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Farm Service Agency

Disaster Assistance for 2023 Livestock Forage Losses

Producers in St. Croix and St. Thomas County are eligible to apply for 2023 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on improved pasture.

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land.

County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the St. Croix County USDA Service Center at 340.773.9146 ext. 100 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Beginning Farmer Loan Opportunity

Accessing capital to begin, extend or support an agriculture operation can be especially challenging to new producers. Farm Service Agency's "Beginning Farmer" direct and guaranteed loan programs provide an opportunity for qualified applicants to secure loans from funding set aside for producers who meet the following conditions:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

For more information contact, contact your St. Croix County USDA Service Center at 340-773-9146 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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 St. Croix County USDA Service Center at 340.773.9146.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program office in Puerto Rico

The application period is now open for a new financial assistance program under Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. The application process will close on October 31, 2023.

Borrowers will have the option to apply for assistance and find additional details online via 22007apply.gov or through a paper-based form. The [website](#) includes an English and Spanish language application that applicants can download or submit via an e-filing portal, information on how to obtain technical assistance in-person or virtually, and additional resources and details about the program. Applicants can also call the free call center at 1-800-721-0970. It is important to note that filing an application is FREE and does not require a lawyer.

Use the following information to contact the Puerto Rico office:

USDA Discrimination and Financial Assistance Program – San Juan Office District View, The Workplace 450 Avenida de la Constitucion, Suite 200 San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Phone: 787-919-7300

Email: conniechaim@gmail.com or constancechaimpsyd@gmail.com.

The USDA-NRCS Science & Technology Training Library Offers Pollinator Seminars in Spanish

The [Conservation Webinar Portal](#), a service of the USDA National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the NRCS East National Technology Support Center (ENTSC) and other partners, hosts the NRCS Science & Technology Training Library with the objective of providing national, regional, and state natural resource conservation professionals with convenient online training on the latest natural resource conservation research and best practices. The virtual library provides live and on-demand webinars on multi-discipline topics by specialists primarily for the East service area states and the Caribbean.

The following seminars will be held in Spanish throughout August 2023:



- *Parte 1. Conservación de polinizadores 101 - 16 de agosto del 2023 (2:00pm US/Eastern)*
- *Parte 2. Conservación de polinizadores e insectos beneficiosos en tierras agrícolas - 23 de agosto del 2023 (2:00pm US/Eastern)*
- *Parte 3. Biodiversidad climáticamente inteligente y conservación del carbono en tierras agrícolas - 30 de agosto del 2023 (2:00pm US/Eastern)*
- *Parte 4. Conservación de polinizadores y plantaciones de hábitat climáticamente inteligentes en granjas urbanas y jardines comunitarios - 6 de septiembre del 2023 (2:00pm US/Eastern)*

The Webinar Portal was developed by Southern Regional Extension Forestry (SREF) through a partnership with North Carolina State University's Extension Forest Resources, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, the USDA Forest Service, the USFS Wood Innovations program, the USDA-NRCS, the USDA NRCS East National Technology Support Center, the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources and other participating land-grant universities and professional accrediting organizations.

For more information, visit www.conservationwebinars.net, you may also [subscribe here](#) to stay informed about upcoming "Live" and "Premier On-Demand" webinars that you may be interested in.

USDA Invests \$7.4 Million in 25 Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Efforts

Mercy Crops' *Proyecto de Agricultura Urbana Participativa II (AGRUPAR II)* in Puerto Rico, is one of the 25 selected projects.

USDA is investing more than \$7.4 million in grants to support community gardens and nonprofit farms, increase food production and access in economically distressed communities, provide job training and education, and develop business plans and zoning. [Learn more.](#)



[Mercy Crops'](#) project will address food insecurity in marginalized urban communities by providing technical knowledge, infrastructure support, digital technologies, and increased social cohesion through the adoption of climate-smart urban agriculture best practices. *AGRUPAR II* will provide a space where beneficiaries of the program such as youth, children, people with disabilities, elderly and low-income families can learn the fundamentals of climate-smart urban agriculture and how to develop their own urban farms with limited resources. The project will improve the access and affordability of high nutritional value, fresh food within low-income urban communities across Puerto Rico including Luquillo and Ponce and including community gardens and agroforestry projects that will be located in urban areas of Puerto Rico, specifically, in the Fortuna community in Luquillo and downtown Ponce.



USDA St. Croix Service Center

Farm Service Agency (FSA) USVI
4401 Estate Sion Farm, Suite 2
Christiansted, VI 00820
340-773-9146 x100

Mark Carlton, District Director

Mark Carlton 352-448-2310
fmark.carlton2@usda.gov

Madison Charles, Program Technician

Madison Charles 340-773-9146 ext. 100
madison.charles@usda.gov

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