

In This Issue:

- [Message from the State Executive Director](#)
- [USDA Launches Loan Assistance Tool to Enhance Equity and Customer Service](#)
- [USDA Develops Simplified Direct Loan Application to Improve Customer Service](#)
- [USDA Reminds New Mexico Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports](#)
- [Farmers.gov Features Help You Manage Your USDA Business Online](#)
- [USDA Offers Assistance to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs](#)
- [USDA Announces New Steps to Enhance Organic Markets and Support Producers](#)
- [USDA Simplifies Application Process for Noninsured Crops for Underserved Producers; Improves Risk Management Accessibility](#)

Message from the State Executive Director

Greeting FSA Friends,

I wanted to remind everyone that we are still accepting nominations for county committee members for elections that will occur later this year. Additionally, FSA is unveiling a new GIS tool to make it easier for producers to participate in the nomination and election processes for county committee members, who make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally. Forms and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections. All nomination forms for the 2023 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2023.

We encourage urban producers, innovative producers and other stakeholders to submit comments for and virtually attend a public meeting of the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production on Aug. 1, 2023. The Committee is part of USDA's efforts to support urban and innovative agriculture, creating a network for feedback. Members include agricultural producers and representatives from the areas of

higher education or extension programs, non-profits, business and economic development, supply chains and financing. The committee last met in April 2023.

Earlier this month it was announced that there is a financial assistance application process for eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) directs USDA to provide this assistance. Since the law's passage, USDA has worked diligently to design the program in accordance with significant stakeholder input. The program website, [22007apply.gov](https://www.22007apply.gov), is now open.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The bottom line, long-term goal of the programs is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. This year FSA held signups for both General (Signup 60) and Grasslands (Signup 205). In New Mexico alone, over 22,300 acres were accepted for General CRP and over 246,876 acres were accepted in Grasslands CRP. We look forward to working with each CRP participant to conserve and protect our land. For General CRP participants, please ensure you are working with your local NRCS to develop the conservation plan. For Grasslands CRP participants, our County Offices have been contacting each participant, those whose acres were accepted and wish to move forward, please contact FSA upon notification. You too will also need to work with your local NRCS office to develop a conservation plan. All accepted offers with approved conservation plans and provided all eligibility is met will transition into contracts on October 1.

Jonas Moya
State Executive Director

OFFICE CLOSURE

- 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
- **Acreage Certification Reporting**
 - July 31 Deadline for reporting Hemp
 - August 15 Deadline for reporting Beans
- **Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP)**
 - 2024 Crop Coverage Purchase Deadlines:

- August 30 Deadline for Canola
 - September 1 Deadline for Aquaculture, Floriculture, Garlic, Onion, Sod Grass
 - September 30 Deadline for Barley, Oats, Rye, Triticale, Wheat
 - **Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)**
 - Sign Up Ends July 26
 - **Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)**
 - Sign up Ends September 30
-

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 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 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:

- July 15: 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

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.

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 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](#).

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.

New Mexico Farm Service Agency

100 Sun Ave. NE Suite 200
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Phone: 505-761-4900
Fax: 877-450-0860

State Executive Director:

Jonas Moya
jonas.moya@usda.gov

Executive Officer:

Brenda Archuleta
brenda.archuleta@usda.gov

Farm Loan Chief:

LeAnn Gibbs
lisa.gibbs@usda.gov

Farm Program Chief:

Joilynn Gray
joilynn.gray@usda.gov

District Directors:

Andrew Flores
andrew.flores@usda.gov
Oscar Rivera
oscar.rivera@usda.gov
Rhonda Mitchell
rhonda.mitchell@usda.gov

To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/NM