



## In This Issue:

- [Message from the FSA State Director](#)
- [Message from the NRCS State Conservationist](#)
- [Important Dates & Deadlines](#)
- [Disaster Assistance Available for Livestock Losses](#)
- [Reminder: Insurance Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Through the Emergency Relief Program](#)
- [USDA Reminds Producers of Spring Application Deadlines for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#)
- [FSA Is Accepting CRP Continuous Enrollment Offers](#)
- [Farmers Can Now Enroll for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs the 2024 Crop Year](#)
- [Update Your Records](#)
- [Applying for FSA Guaranteed Loans](#)
- [Every Successful Farm Starts with a Plan](#)
- [Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers](#)
- [Deadlines Approaching for WholeFarm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm Program Coverage](#)

---

## Message from the FSA State Director

Greetings from the South Dakota State FSA Office!

As we are turning the corner on winter, the days are getting longer and the nights shorter. Other than a bitter cold snap in early January, and the never-ending fog, this winter has been tolerable. Obviously, many of us are concerned about adequate moisture for our spring pastures and crops.

During the month of February, we are celebrating National Black History Month along with Presidents Day.

While South Dakota doesn't have a significant number of Black farmers in the state currently; several Black Americans have made important impacts on American agriculture. The two names that come to mind for many are George Washington Carver for his work on crop rotations and Booker T. Washington for opening Ag education opportunities.

Two names most people would not recognize, but who made a lasting impact on agriculture are Henry Blair and Martha Jones. Blair was the second Black man to be granted a US Patent, his patent in 1834 was for a

corn planter. Jones, the first Black woman to be granted a US Patent, was awarded the patent for a corn husker sheller in 1868.

All of us in agriculture owe Blair and Jones a debt of gratitude for their innovation, their drive; and their commitment to making farming more efficient. They could not have imagined that their inventions would someday be precursors for a corn planter with 48 rows or a combine that can harvest thousands of bushels an hour. What makes their contributions even more remarkable were the times they lived in during the 19th century.

FSA offices will be closed Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup> for President's Day. While over the years multiple Presidents have cited farming or ranching in their background as a foundation for their presidency, it is the 16<sup>th</sup> President who stands out to me.

President Lincoln created the Department of Agriculture in 1862. Two and one-half years later, in what would be his final annual message to the Congress; Lincoln called USDA "The People's Department." At that time, about half of all Americans lived on farms, compared with about 2% today. But through our work on food, agriculture, economic development, science, natural resource conservation and a host of issues, USDA still fulfills Lincoln's vision - touching the lives of every American, every day.

I know everyone is getting crazy busy with lambing and calving season, however, please take some time to visit your FSA office to make your Farm Program Election for the 2024 crop year. The ARC/PLC sign up is open until Friday, March 15, 2024. Please don't wait until the last day!

As we are in the thick of calving and lambing season, please be safe; and remember if a weather disaster strikes, let your local FSA office know the impact it had on you and your livestock.

Sincerely,

Steve Dick  
State Executive Director  
USDA-Farm Service Agency

---

## Message from the NRCS State Conservationist

Greetings,

I was able to participate in the recent [South Dakota \(SD\) Soil Health Coalition's](#) and [SD Specialty Producers Association's](#) annual conferences. Whether you are a partner organization, tribal entity, large scale rancher or farmer, or specialty small acreage grower these statewide and other locally organized events provide great venues to learn of opportunities and discuss your conservation efforts. Other upcoming learning events include the [2024 National Pheasant Fest & Quail Classic](#) returning to South Dakota on March 1 with opportunities to discuss working agricultural land and wildlife habit. The inaugural [South Dakota Grasslands Summit](#) being held March 18 and 19 will focus on the economy, lifestyles, and heritage of the rich grasslands found across the state. We are fortunate in South Dakota to have many great learning [event](#) options.

It's also a great time to apply for financial assistance as we have significant increases in funding for our popular conservation programs from the [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#). Additionally, the new USDA [Organic Transition Initiative](#) includes a NRCS 'Organic Management' practice to provide technical and financial assistance during the years preparing for organic certification. Visit your [local NRCS office](#) to discuss how the IRA funds and Organic Transition Initiative can assist with your next conservation related effort.

Finally, I want to remind all readers that NRCS continues to hire staff in our state. Please tell those you know who may be interested in being a part of the NRCS mission of *delivering conservation solutions* to visit the NRCS [careers](#) webpage and create a profile on [USAJOBS - the federal government's official employment site](#). Doing so allows individuals to receive filtered job announcement alerts. Announcements are posted

periodically for a short period of time. We are currently offering positions for high school students. Additionally, [volunteers](#) can be an integral part of assistance and a learning opportunity. Interested persons should visit the links provided or a [local NRCS office](#).

