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Message from the State Executive Director

Greeting FSA Friends,

June officially marks the beginning of summer. As the weather heats up, please use caution when working outside and closely monitor your crops and livestock for any signs of heat stress or dehydration. Providing shade and adequate sources of water to your animals and crops can make a substantial difference in their performance and health.

I would also like to update you that the nomination period for FSA County Committee (COC) Elections began on yesterday, June 15, and runs until August 1. If you or a fellow farmer are interested in serving on your local County Committee, please visit your local FSA office for more information. County Committees play a critical role in the success of FSA. They help make determinations on programs, such as disaster assistance, hiring decisions, and assists with outreach, as well as ensures fair and equitable administration of FSA programs in their local counties.

On a national level we are also seeking nomination for four positions on the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. Nominations will be open to the public from May 15, 2023, to July 15, 2023. The 12-member Committee, which first convened in March 2022, is part of USDA's efforts to increase support for urban agriculture and innovative production. Member of the Committee provide input on policy development and help identify barriers to urban agriculture as USDA works to promote urban farming and the economic opportunities it provides in cities across the country.

In program news we are happy to inform you that U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) extended the deadline for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two and Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) to July 14, 2023, to give producers more time to apply for assistance. The original deadline was June 2. Click the [link](#) for the full details of the news release.

The Secretary of Agriculture announced that we are accepting more than 1 million acres in this year's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup. The results reflect the continued importance of CRP as a tool to help producers invest in the long-term health, sustainability, and profitability of their land and resources. A total of 178 offers were submitted, in New Mexico, with 148 being ranked as accepted with 35,370.06 acres potentially being contracted on October 1. County Offices are currently notifying participants. Participants with accepted offers will need to decide if they want their offer to be approved into a contract. As participants notify FSA that they want to proceed, FSA will reach out to NRCS so their staff can schedule appointments with participants to begin their conservation planning.

With the ever-changing policies, our county office staff is doing an exceptional job in keeping up with the old, new, and modified programs to better serve New Mexico farmers and ranchers. In going through the seasons with the different programs, it is very apparent that some FSA programs are simple, while others are more complex. In saying this, I want to communicate that New Mexico FSA staff is doing all they can do to administer the FSA programs correctly and with ease. We understand that being in agriculture is not easy and our goal as an agency is to provide additional tools to you through our programs and loans to make the hard times easier. We can get through this together.

Our FSA Conservation Programs have been very active from CRP, ECP and EFRP signups. Zoning in on ECP and EFRP, these recover programs have a standard policy that is part of the administration of the programs. With these programs, FSA coordinates with respective Technical Agencies depending on the national agreements between agencies. I would like to take this time to reiterate, FSA is the administering agency, which means FSA is the agency authority of ECP and EFRP. I have received many phone calls, visits, and inquiries regarding our EFRP program and would like to take a moment to explain the process and status of where FSA is currently.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP):

- FSA's Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) helps farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters. ECP does this through funding and technical assistance. Technical assistance for ECP is provided by NRCS.
- FSA's Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) helps the owners of non-industrial private forests restore forest health damaged by natural disasters. EFRP

does this by authorizing payments to owners of private forests to restore disaster damaged forests.

The technical assistance for EFRP is provided by US Forest Service. NRCS does not provide technical assistance on EFRP. ECP and EFRP were both offered early in the recovery process as these programs are established emergency (recover) programs. Both ECP and EFRP have certain processes and requirements. You can learn more about the programs and their processes and requirements at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/emergency-conservation/index> for ECP and <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/emergency-conservation/index> for EFRP.

In general, when an EFRP signup is held, landowners contact the local FSA Office to submit a Request for Cost Share. At that time, the request is submitted, the basic records and eligibility records are established and/or updated. This is the time where landowners, especially existing customers verify the ownership, operatorship, and location of the property that was damaged or destroyed by the natural disaster. Once the land and person criteria are reviewed and deemed eligible according to the program policy, then the request is referred to the respective Technical Agency. The TA will contact the landowner to schedule an appointment to visit the property and visit the landowner. Based on that visit the technical experts will create a forest restoration plan. Once the plan is returned to FSA, the projects need to go through an environmental impact analyses review to comply with NEPA and cultural resource review requirements. This type of review requires that FSA reach out to the State and Tribal Historic Preservation Office Divisions, which takes a minimum of 30 days. The 30 days begins when THPO and SHPO confirm receipt of the request. For San Miguel and Mora Counties, these requests are being sent in batches due to the number of cost share requests. Once determinations are received from SHPO and THPO offices, then FSA will be able to move forward with the application process. Regarding THPO reviews and specifically for the EFRP programs, in San Miguel and Mora Counties, we are working with six tribes in Mora County and five tribes in San Miguel.

