



Streamlining How You Find Information on Farmers.gov

If you've been to farmers.gov before, things may look a little different from the last time you were here. We've made some changes, to improve how you find information so that you can find what you need even more easily and efficiently.

The big, green navigation bar near the top of every page – it's different now. It opens up, to show descriptions and subtopics, making it quicker and easier to figure out what's where and reduce guessing. Why? Two reasons: First, farmers.gov has grown a lot over the years and the old navigation wasn't designed for the load. Second, because you asked for it. We analyzed your comments through the "Feedback" button on the site and tested our new designs and information organization with real farmers and ranchers through surveys and live testing sessions.



Along with the new website navigation, we restructured how our pages and topics are grouped and organized to help you easily access the information you need. We also relabeled some of our existing pages using more direct language. This means that pages or information you've used before may have different labels or be in new places.

Important changes:

- The old Fund page is now called Loans. The Loans page has information and resources about USDA loans, including the Farm Loan Programs.
- The Recover page is now Protection and Recovery. This page has information to help you prepare and recover from natural disasters, and to mitigate risk for your operation.
- The Conserve page is now Conservation. This page hasn't changed much and still has information on how to implement conservation practices, improve and preserve natural resources, and address conservation concerns.
- The Manage page is now Working With Us. This page connects you with resources that tell you how USDA can help you start, expand, enhance, or improve your agricultural operation.
- The Connect page has been replaced with Your Business, a guide to USDA resources that cater to your specific operation. Information that was on the Connect page has been moved to the Contact Us page and the Get Involved page.

We are always updating farmers.gov based on your feedback and to stay up-to-date with important USDA announcements. We've recently created some new webpages, and updated

some existing ones, to better equip you with the vital information you need. There are even more new pages coming soon, so stay tuned!

For farmers.gov, we don't guess what farmers and ranchers want from a website. We start by asking, then test our designs with volunteers who are also farmers and ranchers.

There's a feedback button on every page of farmers.gov. Based on your feedback, we looked for ways to make our site easier to use and to build the information that you're looking for. Live user testing sessions provide data, such as this heatmap, showing where testers tended to click during an exercise.

You helped us create the new navigation design, the new information organization, and told us how to speak using your words, and not legalese.

Check out farmers.gov today!

USDA Climate Hubs



The USDA Climate Hubs translate climate science into action, putting USDA research and resources into practice. The Hubs develop and deliver science-based, region-specific information and technology to natural resource and agricultural managers to help you make climate-informed decisions that reduce agricultural risk and build resilience to climate change. Our useful tools can help you plan for and manage weather- and climate-related risks.

The Climate Hubs offer a variety of resources to help you manage weather and climate-risks, including tools and technology, outreach and education, and risk assessments:

- Tools and technology to help you respond effectively to climate change impacts including drought, extreme weather events, and changing growing seasons. We provide coordinated technical support to enhance USDA program delivery, especially to underserved and vulnerable communities.

The following tools can help you make informed management decisions on your operation:

- [Adaptation Workbook](#): A flexible process to consider the potential effects of climate change and design land management and conservation actions to prepare for changing conditions.
- [Grass-Cast](#): A grassland and forage productivity forecast for ranchers and rangeland managers.
- [AgRisk Viewer](#): A new platform to access, analyze, and visualize historical crop insurance loss data to inform risk management efforts.
- [Seedlot Selection Tool](#): A web-based mapping application that uses current or future climates to match seedlots and planting sites.
- Outreach, education, and technical support on innovative ways to help lower barriers to adaptation, mitigation, and resilience-building:
 - [Hurricane preparedness and recovery commodity guides](#): Guides to help producers prepare for and recover from hurricane events.

- [‘As If You Were There’ 360 Demonstrations](#): A unique collection of virtual field tours to experience how others are adapting to and mitigating extreme weather and climate-driven events.
- [Pacific Northwest Biochar Atlas](#): Science-based guidance regarding biochar and its benefits, decision-support tools for biochar application, and case studies from early adopters.
- [Regional assessments of risk and vulnerability](#) and user-friendly information and data to support risk management and climate change response.

The Climate Hubs are a unique collaboration that connects USDA research and program agencies like the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Risk Management Agency (RMA), Economic Research Service, and Foreign Agricultural Service, among others.

We support USDA stakeholders by providing vulnerability assessments, curating decision-making tools, and facilitating stakeholder outreach on climate change and its impacts on working lands.

The Climate Hubs also amplify the work of other USDA agencies to ensure USDA is meeting the needs of customers like you.

- For example, the Southwest Climate Hub worked with RMA to provide more accessible, discoverable, and usable crop insurance data through the [AgRisk Viewer](#).
- Our Northern Plains Climate Hub developed a grassland and forage productivity model and [rangeland drought dashboard](#) working closely with agencies and partners.
- At our Northeast Climate Hub, the NRCS liaison developed a [webinar training](#) titled “*Helping farmers help the land through climate-smart farming*” highlighting NRCS resource concerns and practices.