Thank you to all South Dakota farmers, ranchers, land managers, landowners and conservation partners who are moving the needle of conservation in our state.

Sincerely,

Tony Sunseri  
State Conservationist  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

---

## Important Dates & Deadlines

February 19, 2024 - All UDSA Offices closed in observance of Washington's Birthday

February 29, 2024 - Deadline for LIP payment application and notice of loss for 2023 program year

March 8, 2024 - Deadline to submit application for FY24 NRCS Organic Transition Initiative financial assistance

March 15, 2024 - Deadline to apply for 2024 NAP Coverage

March 15, 2024 - Deadline to complete 2024 ARC/PLC enrollment and any election changes

---

## Disaster Assistance Available for Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to you for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

For 2023 livestock losses, you must file a notice and provide the following supporting documentation to your local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of grower's contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation
- Livestock beginning inventory documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle = 5%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under "normal" conditions.

In addition to filing a notice of loss, you must also submit an application for payment by February 29, 2024.

For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## **Reminder: Insurance Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Through the Emergency Relief Program**

Producers who received an Emergency Relief Program (ERP) payment need to meet ERP insurance linkage requirements by purchasing crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level or higher for the next two available crop years, which will be determined from the date you received an ERP payment and may vary depending on the timing and availability of coverage. The insurance coverage requirement applies to the physical location of the county where the crop was located and for which an ERP payment was issued.

Contact your crop insurance agent or local FSA county office as soon as possible to ask about coverage options. Producers who do not obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will be required to refund the ERP benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest. To determine which crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP, visit the [RMA website](#).

For more information, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## **USDA Reminds Producers of Spring Application Deadlines for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**

USDA South Dakota Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers of approaching application deadlines for purchasing risk coverage for some crops through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevented crop planting.

NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass and more.

Upcoming application deadlines for NAP coverage in South Dakota for the 2024 production season include:

- Spring Seeded Crops: March 15, 2024
- Spring Forage/Grazing Crops: March 15, 2024

NAP basic coverage is available at 55% of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. NAP offers higher levels of coverage, ranging from 50% to 65% of expected production in 5% increments, at 100% of the average market price. Producers of organic crops and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100% of the average market price at coverage levels ranging between 50% and 65% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

If a producer has a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (form CCC-860) on file with FSA, it may serve as an application for basic coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived. These producers may also receive a 50% premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected on form CCC-471, prior to the application closing date for each crop.

To learn more about NAP visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center.

---

## FSA Is Accepting CRP Continuous Enrollment Offers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#).

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

For more information, including a list of acceptable practices, contact your local county USDA Service Center at or visit [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp).

---

## Farmers Can Now Enroll for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs the 2024 Crop Year

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that agricultural producers can now enroll in the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#) programs for the 2024 crop year. Producers can enroll and make election changes for the 2024 crop year starting Dec. 18, 2023. The deadline to complete enrollment and any election change is March 15, 2024.

On Nov. 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the *Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024* (Pub. L. 118-22), which extended the *Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018* (Pub. L. 115-334), more commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill, through September 30, 2024. This extension allows authorized programs, including ARC and PLC, to continue operating.

### 2024 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual (ARC-IC), which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2024 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm it will continue for 2024 unless an election change is made.

If producers do not submit their election revision by the March 15, 2024, deadline, their election remains the same as their 2023 election for commodities on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the cropland.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

## **2022 Crop Year Payments**

This fall, FSA issued payments totaling more than \$267 million to agricultural producers who enrolled in the 2022 ARC-CO option and the ARC ARC-IC option for covered commodities that triggered a payment. Payments through the PLC option did not trigger for the 2022 crop year.

ARC and PLC payments for a given crop year are paid out the following fall to allow actual county yields and the Market Year Average prices to be finalized. These payments help mitigate fluctuations in either revenue or prices for certain crops. Payments for crops that may trigger for the 2023 crop year will be issued in the fall of 2024.

## **Crop Insurance Considerations**

ARC and PLC are part of a broader USDA safety net that also includes crop insurance and marketing assistance loans.

Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products.

Producers on farms with a PLC election can purchase Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider; however, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres for that farm.

## **Web-Based Decision Tools**

Many universities offer web-based decision tools to help producers make informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Producers are encouraged to use the tool of their choice to support their ARC and PLC elections.

## **More Information**

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also make elections and complete enrollment [online with level 2 eAuth](#).

---

# **Update Your Records**

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. You should also report changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase. You

should also report any changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC or other legal entity.

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their *Farm Operating Plan* on form CCC-902.

To update your records, contact your local county USDA Service Center.