The goal of our programs is to benefit our agricultural customers who have suffered from natural disaster and due to the regulated application process, it's not always soon enough. Since the inception of the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon fire, many agencies have established their own programs and/or collaborations. One thing that has yielded from the many programs is confusion. Although confusion has been brought on by many aspects, I wanted to clarify a few things that affect FSA:

- FSA administers the Emergency Forest Restoration Program and Emergency Conservation Program.
- The TA for these programs is "hired" on for their expertise.
- The purpose of these programs is to restore the damaged forest or farm/cropland.
- They are cost share programs with a payment limitation established in statute.

As of late, the FEMA Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Offices are offering opportunities for affected landowners to submit Notices of Losses to their [Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claim's Offices](#) in Las Vegas and Mora, NM. For more information on their opportunities, please visit their website. The NRCS has coordinated their efforts to team up with the Claim's Office to conduct the technical work.

I would like to highlight, the technical assistance NRCS is providing through FSA's ECP program ***is not*** associated with the Conservation Restoration Plans that NRCS is offering through their partnership with the Hermit's Peal Calf Canyon Claims office. Although the plans may be similar, the landowner can choose the path that best fits his/her situation. Practices not covered by one program, may be covered by the other; however, the same practices will not be covered by multiple programs. When working with these respective agencies, please communicate your participation in the offered recovery programs and/or plans to avoid a duplication of benefits.

As always, if you have any questions about our programs, please do not hesitate to contact our team. The New Mexico Farm Service Agency is here to support your operations, and we wish you a successful summer season.

Jonas Moya State Executive Director

OFFICE CLOSURE

- Juneteenth National Independence Day – June 19
- Independence Day – July 4
- Labor Day – September 4
- Columbus Day– October 9
- Veterans Day (observed) – November 10
- Thanksgiving – November 23
- Christmas Day – December 25

IMPORTANT DATES (Please check with your local office for other deadlines that may apply to your particular situation) [Service Center Locator](#)

- **Conservation Programs**
 - Conservation Reserve Program (Continuous) Signup 59 Ongoing
- **Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP)**
 - Sign Up Ends July 14
- **Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase 2**
 - Sign Up Ends July 14
- **Acreage Certification Reporting**
 - July 15 Deadline for reporting:
 - CRP acreage,
 - Potatoes (except Curry, Lea, and Roosevelt Counties),
 - perennial crops (not covered by NAP)
 - all other crops (contact [local FSA](#) Office)
 - July 31 Deadline for reporting Hemp
 - August 15 Deadline for reporting Beans

- **Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)**
 - Sign Up Ends July 26
- **Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)**

Sign up Ends September 30

USDA Develops Simplified Direct Loan Application to Improve Customer Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed a simplified direct loan application to provide improved customer experience for producers applying for loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The simplified direct loan application enables producers to complete a more streamlined application, reduced from 29 to 13 pages. Producers will also have the option to complete an electronic fillable form or prepare a traditional, paper application for submission to their local FSA farm loan office. The paper and electronic versions of the form will be available starting March 1, 2023.

Approximately 26,000 producers submit a direct loan application to the FSA annually, but there is a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-based application process. Coupled with the Loan Assistance Tool released in October 2022, the simplified application will provide all loan applicants access to information regarding the application process and assist them with gathering the correct documents before they begin the process. This new application will help farmers and ranchers submit complete loan applications and reduce the number of incomplete, rejected, or withdrawn applications.

