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A Message from the FSA Acting State Executive Director

Fall is certainly a busy time for our Farm Service Agency (FSA) customers. Whether you are combining, planting winter wheat or other fall-seeded crops, or weaning livestock, please remember to be safe as you go about your activities.

For those of you who are planting, your FSA office will be ready to take your acreage certification information as you finish getting your fall-seeded crops in the ground. You can help us out with this process now by keeping a good record of what you plant, where you plant it and when you plant it. This information is critical for completing your certification. Some offices may already have given you maps to aid with this process. Please note you also can certify any newly-planted cover crop acres at the same time.

Our offices have been fielding questions on the timing of the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) Phase 2](#) payments. As you'll recall, the application deadline for that program was mid-July. Secretary Vilsack announced this week the start of the issuance of those payments, plus payments for the Emergency Livestock Relief Program. You can find more information on this

in the article below this column. Please note we do not have a timeline on the issuance of payments under the [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program](#).

That's all for this month. Best wishes for a successful harvest.

--Tim Divis

FSA Issuing \$1.75 Billion to Agricultural Producers Through Emergency Relief Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) this week started issuing more than \$1.75 billion in emergency relief payments to eligible farmers and livestock producers. These much-needed payments are helping farming and ranching operations recover following natural disasters in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Emergency Livestock Relief Program

FSA will issue more than \$581 million in 2021 and 2022 drought and wildfire emergency relief to eligible ranchers.

FSA is closing out the [Emergency Livestock Relief Program](#) (ELRP) for losses suffered in 2021. ELRP Phase Two payments are estimated at \$115.7 million. Ranchers who lost grazing acres due to drought and wildfire and received assistance through ELRP Phase One will soon receive an additional payment through ELRP Phase Two. This second payment will be equal to 20% of the 2021 gross ELRP Phase One payment. ELRP Phase Two payments to producers will be automatic with no application required. In April 2022, FSA staff processed more than 100,000 payments through ELRP Phase One and paid eligible ranchers more than \$600 million for 2021 grazing losses.

In 2022, ranchers continued to experience significant loss of grazing acres due to drought and wildfire. To help mitigate these losses, eligible ranchers will receive ELRP disaster assistance payments for increases in supplemental feed costs. To expedite payments, determine producer eligibility and calculate the ELRP 2022 payment, FSA is using livestock inventories and drought-affected forage acreage or restricted animal units and grazing days due to wildfire already reported to FSA by ranchers when they submitted their Livestock Forage Disaster Program applications. ELRP payments for 2022 losses are estimated at \$465.4 million and will be automatic with no application required.

Emergency Relief Program Phase Two

FSA is closing out Phase Two of the [Emergency Relief Program](#) (ERP) this week through the delivery of more than \$1.17 billion in crop disaster assistance payments to producers of eligible crops who suffered losses, measured through decreases in revenue, due to qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2020 and 2021. ERP Phase Two was intended primarily for producers of crops that were not covered by federal crop insurance or FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Previously, through ERP Phase one, FSA staff processed more than 300,000 applications and paid an estimated 217,000 eligible producers more than \$7.4 billion.

More Information

These programs represent a few of FSA's extensive commodity, conservation, credit, disaster recovery and safety-net programs. By the close of the fiscal year on Sept. 30, for all farm and farm loan programs — including vital access to [capital for distressed borrowers](#) — USDA, through the delivery of FSA programs, will have invested more than \$19 billion in America's agricultural producers with more economic support on the way in fiscal year 2024.

For more information on available FSA programs, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Dates to Remember

Oct. 2, 2023 – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) application closing deadline for coverage for rye, triticale, wheat in the 2024 production season

Oct. 9, 2023 – USDA Service Centers closed for federal holiday

Oct. 31, 2023 – FSA deadline for applications to the Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Nov. 10, 2023 – USDA Service Centers closed for federal holiday

Nov. 15, 2023 – Acreage reporting deadline for fall-seeded crops for 2024 program eligibility (including for NAP)

Nov. 15, 2023 – NAP application closing deadline for coverage for alfalfa, mixed forages and grass in the 2024 production season

****Please note any above NAP calendar reference may not be inclusive for all NAP-covered crops; NAP participants should contact their County FSA Office to confirm important program deadlines.*

Marketing Assistance Loans Can Help with Cash Flow Needs While Awaiting Marketing Window

Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, wool and honey.

MALs provide you with interim financing after harvest to help you meet cash flow needs without having to sell your commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2023 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, contact your [county USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Milk Loss Assistance Program to Aid Dairies Impacted by Disaster in 2020, 2021 and 2022

Program Signup Ends Oct. 16, 2023

USDA announced Milk Loss Program (MLP) assistance for eligible dairy operations for milk that was dumped or removed, without compensation, from the commercial milk market due to qualifying weather events and the consequences of those weather events that inhibited delivery or storage of milk (e.g., power outages, impassable roads, infrastructure losses, etc.) during calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), signup for MLP is open and runs through Oct. 16, 2023.

Eligibility

MLP compensates dairy operations for milk dumped or removed without compensation from the commercial milk market due to qualifying disaster events, including droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), and smoke exposure that occurred in the 2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years. Tornadoes are considered a qualifying disaster event for calendar year 2022 only.

The milk loss claim period is each calendar month that milk was dumped or removed from the commercial market. Each MLP application covers the loss in a single calendar month. Milk loss that occurs in more than one calendar month due to the same qualifying weather event requires a separate application for each month.