---

## Applying for FSA Guaranteed Loans

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$2,236,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

For more information on guaranteed loans, contact your local county USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## Every Successful Farm Starts with a Plan

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners invest in their operations and local communities to keep working lands working, boost rural economies, increase the competitiveness of American agriculture and improve the quality of our air, water, soil and wildlife habitat.

Simply put – NRCS helps America's farmers, ranchers and forestland owners make conservation work for them.

Our Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program enables every acre of voluntary conservation applied through every program NRCS administers. It is the foundation of our financial and technical assistance delivery system.

Every farm and acre is unique and requires tailored management; and every decision maker has different management concerns and needs. Our technical assistance is one-on-one, personalized advice and support to help producers make the best decisions for their lands – and is offered free of charge.

This personalized assistance provides producers with the science-based data and tools to make informed decisions about where to target efforts to get the greatest return on their investment and ensure the long-term sustainability of American agriculture.

A comprehensive conservation plan is the first step to managing all the natural resources on a farm. NRCS walks the farm with the producer and develops options to address that producer's needs. Our toolbox includes aerial photos, soil surveys, engineering solutions and individual science-based analysis customized for the producer's property. The plan we develop with the producer combines existing production methods with recommended conservation practices to best manage that farm's unique natural resources, while allowing the producer to grow sustainably and productively. Supported by our expert analysis and recommendations, the producer chooses which option best meets their needs. These decisions become the producer's conservation plan, a step-by-step guide to reach their objectives.

This planning process also makes it easier to identify how and when the farmer, rancher or forest landowner could qualify for Farm Bill financial assistance to help them install conservation systems or receive incentives for trying new ones. We have the expertise to see our customers through this process. Because identifying when, where and how to implement practices is not plug and play.

The final plan provides a roadmap for the producer to meet their natural resource conservation goals. It includes helpful information on each of the producer's practices, such as how they benefit the farm, how to maintain them, and how they help the soil, water and wildlife.

By developing a conservation plan and adding conservation to the land, farmers, ranchers and forest landowners can protect the land's ability to provide for their family and future generations.

With offices in communities nationwide, NRCS staff provide the information, tools and delivery systems necessary for producers – in every state and territory – to conserve, maintain and improve their natural resources.

Contact your local [USDA service center](#) to find out more.

---

## Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers

A 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. [Download the guide here](#). The guide is also available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese on [farmers.gov/translations](https://farmers.gov/translations).

---

## Deadlines Approaching for WholeFarm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm Program Coverage

Don't wait! USDA's Risk Management Agency may have the coverage you need if you are running a smaller operation. The Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm are great risk management options for urban, organic and/or innovative producers.

[RMA Whole Farm Revenue Protection](#) provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on the farm under one insurance. This covers farms with specialty or organic commodities and or those marketing to local, regional, specialty, and direct markets, and allows diversified farms to insure all their crops under one policy. Check out Frequently Asked Questions on [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection](#). **Sales closing dates vary by region, and upcoming sales closing dates are Feb. 28 and March 31, 2024!** To purchase before your sales closing date, speak to a [crop insurance agent](#) as soon as possible.



[RMA's Micro Farm Program](#) gives smaller operations (up to \$350,000 in approved revenue) a more cost-effective way to insure all or most of their commodities under one policy. This is ideal for producers who participate in farmers markets and local food networks because post-production operations, such as canning, freezing, and processing can be used to calculate your farm's insurance guarantee. Check out Frequently Asked Questions on [Micro Farm](#). **Sales closing dates vary by region, and are Feb. 28, March 31, and April 15, 2024!** To purchase before your sales closing date, speak to a [crop insurance agent](#) as soon as possible.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at [rma.usda.gov](#) or by contacting your [RMA Regional Office](#).

Learn more about [crop insurance for urban farmers and innovative producers](#).



## USDA in South Dakota

200 4th Street SW  
Huron, SD 57350

### Farm Service Agency

**State Executive Director:**  
Steve Dick

**Administrative Officer:**  
Theresa Hoadley

**Program Managers:**  
Owen Fagerhaug - *Conservation*  
Logan Kopfmann - *Disaster Relief*  
Donita Garry - *Program Delivery*  
Ryan Vanden Berge - *Farm Loan Program*

**State Committee:**  
Troy Knecht, Chair  
Fanny Brewer  
Peggy Greenway  
Larry Olsen  
Hank Wonnemberg

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

**State Conservationist:**  
Tony Sunseri

**Assistant State Conservationists:**  
Ryan Forbes - *Acting - Ecological Sciences*  
James Reedy - *Engineering*  
Nathan Jones - *Soils*  
Jessica Michalski - *Acting - Programs*  
Colette Kessler - *Partnerships*  
Deke Hobbick - *Compliance*  
Denise Gauer - *Management & Strategy*  
Michael Beck - *Public Affairs*

Phone: 605-352-1160

Phone: 605-352-1200