In October 2022, USDA launched the Loan Assistance Tool, an online step-by-step guide that provides materials to help an applicant prepare their farm loan application in one tool. Farmers can access the Loan Assistance Tool by visiting farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool and clicking the 'Get Started' button. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser. A version compatible with mobile devices is expected to be available by the summer. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

The simplified direct loan application and Loan Assistance Tool are the first of multiple farm loan process improvements that will be available to USDA customers on farmers.gov in the future. Other improvements that are anticipated to launch in 2023 include:

- An interactive online direct loan application that gives customers a paperless and electronic signature option, along with the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns.
- An online direct loan repayment feature that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local Service Center to pay a loan installment.

USDA provides access to credit to approximately 115,000 producers who cannot obtain sufficient commercial credit through direct and guaranteed farm loans. With the funds and direction Congress provided in Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act, USDA took action

in October 2022 to [provide relief to qualifying distressed borrowers](#) while working on making transformational changes to loan servicing so that borrowers are provided the flexibility and opportunities needed to address the inherent risks and unpredictability associated with agricultural operations.

Soon, all direct loan borrowers will receive a letter from USDA describing the circumstances under which additional payments will be made to distressed borrowers and how they can work with their FSA local office to discuss these options. Producers can explore all available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting their [local USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Launches Loan Assistance Tool to Enhance Equity and Customer Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched a new online tool to help farmers and ranchers better navigate the farm loan application process. This uniform application process will help to ensure all farm loan applicants receive equal support and have a consistent customer experience with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) regardless of their individual circumstances.

USDA experiences a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, particularly among underserved customers, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-based application process. The Loan Assistance Tool is available 24/7 and gives customers an online step-by-step guide that supplements the support they receive when working in person with a USDA employee, providing materials that may help an applicant prepare their loan application in one tool.

Farmers can access the Loan Assistance Tool by visiting farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool and clicking the 'Get Started' button. From here they can follow the prompts to complete the Eligibility Self-Assessment and start the farm loan journey. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

The Loan Assistance Tool is the first of multiple farm loan process improvements that will be available to USDA customers on farmers.gov in the future. Other improvements and tools that are anticipated to launch in 2023 include:

- A streamlined and simplified direct loan application, reduced from 29 pages to 13 pages.
- An interactive online direct loan application that gives customers a paperless and electronic signature option, along with the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns.
- An online direct loan repayment feature that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local Service Center to pay a loan installment.

Background

USDA provides access to credit to approximately 115,000 producers who cannot obtain sufficient commercial credit through direct and guaranteed farm loans. With the funds and direction Congress provided in Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act, USDA is taking action to immediately [provide relief to qualifying distressed borrowers](#) whose operations are at financial risk while working on making transformational changes to loan servicing so that borrowers are provided the flexibility and opportunities needed to address the inherent risks and unpredictability associated with agricultural operations.

USDA Extends Application Deadline for Revenue Loss Programs to July 14

USDA is extending the deadline for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two and Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) to July 14, 2023, to give producers more time to apply for assistance. The original deadline was June 2.

Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is partnering with nine organizations to provide educational and technical assistance to agricultural producers and provide assistance in completing an ERP Phase Two application. The extended deadline will give producers more time to work with these partner organizations and apply for assistance.

Cooperative Agreements for ERP Phase Two Application Assistance Through cooperative agreements with FSA, the following organizations are providing free assistance to producers across the United States and territories.

- [Alabama State Association of Cooperatives](#)
- [Farmers Legal Action Group, INC.](#)
- [Flower Hill Institute](#)
- [Intertribal Agriculture Council, Inc](#)
- [North South Institute](#)
- [Renewing the Countryside II](#)
- [Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA](#)
- [Rural Coalition](#)
- [Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers CBO](#)

Depending on a producer's location, these nine partners can provide assistance either by phone or through online meeting software like Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

There is never a charge for technical assistance provided by FSA employees or cooperative agreement recipients. These organizations will assist producers with completing the

application and any follow-up future insurance coverage requirements. Producers who receive ERP payments are statutorily required to purchase crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for the next two available crop years. These organizations will not collect producer records, complete or sign the application form, or act on the producer's behalf in any way throughout this process.

Find more information on FSA cooperative agreements and contact information for the nine organizations please visit fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/cooperative-agreements/index.

PARP Application Assistance

USDA will host a webinar that focus on completing the PARP application form on June 8, 2023 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. eastern with members of the National Farm Income Tax Extension Committee. Register [here](#).

