a fall-seeded crop before October 1, 2022. For land in colder climates, this flexibility may allow for better establishment of a winter wheat crop or better prepare the land for spring planting.

### **Organic Considerations**

Since CRP land typically does not have a recent history of pesticide or herbicide application, USDA is encouraging producers to consider organic production. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides [technical and financial assistance](#) to help producers plan and implement conservation practices, including those

that work well for organic operations, such as pest management and mulching. Meanwhile, FSA offers [cost-share for certification costs](#) and other fees.

### **Other CRP Options**

Participants can also choose to enroll all or part of their expiring acres into the Continuous CRP signup for 2022. Important conservation benefits may still be achieved by re-enrolling sensitive acres such as buffers or wetlands. Expiring water quality practices such as filter strips, grass waterways, and riparian buffers may be eligible to be reenrolled under the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR) and CLEAR 30 options under CRP. Additionally, expiring continuous CRP practices such as shelterbelts, field windbreaks, and other buffer practices may also be re-enrolled to provide benefits for organic farming operations.

If producers are not planning to farm the land from their expiring CRP contract, the Transition Incentives Program (TIP) may also provide them two additional annual rental payments after their contract expires on the condition that they sell or rent their land to a beginning or veteran farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

Producers interested in the Continuous CRP signup, CLEAR 30, or TIP should contact FSA by Aug. 5, 2022.

### **NRCS Conservation Programs**

USDA also encourages producers to consider NRCS conservation programs, which help producers integrate conservation on croplands, grazing lands and other agricultural landscapes. EQIP and CSP can help producers plant cover crops, manage nutrients and improve irrigation and grazing systems. Additionally, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), or state or private easement programs, may be such an option. In many cases, a combination of approaches can be taken on the same parcel. For example, riparian areas or other sensitive parts of a parcel may be enrolled in continuous CRP and the remaining land that is returned to farming can participate in CSP or EQIP and may be eligible to receive additional ranking points.

### **Other Flexibilities to Support Conservation**

Additionally, NRCS is also offering a new flexibility for EQIP and CSP participants who have cover cropping including in their existing contracts. NRCS will allow participants to either modify their plans to plant a cover crop (and instead shift to a conservation crop rotation) or delay their cover crop plans a year, without needing to terminate the existing contract. This will allow for flexibility to respond to market signals while still ensuring the conservation benefits through NRCS financial and technical assistance for participating producers.

### **More Information**

Producers and landowners can learn more about these options by contacting FSA and NRCS at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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

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## Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Farm Loan team in Missouri is already working on operating loans for spring 2022 and asks potential borrowers to submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

**Microloans** are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new operation, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

**Marketing Assistance Loans** allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

**Farm Storage Facility Loans** can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain

bins, hay storage structures, and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

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## Top 6 Emergency Relief Program Checklist Items for Eligible Farmers

FSA recently began mailing 303,000 pre-filled applications for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP), a new program designed to help agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms, and other qualifying natural disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021.

The past few years have been tough to say the least. As producers have dealt with the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have also struggled to recover from more frequent, more intense natural disasters. I am grateful that Congress passed, and President Biden signed into law the *Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act* (P.L. 117-43), which includes \$10 billion in critical emergency relief.

After extensive stakeholder outreach, including with producers and groups that have not always been included in USDA programs, our team began work developing a responsive, easier-to-access program that could be rolled out in phases. We're now rolling out the first phase of ERP, which uses existing [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) data as the basis for calculating initial payments.

By leveraging existing data, we will be able to deliver approximately \$6 billion in assistance on a faster timeline; at the same time, my team and I are committed to ensuring that producers who do not have existing data on file with USDA are captured in the second phase of ERP, which will be explicitly focused on filling gaps in previously implemented emergency assistance.

