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| US Department of Agriculture |
| Rhode Island Service Center Newsletter - September 2022 |
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| [**Farm Service Agency**](https://fsa.usda.gov/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)**|**[**Natural Resources Conservation Service**](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)**|**[**Risk Management Agency**](https://rma.usda.gov/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) |
| **Message from RI State Executive Director J. Eric Scherer**

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| Eric Scherer“To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves.” - Mahatma Gandhi, Indian activist.USDA has designated all five Rhode Island counties as primary natural disaster areas which allows the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural operations in Rhode Island are experiencing severe and worsening drought conditions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover from these devastating natural disasters. Impacted producers should contact your local USDA Service Center (contact information below) to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.Agricultural operations in Rhode Island are experiencing severe and worsening drought conditions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover from these devastating natural disasters. Impacted producers should contact your local USDA Service Center (contact information below) to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?data=05%7C01%7C%7Ca3efcfe7c2f9439c315b08da8c3f4dcf%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637976500759644007%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&reserved=0&sdata=VeHxaAyIU%2F3M0ppY%2BKb%2Bwq76Io%2BFSezJ1J%2Fnsz%2FiIDU%3D&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdroughtmonitor.unl.edu%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), these counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of D3 Drought.  The **Application Deadline**: for drought assistance is April 17, 2023!**USDA Disaster Recovery Assistance**Producers who experience livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/livestock-indemnity/index?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (LIP). To participate in LIP, producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.The [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/emergency-assist-for-livestock-honey-bees-fish/index?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (ELAP) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed losses as well as water hauling expenses associated with transportation of water to livestock and transporting livestock to forage or other grazing acres. For ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days.Livestock producers may also be eligible for the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/livestock-forage/index?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) for 2022 grazing losses due to drought.  FSA maintains a list of [counties eligible for LFP](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/livestock-forage/index?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) and makes updates each Thursday.Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the [Tree Assistance Program](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/tree-assistance-program/index?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (TAP) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost during the drought. This complements [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/noninsured-crop-disaster-assistance/index?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (NAP) or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days.FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/emergency-farm-loans/index?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) to help them recover from production and physical losses. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs. Additionally, FSA has a variety of loan servicing options available for borrowers who are unable to make scheduled payments on their farm loan debt to FSA because of reasons beyond their control.**More Information**More disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including the Farmers.gov [Drought Webpage](https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/drought?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](https://www.farmers.gov/node/28989?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/FSA_DisasterAssistance_at_a_glance_brochure_.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](https://www.farmers.gov/fund/farm-loan-discovery-tool?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Information-Tools/Agent-Locator-Page?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local [USDA Service Center](http://www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov.](https://www.usda.gov/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)Your USDA Service Center is open for business!  Please call the RI FSA County Office at 401-828-3120 Option 1, the staff is waiting to help you! Best,Eric SchererRI State Executive Director, USDA, FSA |

**Gear Up for the 2022 Hurricane Season**

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| Hurricane season is officially underway, and it lasts until November 30. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts that the 2022 hurricane season will be above normal in the Atlantic and produce 14 to 21 named storms with six to 10 hurricanes and three to six major hurricanes.  Additionally, NOAA predicts that the eastern Pacific hurricane season will produce 10 to 17 named storms, with four to eight hurricanes and zero to three major hurricanes.On farmers.gov, visit the [Hurricane Webpage](https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/hurricane?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](https://www.farmers.gov/node/28989?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/FSA_DisasterAssistance_at_a_glance_brochure_.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](https://www.farmers.gov/fund/farm-loan-discovery-tool?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Information-Tools/Agent-Locator-Page?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).For FSA and NRCS programs, contact the Rhode Island USDA Service Center located at 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick RI 02886.  To reach the Rhode Island County FSA Office, dial 401-828-3120 Option 1.  To reach Rhode Island NRCS, dial 401-828-1300.  |

