



In This Issue:

- [Message from the State Executive Director](#)
- [FSA Offers Drought Assistance for Livestock Producers Through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#)
- [Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction](#)
- [FSA Offers Loan Servicing Options](#)
- [USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers](#)
- [The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys](#)
- [USDA Reminds New Mexico Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports](#)

Message from the State Executive Director

Howdy Friends,

Summer is gone, and Fall is upon us. I hope you all are doing well, and enjoying the activities of the season. As usual I have a few updates to present to you regarding the programs and loans that New Mexico FSA has to offer.

Loan Interest rates for September 2022 have been announced. FSA loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment, and storage structures or meet cash flow needs. Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Several positions are currently vacant throughout the state. Job announcements have been posted to www.usajobs.gov. We are currently advertising the following positions: County Executive Director in Training, State Program Technician, Urban County Executive Director, and Urban County Program Technician. If you know anyone who is interested in a career with the FSA, please visit the website for more details on the positions.

USDA is seeking input on a new grant program to strengthen the food supply chain, reduce irregular migration, and improve working conditions for farmworkers. We are gathering information to help shape a recently announced planned grant program focused on improving

the resiliency of our food and agricultural supply chain by addressing labor shortages in agriculture, reducing irregular migration through increased use of legal pathways, and improving labor protections for farmworkers. For more information on a listening session happening on September 28 & 29 pertaining to this grant, please visit fsa.usda.gov/farmworkers.

The people’s garden initiative is expanding its reach to gardens across the country. School gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural, suburban, and urban areas can be recognized as a “People’s Garden” if they register on the USDA website and meet criteria including benefitting the community, working collaboratively, incorporating conservation practices and educating the public. If you are interested in becoming part of the initiative, please visit usda.gov.

As a reminder, Microloan Assistance for Wildfire Disaster Recovery is now being offered. These loans offer a possible resource to provide short-term financial assistance to producers until other resources become available. Please contact your local FSA office to request additional information.

As we continue to work in the communities affected by this year’s severe wildfires, we want to make sure that every eligible applicant has the opportunity to apply for Emergency Forestry Restoration Program (EFRP) and Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) in San Miguel and Mora counties. The signup period lasts until November 7. If you have interest in these programs, please contact the local FSA County Office.

Sincerely,

Jonas Moya

OFFICE CLOSURES

- **Columbus Day - October 10**
- **Veterans Day - November 11**
- **Thanksgiving Day - November 24**
- **Christmas Day - December 26**

IMPORTANT DATES

Program	Announcement	Date
Organic Certification Cost Share Program	Deadline to complete application with supporting documentation	October 31
Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)	Application Closing Date for: Grass, Honey, Lettuce	December 1
Livestock Forage Program	2022 Application for Payment Deadline	January 30, 2023

Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP)	2022 Application for Payment Deadline	January 30, 2023
Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)	Application Closing Date for: Cabbage, Carrots, Spinach/Greens	February 1, 2023
Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)	2022 Application for Payment Deadline	March 1, 2023
Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program	Deadline to complete application with supporting documentation	TBD

FSA Offers Drought Assistance for Livestock Producers Through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)

If you've suffered above normal expenses for hauling feed or water to livestock or hauling livestock to forage/grazing acres due to the impacts of drought, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

For eligible producers in qualifying counties, ELAP provides financial assistance for:

- the transportation of water to livestock;
- the above normal cost of mileage for transporting feed to livestock,
- the above normal cost of transporting livestock to forage/grazing acres.*

**Hauling livestock one-way, one haul per animal reimbursement and no payment for "empty miles."*

Eligible livestock include cattle, buffalo, goats and sheep, among others, that are maintained for commercial use and located in a county where the qualifying drought conditions occur. A county must have had D2 severe drought intensity on the U.S. Drought Monitor for eight consecutive weeks during the normal grazing period, or D3 or D4 drought intensity at any time during the normal grazing period. Producers must have risk in both eligible livestock and eligible grazing land in an eligible county to qualify for ELAP assistance.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

For ELAP water transportation assistance, a producer must be transporting water to eligible livestock on eligible grazing land where the producer had adequate livestock watering systems or facilities in place before the drought occurred and where they do not normally require the transportation of water. Payments are for costs associated with personal labor, equipment, hired labor, equipment, and/or contracted water transportation fees. Cost of the water itself is not covered. The ELAP payment formula uses a national average price per gallon.

ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING FEED

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who incur above normal expenses for transporting feed to livestock during drought. The payment formula excludes the first 25 miles and any mileage over 1,000 miles. The reimbursement rate is 60% of the costs above what would normally have been incurred during the same time period in a normal (non-drought) year. **ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING LIVESTOCK TO FORAGE/GRAZING ACRES**

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who are hauling livestock to a new location for feed resources due to insufficient feed and/or grazing in drought-impacted areas. Assistance for Livestock transportation is retroactive to 2021 and available for 2022 and subsequent years. **Please contact your county FSA office for additional details.**

For calendar year 2022 forward, producers must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office **within 30 calendar days** of when the loss is apparent; producers should contact their county FSA office as soon as the loss of water resources or feed resources are known. For ELAP eligibility, documentation of expenses is critical. Producers should maintain records and receipts associated with the costs of transporting water to eligible livestock, the costs of transporting feed to eligible livestock, and the costs of transporting eligible livestock to forage/grazing acres.

ELAP also offers assistance to producers impacted by wildfire. Contact your county FSA office for more information on ELAP resources for wildfire losses. In addition, beekeepers also can benefit from ELAP provisions and should contact their county FSA office within 15 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent. For more information regarding ELAP, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities, and to make improvements essential to an operation.

Applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.

Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. If applying for a direct loan to finance a construction project, the applicant must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.

A surety bond is required when a contract exceeds \$100,000. An authorized agency official determines that a surety bond appears advisable to protect the borrower against default of the contractor or a contract provides for partial payments in excess of the amount of 60 percent of the value of the work in place.

Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant's farming operation or work schedule.

Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.

FSA Offers Loan Servicing Options

There are options for Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about your options.

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.

The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at nass.usda.gov/Publications and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be.

USDA Reminds New Mexico Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers in New Mexico 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 New Mexico:

November 15	Apiculture
December 15	Fall Seeded Grains
December 16	Grass for Grazing covered by NAP
January 15	Apples

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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