To apply for ERP Phase 1, here's what you need to do:

### 1. Check Your Mailbox

The form being mailed to you includes eligibility requirements, outlines the application process, and provides estimated ERP payment calculations. Producers will receive a separate application form for each program year in which an eligible loss occurred. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP phase one payment. This application takes about 0.176 hours (that's less than 15 minutes) for producers to complete, compared to the former Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus application which took several hours for producers to complete and even longer for FSA staff.

The deadline to return completed ERP applications to FSA is **Friday, July 22, 2022**. *If you have NAP coverage, you will receive pre-filled ERP applications later this summer. Details on ERP Phase 2 will be forthcoming as well.*

### 2. Check Your Eligibility

ERP covers losses to crops, trees, bushes, and vines due to a qualifying natural disaster event in calendar years 2020 and 2021. Eligible crops include all crops for which crop insurance or NAP coverage was available, except for crops intended for grazing. Qualifying natural disaster events include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought\*, and related conditions.

*\*Lists of [2020](#) and [2021](#) drought counties eligible for ERP are available online.*

### **3. Check Required Forms on File with FSA**

**Producers must have the following forms on file with FSA:**

- 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).
- 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.

*If you have previously participated in FSA programs, you will likely have these required forms on file. However, if you're uncertain or want to confirm the status of your forms, contact your [local FSA county office](#).*

### **4. Check Historically Underserved Status with FSA, If Applicable**

The ERP payment percentage for historically underserved producers, including beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers, and ranchers will be increased by 15% of the calculated ERP payment.

To qualify for the higher payment percentage, eligible producers must have the following form on file with FSA:

- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*.

### **5. Check Your Future Insurance Coverage**

All producers who receive ERP phase one payments are statutorily required to purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, for the next two available crop years, as determined by the Secretary.

Coverage requirements will be determined from the date a producer receives an ERP payment and may vary depending on the timing and availability of crop insurance or NAP for a producer's particular crops. The final crop year to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage to meet the second year of coverage for this requirement is the 2026 crop year.



## 6. Check Your bank

Once the completed ERP application for payment is submitted to and signed by FSA, producers who have direct deposit should look for payment within three business days.

### More Information

We have additional resources, including:

- [ERP May 16, 2022 New Release](#)
- [ERP Fact Sheet](#)
- [Answers to Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Emergency Relief Webpage](#)
- [ERP Notice of Funding Availability](#)

In addition to ERP, FSA is also implementing the first phase of the new Emergency Livestock Relief Program. At this time, FSA has made more than \$588 million in payments to impacted livestock producers.

Bottom line, we take your feedback seriously, and we wanted to deliver this relief as soon as possible. We learned from previous relief programs, and we're excited to be getting this to you as swiftly as we can.

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## 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, handling equipment and storage and handling trucks. Some eligible equipment may include augers, dryers, grain carts, grain trailers, hay bale wrappers and hay bale accumulators. For a complete list of eligible equipment please see the link below.

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 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.

For more information, contact your Local County USDA Service Center or visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage/index>

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## Wool, Mohair and Pelts May be eligible for Loan Deficiency Payment

If you have wool, mohair or pelts, you may be eligible for loan deficiency payments (LDPs) from the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

LDPs and marketing assistance loans (MALs) are marketing tools that are available after shearing each year. For the crop year 2022, producers should sign the CCC-633 EZ, page 1 before shearing or slaughter and before losing beneficial interest in the wool, mohair or pelts. Producers can then apply for the LDP payment from January 1, 2022 through January 31, 2023. MALs help producers meet cash flow needs without selling commodities when market prices are at harvest-time lows. Producers who are eligible for marketing loans, but choose to forgo the loan, are eligible for LDPs if the posted county price falls below the county loan rate. Producers can purchase a commodity certificate that may be exchanged for the outstanding loan collateral. Daily LDP rates are available online in the link below. Rules related to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant no longer apply to LDPs. However, 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 a Market Loan Gain (MLG) or LDP. You must have a valid CCC-941 on file to earn a market gain of LDP. The AGI provision does not apply to MALs redeemed with commodity certificate exchange.

For more information, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/loan-deficiency/index>

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