**USDA to Invest up to $300 million in New Organic Transition Initiative**

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| USDA Organic LogoAgriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced details of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) $300 million investment, including with American Rescue Plan funds, in a new Organic Transition Initiative that will help build new and better markets and streams of income for farmers and producers. Organic production allows producers to hold a unique position in the marketplace and thus take home a greater share of the food dollar.According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, the number of non-certified organic farms actively transitioning to organic production dropped by nearly 71 percent since 2008. Through the comprehensive support provided by this initiative USDA hopes to reverse this trend, opening opportunities for new and beginning farmers and expanding direct consumer access to organic foods through increased production.The initiative will deliver wrap-around technical assistance, including farmer-to-farmer mentoring; provide direct support through conservation financial assistance and additional crop insurance assistance, and support market development projects in targeted markets.More information is available at [USDA to Invest up to $300 million in New Organic Transition Initiative | USDA.](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2022/08/22/usda-invest-300-million-new-organic-transition-initiative?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) |

**New Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers**

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| A new multi-agency guide for USDA assistance for underserved farmers and ranchers is now available. If you are a farmer or rancher and are a minority, woman, veteran, beginning, or limited resource producer, you can use this booklet to learn about assistance and targeted opportunities available to you. This includes programs offered through the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency. The guide is also available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese on [farmers.gov/translations](http://www.farmers.gov/translations?utm_campaign=underservedfarmers&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).   |

**USDA Announces New Opportunities to Improve Nutrient Management****USDA** welcomed the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which will deliver $19.5 billion in new conservation funding to support climate-smart agriculture. This historic funding will bolster the new steps that USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced to improve opportunities for nutrient management. NRCS will target funding, increasing program flexibilities, launch a new outreach campaign to promote nutrient management’s economic benefits, in addition to expanding partnerships to develop nutrient management plans. This is part of USDA’s broader effort to address future fertilizer availability and cost challenges for U.S. producers.Through USDA’s conservation programs, America’s farmers and ranchers will have streamlined opportunities to improve their nutrient management planning, which provides conservation benefits while mitigating the impacts of supply chain disruptions and increased input costs.Specifically, NRCS efforts include:* **Streamlined Nutrient Management Initiative** – A streamlined initative will incentivize nutrient management activities through key conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts, and the Conservation Stewardship Program. The initiative will use a ranking threshold for pre-approval and include a streamlined and expedited application process, targeted outreach to small-scale and historically underserved producers, and coordination with FSA to streamline the program eligibility process for producers new to USDA. In addition to otherwise available funding at the state level, NRCS is targeting additional FY23 funds for nutrient management. NRCS is also announcing a streamlined funding opportunity for up to $40 million in nutrient management grant opportunities through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).
* **Nutrient Management Economic Benefits Outreach Campaign** – A new outreach campaign will highlight the economic benefits of nutrient management planning for farmers. The potential net savings to farmers who adopt a nutrient management plan is estimated to be an average of $30 per acre for cropland.  It is estimated that there are 89 million acres of cropland (28% of total U.S. cropland) currently exceeding the nitrogen loss threshold; and if all those acres implemented a nutrient management plan, the average net savings would be $2.6 billion. NRCS staff develop nutrient management plans to help producers use nutrient resources effectively and efficiently to adequately supply soils and plants with necessary nutrients while minimizing transport of nutrients to ground and surface waters. Producer information is available at farmers.gov/global-food-security.
* **Expanded Nutrient Management Support through Technical Service Providers Streamlining and Pilots** – New agreements with key partners who have existing capacity to support nutrient management planning and technical assistance will expand benefits and serve as a model to continue streamlining the certification process for Technical Service Providers (TSPs).  NRCS is also developing new opportunities to support partner training frameworks, nutrient management outreach and education, and new incentive payments through TSP partners for nutrient management planning and implementation.

Alongside the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and American Rescue Plan, the Inflation Reduction Act provides once-in-a-generation investment in rural communities and their infrastructure needs, while also responding to the climate crisis. The bill invests $40 billion into existing USDA programs promoting climate smart agriculture, rural energy efficiency and reliability, forest conservation, and more.Approximately $20 billion of this investment will support conservation programs that are oversubscribed, meaning that more producers will have access to conservation assistance that will support healthier land and water, improve the resilience of their operations, support their bottom line, and combat climate change. This includes:* $8.45 billion for EQIP
* $4.95 billion for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
* $3.25 billion for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
* $1.4 billion for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

For more information and resources for nutrient management planning, visit [farmers.gov/global-food-insecurity.](https://www.farmers.gov/global-food-insecurity?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)  Contact NRCS at your [local USDA Service Center](http://www.farmers.gov/service-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) to get assistance with a nutrient management plan for your land. |
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**Rhode Island USDA**60 Quaker LaneWarwick, RI 02886

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

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