



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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South Dakota USDA Newsletter - September 18, 2024

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Message from the FSA State Executive Director

Greetings from the South Dakota State FSA Office!

With summer hanging on with hot dry days, we are starting to see the corn and soybeans turn. Silage chopping is in full swing and in some areas, it has been

completed. For the East River farmers, these days are welcome after a summer of ample rainfall, however, for our West River ranchers, these days are a challenge with grass fires a real threat to thousands of acres and livestock.

If disaster does strike, FSA offers assistance through our [Emergency Conservation Program \(ECP\)](#) to producers who have experience damage to their fences either by fire or flooding. ECP also can assist with restoration to fields that experience silting from flooding. ECP has been implemented in the southeast counties of South Dakota to address the excessive flooding in June. To learn if your county is eligible, please reach out to your local USDA Service Center.

Just as East River has received adequate rains this past summer, the western third of the state has experienced drought. Three West River counties have hit D3 on the most recent [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), automatically qualify them for [Livestock Forage Assistance \(LFP\)](#). Counties that hit the D2 stage for eight consecutive weeks are also eligible. Unless we see dramatic changes, we fully expect a large portion of our West River counties to qualify soon.

Often, I have shared with folks the various milestones South Dakota FSA team members have reached. This month I want to highlight an individual who has given 41 plus years of service to South Dakota farm and ranch families. In 1983, a farm kid from Moody County set out to work for the Farmers Home Administration as a loan official in Parkston.

For those old enough to remember, the 1980's was not particularly a good time to be involved with agriculture. The experience from that decade has had a lasting impact on the folks that work for USDA.

After a few years in Parkston, followed by a very short stint in Burke, Joe Schultz settled into the Lake Andes office as a loan official, then on to the County Executive Director position for Charles Mix County. Joe has counseled and mentored hundreds of FSA team members as a District Director; Acting State Executive Director and Acting Administrative Officer.

Joe's approach to every challenge throughout his career is to look for the positives in the people he worked with; the farmers and ranchers he served; and in his community. His passion and commitment will be missed, but the mark he has left

over four decades will leave a lasting impact. Joe and his wife Sue are looking forward to seeing their granddaughter and catching a few fish on the River.

As we head into fall season, please be careful with harvest and working cattle.

Sincerely,

Steve Dick
State Executive Director
USDA - Farm Service Agency

Message from the NRCS State Conservationist

Greetings,

As we near the end of fiscal year 2024, I want to share a few highlights while also looking ahead to 2025.

This year, our professional staff in South Dakota met with producers across the state to develop approximately 3,600 [conservation plans](#) evaluating alternatives to meet producer's need on 2.6 million acres. Those plans can be used to apply for financial assistance from NRCS, partner entities, and other agencies.

Producers voluntarily enrolled 1.2 million acres of those conservation plans in 885 contracts of the NRCS [Environmental Quality Incentive Program](#) (EQIP) and [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP) obligating \$84.2 million for conservation activities while benefiting local economies! We were able to obligate \$15.8 million dollars (19%) of those conservation program funds assisting beginning farmers and ranchers with conservation activities on 148,000 acres. The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) will significantly contribute to available funds again in 2025. Applications for EQIP and CSP are accepted year-round but applications submitted by November 1 will be considered for 2025 fund obligations.

Not all producer needs are able to be addressed with NRCS financial programs and I encourage everyone to visit the new [Dakota Conservation Network website](#). This website brings together many partners in conservation to one searchable location. Whether you are part of a multi-generational grain farm, just acquired a tribal land

lease, or growing specialty crops, please visit [your local NRCS office](#) to discuss your goals and learn how an NRCS specialist or program can support your efforts.

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

September 18, 2024 - FSA State Committee Meeting

September 30, 2024 - Final day to purchase [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) coverage on Winter Rye

October 4 and December 20, 2024 – Batching date for [Agricultural Conservation Easements through the Investing in America Agenda | Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

October 14, 2024 - Holiday - USDA Service Centers CLOSED

October 15, 2024 - Deadline to submit Additional Forms for [Emergency Relief Program](#)

October 31, 2024 - [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#) deadline

November 1, 2024 - Batching date for FY2025 [NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program](#) (EQIP) and [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP).

November 15, 2024 - Acreage Reporting Deadline for Fall-Seeded Small Grains

USDA Offers Assistance and Resources for Recovery from and Prevention of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 in Dairy Herds

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the detection of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), also known as H5N1, in dairy cattle in 12 states including Colorado, Idaho,

Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Mexico, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming. To protect the U.S. livestock industry from the threat posed by HPAI H5N1 USDA is taking a number of actions with our federal partners.