Eligibility

To be eligible for ERP Phase Two, producers must have suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event. Assistance will be primarily to producers of crops that were not covered by Federal Crop Insurance or NAP, since crops covered by Federal Crop Insurance and NAP were included in the assistance under ERP Phase One.

To be eligible for PARP, an agricultural producer must have been in the business of farming during at least part of the 2020 calendar year and had a 15% or greater decrease in allowable gross revenue for the 2020 calendar year, as compared to a baseline year.

FSA offers an online [ERP tool](#) and [PARP tool](#) that can help producers determine what is considered allowable gross revenue for each respective program. Producers should contact their local FSA office to make an appointment to apply for ERP Phase Two and PARP assistance.

Producers should also keep in mind that July 15 is a major deadline to complete acreage reports for most crops. FSA encourages producers to complete the ERP Phase Two application, PARP application and acreage reporting during the same office visit.

More Information

For more information, view the [ERP Phase Two Fact Sheet](#), [PARP Fact Sheet](#), the [ERP Phase Two-PARP Comparison Fact Sheet](#), [ERP Phase Two application video tutorial](#), [PARP application video tutorial](#), [myth-buster blog](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Offers Assistance to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs

USDA announced assistance for dairy producers with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP). ODMAP is established to help mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs, and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. Specifically, under the ODMAP, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is making \$104 million available to organic dairy operations to assist with projected marketing costs in 2023, calculated using their marketing costs in 2022. FSA began accepting applications for ODMAP on May 24, 2023. Eligible producers include certified organic dairy operations that produce milk from cows, goats and sheep.

How ODMAP Works

FSA is providing financial assistance for a producer's projected marketing costs in 2023 based on their 2022 costs. ODMAP provides a one-time cost-share payment based on marketing costs on pounds of organic milk marketed in the 2022 calendar year. ODMAP provides financial assistance that will immediately support certified organic dairy operations during 2023 keeping organic dairy operations sustainable until markets return to more normal conditions.

How to Apply

FSA is accepting applications from May 24 to July 26, 2023. To apply, producers should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#). To complete the ODMAP application, producers must certify to pounds of 2022 milk production, show documentation of their organic certification, and submit a completed application form.

Organic dairy operations are required to provide their USDA certification of organic status confirming operation as an organic dairy in 2023 and 2022 along with the certification of 2022 milk production in hundredweight.

ODMAP complements other assistance available to dairy producers, including Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and Supplemental DMC, with more than \$300 million in benefits paid for the 2023 program year to date. Learn more on the [FSA Dairy Programs webpage](#).

USDA Announces New Steps to Enhance Organic Markets and Support Producers

The USDA is taking additional steps as part of its commitment to strengthen the market for domestically grown organic goods, and to support producers seeking organic certification. These funding opportunities are part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic Transition Initiative](#), launched in fall 2022, which is a suite of offerings to help existing organic farmers and those transitioning to organic production and processing.

Consumer demand for organically produced goods surpassed \$67 billion in 2022, and multi-year trends of strong growth in the sector provide market incentives for U.S. farmers across a broad range of products. However, through public comment and listening sessions USDA has heard that producers may be less willing to commit to the three-year transition to organic certification because of risks related to inadequate organic processing, storage, and handling

capacity, cost barriers due to limited markets for rotational crops, a lack of certainty about market access, and insufficient supply of certain organic ingredients. The organic livestock and processed product markets depend heavily on imported agricultural products for feed grains and key ingredients. These are longstanding market issues that were brought into sharp focus due to the impacts of the pandemic and international conflicts in critical overseas organic supply regions, resulting in limitations on certain domestic organic products in the face of rising demand.

Cost Share for Organic Certification

As part of USDA's broader effort to support organic producers and in response to stakeholder feedback, this year the Farm Service Agency increased the cost share amount under the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which helps organic producers cover organic certification costs, to the maximum amount allowed by statute.

Specifically, FSA will cover up to 75% of costs associated with organic certification, up to \$750 for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and state organic program fees (California only). OCCSP will cover costs incurred from Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023.