[Additional program information can be found here.](#)

FSA Reminds Direct Loan Borrowers of Assistance Options

Requests for Cash Flow-Based or Extraordinary Measures Assistance Must be Received by Dec. 31, 2023

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) continues to accept and review individual assistance requests from: (1) direct Farm Loan Programs (FLP) borrowers who missed a recent installment or are unable to make their next scheduled installment, and (2) borrowers who took certain extraordinary measures to avoid delinquency on their direct FLP loans.

FSA direct loan borrowers with qualifying FLP loans who are unable to pay their upcoming installments or have already missed a recent installment payment can request a cash flow analysis from FSA using a recent balance sheet and operating plan to determine their eligibility. **This assistance is currently limited to installments due August 1, 2022, through January 15, 2024.** If FSA determines that a borrower qualifies for cash flow-based assistance due to an inability to develop a feasible plan for the current production cycle, FSA will make a one-time credit to the borrower's account in the amount of the missed or upcoming direct loan installment(s). Consistent with other Section 22006 assistance provided to FSA direct loan borrowers, cash flow-based assistance is only available to borrowers who have not received prior IRA Section 22006 assistance that covered a forward direct loan installment.

Assistance is also available for borrowers who took certain extraordinary measures between February 28, 2020, through October 18, 2022, to avoid delinquency on their loans, such as

monetizing long term or essential assets, incurring additional non-FSA debt, or deferring other essential payments, resulting in reduced farm and household viability. If FSA determines that a borrower qualifies for extraordinary measures assistance, the borrower will receive a direct payment equaling the amount of funds obtained through the extraordinary measure(s) that were used to make the payment(s) to FSA, with a maximum payment being the full amount of the installment paid. Borrowers may also be eligible to receive a payment covering their next loan installment due on all FLP direct loans if they have not received prior IRA Section 22006 assistance that covered a forward installment.

Borrowers can submit requests for extraordinary measures or cash flow-based assistance in person at their local FSA office or by sending in a direct request using the farmers.gov 22006 assistance request portals at farmers.gov/loans/inflation-reduction-investments/assistance. All requests for assistance must be received by December 31, 2023.

Borrowers can learn more about extraordinary measures and cash flow-based assistance, including complete eligibility requirements, at farmers.gov/loans/inflation-reduction-investments/assistance.

FSA Loan Interest Rates

OPERATING/OWNERSHIP INTEREST (RATES FOR OCTOBER)

Farm Operating: 5.25%
Farm Operating - Limited Resource: 5%
Microloan Operating: 5%
Farm Ownership: 5.25%
Farm Ownership - Limited Resource: 5%
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 3.25%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.5%
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.75%

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN (RATES FOR SEPTEMBER AS OCTOBER NOT AVAILABLE AT TIME OF PUBLISHING)

3-year term: 4.5%
5-year term: 4.25%
7-year term: 4.125%
10-year term: 4.125%
12-year term: 4.125%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 6.375%

Section 22007 Program to Assist Those Who Experienced Discrimination

The application period is open for a financial assistance program under Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021.

The application deadline, originally set for October 31, 2023, has been extended to January

13, 2024.

Borrowers will have the option to apply for assistance online via 22007apply.gov or through a paper-based form. This program is not being administered at Farm Service Agency offices but by private companies with USDA oversight and supervision. Details about the program, including an application and e-filing portal, are available at 22007apply.gov. The website includes an English and Spanish language application that applicants can download or submit via an e-filing portal, information on how to obtain technical assistance in-person or virtually, and additional resources and details about the program.

Applicants can also call the free call center at 1-800-721-0970, or visit one of several dozen brick-and-mortar offices the program has set up around the country. Locations are provided on the program website and vendors will update the local events schedule with more information as it becomes available.

It is important to note that filing an application is free and does not require a lawyer.

If you want to get weekly updates on the program's events and progress, you can go to <https://22007apply.gov>, and subscribe to a weekly newsletter.

Cost-Share Opportunities Available Through Local NRCS Offices



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a wide range of cost-share opportunities that are offered through several different programs and initiatives. These include, but are not limited to, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), High Tunnel Initiative and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

These programs and initiatives are available to assist producers in a wide variety of sectors ranging from small-scale, urban specialty crop production, annual row crop production, organic production, forage production and livestock production.

Producers can work with NRCS staff to implement practices on certain areas of their operation or across their entire operation.

Practices include, but are not limited to:

- conversion from gravity to center pivot or sub-surface drip irrigation
- irrigation water management
- combustion system improvement
- high tunnel
- nutrient management
- pest management
- cover crops

- residue and tillage management, no-till
- livestock pipeline and watering facilities
- cross fencing
- pasture, range and hay planting
- brush management, including prescribed burn

For more information on these cost-share opportunities and how they can fit into your operation, contact your [nearest NRCS office](#).

USDA Launches Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program to Support Agricultural Employers and Farmworkers

The Biden-Harris Administration has announced that agricultural employers can begin to apply for a pilot program designed to improve the resiliency of the food and agricultural supply chain by addressing workforce challenges farmers and ranchers face. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in coordination with other federal agencies, is announcing up to \$65 million in grants available for the Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP Program).

The program will help address workforce needs in agriculture, promote a safe and healthy work environment for farmworkers, and aims to support expansion of lawful migration pathways for workers, including for workers from Northern Central America, through the Department of Labor's seasonal H-2A visa program. The program makes good on a commitment made and announced as part of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection and is funded by President Biden's American Rescue Plan.

[Read the full news release here.](#)



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Visit the Nebraska FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.
Visit the Nebraska NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov/ne.

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