On April 24, APHIS announced a federal order that includes mandatory testing for interstate movement of dairy cattle and mandatory reporting of influenza A detections in livestock. In addition to the Federal Order mandates, USDA provides several voluntary testing and monitoring options, including the [HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program](#) announced on May 31, 2024. APHIS has released a list of [requirements and recommendations](#) that apply to interstate moving of lactating dairy cattle, [testing guidance](#) for livestock, and answers to [frequently asked questions](#). Producers are encouraged to visit the APHIS HPAI Livestock Detection [website](#) for information about these programs and requirements, as well as the most comprehensive and timely updates about this rapidly evolving situation.

Assistance for Milk Loss

Confirmed H5N1 Positive Test Results Required for Recovery Assistance

Producers who incur milk losses in their dairy herds due to HPAI H5N1 can now apply for financial assistance through the USDA's updated Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) expanded ELAP policy through the rule-making process to assist with financial losses resulting from reduced milk production when cattle are removed from commercial milking in dairy herds having a confirmed positive H5N1 test. Positive tests must be confirmed through the USDA's APHIS' National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).

To apply, **producers need to submit** the following to FSA:

- Proof of herd infection through a confirmed positive H5N1 test (based on USDA's APHIS [H5N1 case definition](#)) on individual animal or bulk tank samples confirmed by APHIS' NVSL;
- A notice of loss indicating the date when the loss is apparent, which is the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test; and

- An application for payment certifying the number of eligible adult dairy cows removed from production, the month the cows were removed from production, and the producer's share in the milk production.

The final date to file a notice of loss and application for payment for eligible losses is 30 days after the end of the prior calendar year, which is **January 30**.

Note: *To determine livestock and producer eligibility for ELAP H5N1 assistance, to submit an application or if you've not previously conducted business with FSA, contact your local FSA county office for details. [Find your local office](#). Other online resources include [frequently asked questions](#) and a [fact sheet](#).*

Loans for Biosecurity Implementation

FSA also provides direct and guaranteed loans for farmers and ranchers that can assist with implementation of biosecurity measures for their operations. Loans can assist with:

- Installing physical barriers to facilitate quarantine, to prevent livestock interaction with wildlife, and to prevent unauthorized access by visitors
- Purchase of disinfectant, footbaths, and disposable footwear and clothing;
- Veterinary costs related to vaccination and general animal health;
- Testing of feed and water sources for toxins and other disease;
- Costs associated with responsible manure disposal and management;
- Costs associated with cleaning and disinfecting livestock transportation equipment; and
- Other biosecurity measures recommended by USDA or other applicable agencies.

To learn more about loans, producers can use the:

- [Loan Assistance Tool](#) – helps producers better navigate the farm loan process. The online Loan Assistance Tool provides producers needing agricultural financing with an interactive, step-by-step guide.

- [Farm Loans Overview Factsheet](#) – provides an overview of all FSA direct and guaranteed loans, and eligibility requirements.
- [Farm Loans Homepage](#) – gives in-depth farm loan information, including fact sheets, for those who don't want to use the online Loan Assistance Tool.

To learn more about ELAP or farm loans, producers should contact the FSA at the [local USDA Service Center](#).

To learn more about APHIS requirements and resources, visit APHIS' [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) Detections in Livestock webpage](#).

USDA Reminds South Dakota Livestock Producers of Available Drought Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds drought-impacted producers in State that they may be eligible for assistance through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#).

For eligible livestock in qualifying counties, ELAP provides financial assistance for:

- the transportation of water to livestock;
- the above normal cost of mileage for transporting feed to livestock; and
- the above normal cost of transporting livestock to forage/grazing acres.*
**Hauling livestock both ways starting in 2023, one haul per animal reimbursement and no payment for "empty miles."*

Eligible livestock include cattle, bison, goats and sheep, among others, that are maintained for commercial use and located in a county where qualifying drought conditions occur. A county must have had D2 severe drought intensity on the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for eight consecutive weeks during the normal grazing period, or D3 or D4 drought intensity at any time during the normal grazing period. Producers must have risk in both eligible livestock and eligible grazing land in an eligible county to qualify for ELAP assistance.

Transporting Water

Producers must be transporting water to eligible livestock on eligible grazing land where adequate livestock watering systems or facilities were in place before the

drought occurred and where water transportation is not normally required. ELAP covers costs associated with personal labor, equipment, hired labor, and contracted water transportation fees. Cost of the water itself is not covered. ELAP covers \$0.07 per gallon to transport water.

Transporting Feed

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who incur above normal expenses for transporting feed to livestock during drought. The payment formula excludes the first 25 miles and any mileage over 1,000 miles. The reimbursement rate is 60% of the cost above what would normally would have been incurred during the same time period in a normal (non-drought) year.

Livestock feed that is transported to livestock located on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is eligible if the producer has an approved conservation plan with acceptable grazing practices developed in coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service

The payment rate to transport feed is \$6.60/ loaded mile for expenses above what would have normally been incurred.