FSA begins accepting applications for OCCSP Monday, May 15. Applications are due Oct. 31, 2023. To apply, producers and handlers should contact the FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#). As part of completing the OCCSP application, 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 departments of agriculture.

FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA will post a synopsis of the funding opportunity on [grants.gov](#) and will send more information to all eligible state departments of agriculture. Additional details can be found on the [OCCSP webpage](#). More information about these initiatives and more can be found at [farmers.gov/organic-transition-initiative](#).

Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

Producers are encouraged to call their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to ensure maximum use of their time and to make sure FSA staff is available to tend to their important business needs. Please call your local FSA office ahead to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that might be needed during your appointment. To find your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator](#).

Farmers.gov Features Help You Manage Your USDA Business Online

Farmers.gov provides a secure, single desktop- and mobile device-accessible authenticated portal for FSA, NRCS and RMA customer-facing features. As we've continued to add more content and capabilities, farmers.gov has quickly become the premier online hub for customers to find resources, submit applications and assistance requests, and make connections.

The farmers.gov portal also enables you to:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices and plans.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View detailed information on all previous and ongoing contracts.
- Have the authority as an FSA and/or NRCS customer to work in the portal and act on behalf of your active power-of-attorney entitlements and your current authorities for business entities.

You'll also receive an email letting you know that an NRCS document needs your signature, which you can quickly and easily sign online in the portal. These conservation features join several others already available through the farmers.gov portal, including the ability to view farm loan information and farm records. Capabilities include:

- View, print and export detailed farm records such as cropland, base acres, yields, CRP acres, land ownership details, and much more;
- View, print and export farm/tract maps that can be provided to lenders, chemical or fertilizer providers, and FSA for reporting acreage and crop insurance agents; and
- Export common land unit (field) boundaries as ESRI shapefiles.

To access your information, you'll need a [USDA eAuth account](#) to login to farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit [farmers.gov](#) and sign into the site's authenticated portal via the [Sign In/Sign Up link](#) at the top right of the website. In addition to the self-service features available by logging into farmers.gov, the website also has ample information on USDA programs, including pandemic assistance, farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs and crop insurance. Recently, USDA updated the navigation and organization of the site as well as added some new webpages, including "[Get Involved](#)," "[Common Forms](#)," and "[Translations](#)." [Learn more about these changes.](#)

USDA Simplifies Application Process for Noninsured Crops for Underserved Producers; Improves Risk Management Accessibility

Earlier this year, Farm Service Agency (FSA) made several updates to disaster assistance programs to give more farmers, ranchers, and Tribes equitable access to recovery programs. Specifically, we made changes to the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and simplified the application process for underserved producers.

This important policy change opens the door to risk management options for producers who may not have previously known about or been able to obtain coverage to protect their crops.

NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when natural disaster events cause low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting.

Our policy improvements mean that, beginning with the 2022 crop year, having a CCC-860 form, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, on file with FSA will provide producers with basic NAP coverage for all eligible crops. Specifically, FSA is waiving all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage for producers with a CCC-860 on file prior to the application closing date for each crop. These producers are also eligible to receive a 50% premium reduction if they elect higher levels of coverage before the application closing date for each crop.

At the end of January, FSA notified producers who already have the CCC-860 certification form on file regarding their eligibility for NAP basic coverage for 2022. If you suffered losses from natural disasters in 2022, you will need to contact your local FSA county office to file an acreage report, as well as a notice of loss, and an application for a NAP payment.

If you are interested in NAP coverage for 2023 and future years, your local FSA county office staff will be more than happy to provide information on eligibility, coverage options, and how to apply for additional coverage.

While these recent policy changes are intended to remove barriers to available benefits and help underserved producers manage risk, any producer of noninsurable crops can apply for NAP coverage by completing FSA form [CCC-471](#), Application for Coverage, and paying a service fee. Your local FSA office can verify application closing dates and ensure coverage for your crops is available.

FSA is committed to revisiting program policies and finding ways, within our authorities, to remove obstacles that prevent participation. Expanding NAP to ensure all producers of noninsured crops have access to risk coverage is the result of proactive input from producers and the willingness of FSA employees to think outside of the box for the benefit of the producers we serve.

Please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) for more information on NAP coverage options.

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