There are 10 regional Climate Hubs across the nation co-located at Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) research units. To find your regional Climate Hub contacts visit climatehubs.usda.gov/contact. For more information on the Climate Hubs, visit climatehubs.usda.gov/. We are happy to help connect producers, USDA staff, and stakeholders to each other and to the best resources USDA has to offer.

USDA Builds Pandemic Support for Certified Organic and Transitioning Operations



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide pandemic assistance to cover certification and education expenses to agricultural producers who are certified organic or transitioning to organic. USDA will make \$20 million available through the new [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program \(OTECP\)](#) as part of USDA’s broader [Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative](#), which provides new, broader and more equitable opportunities for farmers, ranchers and producers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, certified organic and transitional operations faced challenges due to loss of markets, and increased costs and labor shortages, in addition to costs related to obtaining or renewing their organic certification, which producers and handlers of conventionally grown commodities do not incur. Transitional operations also faced the financial challenge of implementing practices required to obtain organic certification without being able to obtain the premium prices normally received for certified organic commodities.

Eligible Expenses

OTTECP funding is provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). Certified operations and transitional operations may apply for OTTECP for eligible expenses paid during the 2020, 2021 and 2022 fiscal years. For each year, OTTECP covers 25% of a certified operation's eligible certification expenses, up to \$250 per certification category (crop, livestock, wild crop, handling and State Organic Program fee). This includes application fees, inspection fees, USDA organic certification costs, state organic program fees and more.

Crop and livestock operations transitioning to organic production may be eligible for 75% of a transitional operation's eligible expenses, up to \$750, for each year. This includes fees charged by a certifying agent or consultant for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan.

For both certified operations and transitional operations, OTTECP covers 75% of the registration fees, up to \$200, per year, for educational events that include content related to organic production and handling in order to assist operations in increasing their knowledge of production and marketing practices that can improve their operations, increase resilience and expand available marketing opportunities. Additionally, both certified and transitional operations may be eligible for 75% of the expense of soil testing required under the National Organic Program (NOP) to document micronutrient deficiency, not to exceed \$100 per year.

Applying for Assistance

Signup for 2020 and 2021 OTTECP will be Nov. 8, 2021, through Jan. 7, 2022. Producers apply through their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office and can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364. Visit farmers.gov/ottecp to learn more.

Additional Organic Support

OTTECP builds upon USDA's Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) which provides cost share assistance of 50%, up to a maximum of \$500 per scope, to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the NOP. This year's application period for OCCSP ended Nov. 1, 2021.

Additionally, USDA's Risk Management Agency announced improvements to the Whole-Farm Revenue Program including increasing expansion limits for organic producers to the higher of \$500,000 or 35%. Previously, small and medium size organic operations were held to the same 35% limit to expansion as conventional practice producers. Also, producers can now report acreage as certified organic, or as acreage in transition to organic, when the producer has requested an organic certification by the acreage reporting date.

To learn more about USDA's assistance for organic producers, visit usda.gov/organic.

As USDA looks for long-term solutions to build back a better food system, the Department is committed to delivery of financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers and businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions. Since USDA

rolled out the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative in March, the Department has provided support to America's farmers and ranchers including:

- \$18 billion in [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2](#) payments, including a fourfold increase in participation by historically underserved producers since the program reopened in April 2021.
- Over \$35 million in assistance for those who had to depopulate livestock and poultry due to insufficient processing access ([Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program](#)).
- Over \$7 million to date for the logging and log hauling industry ([Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers](#)). Final payments are being calculated to be disbursed soon.
- \$1 billion to [purchase healthy food for food insecure Americans and build food bank capacity](#).
- \$350 million in [additional dairy assistance related to market volatility](#).
- [\\$500 million deployed through existing USDA programs](#).

For more details, please visit www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance.

Applying for NAP Payments



The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

In order to participate, you must obtain NAP coverage for the crop year by the applicable deadline using form CCC-471 "Application for Coverage" and pay the service fee. Application closing dates vary by crop. Producers are also required to submit an acceptable crop acreage report. Additionally, NAP participants must provide:

- The quantity of all harvested production of the crop in which the producer held an interest during the crop year
- The disposition of the harvested crop, such as whether it is marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended
- Acceptable crop production records (when requested by FSA)

Producers who fail to report acreage and production information for NAP-covered crops could see reduced or zero NAP assistance. These reports are used to calculate the approved yield.

If your NAP-covered crops are affected by a natural disaster, notify your FSA office by completing Part B of form CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment." This must be completed within 15 calendar days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date. For hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

To receive benefits, you must also complete Parts D, E, F and G of the CCC-576 “Notice of Loss and Application for Payment” within 60 days of the last day of coverage for the crop year for any NAP covered crops. The CCC-576 requires acceptable appraisal information. Producers must provide evidence of production and note whether the crop was marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your Rhode Island County USDA Service Center at 401-828-3120 Option 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.



Rhode Island USDA

60 Quaker Lane

Warwick, RI 02886

RI NRCS Field Office:	401-828-1300
RI FSA State Office:	401-828-3120 Option 1
RI FSA County Office:	401-828-3120 Option 2
RI FSA Farm Loan Team:	401-828-3120 Option 3
Risk Management Agency:	919-875-4880

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).