Transporting Livestock

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who are hauling livestock to a new location for feed resources due to insufficient feed or grazing in drought-impacted areas. As with transporting feed, the payment formula for transporting livestock excludes the first 25 miles and any mileage over 1,000 miles. The reimbursement rate is 60% of the costs above what would normally have been incurred during the same time period in a normal (non-drought) year.

The payment rate to transport livestock is \$6.60/loaded mile for expenses above what would have normally been incurred and covers hauling livestock one-way, one haul per animal reimbursement and no payment for “empty miles.”

An [online tool](#) is now available to help ranchers document and estimate payments to cover feed and livestock transportation costs caused by drought.

Reporting Losses

Producers should contact FSA as soon as the loss of water or feed resources are known.

For ELAP eligibility, documentation of expenses is critical. Producers should maintain records and receipts associated with the costs of transporting water to eligible livestock, the costs of transporting feed to eligible livestock, the costs of additional feed purchases, and the costs of transporting eligible livestock to forage or other grazing acres.

More Information

Producers interested in ELAP assistance can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for programs.

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 local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

USDA Now Accepting Applications for Available Funds to Help Cover Organic Certification Costs

Through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will cover up to 75% of organic certification costs at a maximum of \$750 per certification category. FSA is now accepting applications, and organic producers and handlers should apply for OCCSP by the Oct. 31, 2024, deadline for eligible expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024. FSA will issue payments as applications are received and approved.

OCCSP was part of a [broader organic announcement](#) made by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on May 15, 2024, which also included the Organic Market Development Grant program and Organic Transition Initiative.

Eligible Applicants, Expenses and Categories

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of organic agricultural commodities for expenses incurred obtaining or maintaining organic certification under USDA's [National Organic Program](#). Eligible OCCSP applicants include any certified organic producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Cost share assistance covers expenses including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, inspector travel expenses, user fees, sales assessments and postage. OCCSP pays a maximum of \$750 per certification category for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling, and state organic program fees (California only).

How to Apply

To apply, producers and handlers should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#) and be prepared to provide documentation of organic certification and eligible expenses. OCCSP applications can also be submitted through participating state departments of agriculture. For more information, visit the [OCCSP](#) webpage.

Opportunity for State Departments of Agriculture

FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA posted a [funding opportunity summary on grants.gov](#) and will electronically mail the Notice of Funding Opportunity to all eligible state departments of agriculture. Applications are due July 12, 2024.

If a state department of agriculture chooses to participate in OCCSP, both the state department of agriculture and FSA county offices in that state will accept OCCSP applications and make payments to eligible certified operations. Producers or handlers can receive OCCSP assistance from either FSA or the participating state department of agriculture but not both.

More Information

USDA offers other assistance for organic producers, including the [Organic Transition Initiative \(OTI\)](#), which includes direct farmer assistance for organic production and processing and conservation. For more information on organic agriculture, visit farmers.gov/organic.

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and view other farm records data and customer information by logging into their [farmers.gov account](#). If you don't have an account, sign up today.

Obtaining Payments Due to Deceased Producers

In order to claim a Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment on behalf of a deceased producer, all program conditions for the payment must have been met before the applicable producer's date of death.

If a producer earned a FSA payment prior to his or her death, the following is the order of precedence for the representatives of the producer:

- administrator or executor of the estate
- the surviving spouse
- surviving sons and daughters, including adopted children
- surviving father and mother
- surviving brothers and sisters
- heirs of the deceased person who would be entitled to payment according to the State law

For FSA to release the payment, the legal representative of the deceased producer must file a form FSA-325 to claim the payment for themselves or an estate. The county office will verify that the application, contract, loan agreement, or other similar form requesting payment issuance, was signed by the applicable deadline by the deceased or a person legally authorized to act on their behalf at that time of application.

If the application, contract or loan agreement form was signed by someone other than the deceased participant, FSA will determine whether the person submitting the form has the legal authority to submit the form.

Payments will be issued to the respective representative's name using the deceased program participant's tax identification number. Payments made to representatives are subject to offset regulations for debts owed by the deceased.

FSA is not responsible for advising persons in obtaining legal advice on how to obtain program benefits that may be due to a participant who has died, disappeared or who has been declared incompetent.

Report Banking Changes to FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to receive timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for any reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2019 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2020. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

Disaster Set-Aside Program for Farm Loan Borrowers

Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and relieves immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment/s needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale.

Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

For more information, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Beginners Guide to Crop Insurance

Don't know much about Federal crop insurance, but you want to learn more?

Crop insurance is a risk management strategy that farmers use to protect their livelihoods. By purchasing a policy through a crop insurance agent, farmers are financially protected if there are losses due to a covered cause of loss. It's not so different from car or homeowners insurance.

Start your journey out right by reading RMA's [Beginners Guide to Crop Insurance](#).

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[Get Started at Your USDA Service Center | Farmers.gov](#)

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