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## Dates to Remember

**September 4, 2023:** USDA Offices Closed for Labor Day

**September 15, 2023:** [Dane Demo Farms Kickoff Event](#)

**September 30, 2023:** [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) Deadline for 2024 crop year - alfalfa, birdsfoot/trefoil, clover, garlic, grass, mixed forage, rhubarb, triticale, vetch, flowers, Christmas trees, fin fish, ginseng, turf grass sod and wild rice.

**September 30, 2023:** Acreage Reporting for 2024 crop year for value-loss and controlled environment crops (except nursery).

**September 30, 2023:** Deadline to purchase [USDA Risk Management Agency's Margin Protection Coverage](#).

**October 9, 2023:** USDA Offices Closed for Columbus Day

**November 1, 2023:** Deadline to apply for the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP).

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## USDA Offers Drought Impacted State Farmers and Ranchers Immediate Disaster Assistance

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Wisconsin Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers of federal farm program benefits that may be available to help eligible producers recover from drought.

FSA offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts during drought or similar qualifying natural disasters.

Available programs and loans include:

[Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) provides assistance to Livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land. To participate in LFP producers must own, cash lease, or contract grow eligible livestock, provide pasture or grazing land to eligible livestock on the beginning date of the qualifying drought, certify that they suffered a grazing loss due to drought, and submit an acreage report to FSA for all grazing land for which a grazing loss is being claimed. FSA maintains a list of [counties eligible for LFP](#) and makes updates each Thursday.

[Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#) provides eligible producers with compensation for expenses associated with transporting water or feed to livestock, transporting livestock to forage or other grazing acres, or purchasing feed, above normal, to sustain honeybees. For ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss within 30 days for livestock, feed and water transportation costs and within 15 days for honeybee losses.

[Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#) authorizes producers to conduct [Emergency Haying and Grazing](#) activities during times of drought. Grazing activities can occur during the Primary Nesting Season (May 15<sup>th</sup> through August 1<sup>st</sup>), while producers are first eligible to Hay beginning August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Producers must request and receive approval from the Farm Service Agency before beginning any activities.

[Emergency Conservation Program \(ECP\)](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program \(EFRP\)](#) assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore fencing, remove debris, replace damaged irrigation system, land leveling and more. FSA has updated ECP policy to permit advance payments up to 25% of costs for all ECP practices.

[Emergency Loans](#) - FSA offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](#), including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers who cannot secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](#) 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.

[Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#) provides cost-share assistance to orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost during the drought. This complements [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) 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.



More Information found on [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov), the [Drought Webpage](#), [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Loan Assistance Tool](#) 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](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their [local USDA Service Center](#).

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## Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

Current loan rates as of September 1, 2023.

### Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	5.125%
Farm Operating - Microloan	5.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.000%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	5.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	3.000%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%

### Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):

3-year FSFL	4.500%
5-year FSFL	4.250%
7-year FSFL	4.125%
10-year FSFL	4.125%
12-year FSFL	4.125%

Please visit the [Farm Loan Program](#) webpage for more information.

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## USDA Updates Livestock Disaster Payment Rate to Assist Producers Hard-Hit by Heat and Humidity

The USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced today it is updating the [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#) payment rate to support livestock producers in the Midwest who have lost cattle to the extreme heat and humidity experienced this summer. To help indemnify ranchers to reflect a trend towards higher cattle weights in feedlots, the 2023 LIP payment

rate for beef calves over 800 pounds will increase from \$1244 per head to \$1618, an increase of \$374.

LIP provides benefits to livestock owners and some contract growers for livestock deaths exceeding normal mortality from eligible adverse weather events, certain predation losses and reduced sales prices due to injury from an eligible loss. Indemnity payments are made at a rate of 75% of the prior year's average fair market value of the livestock.

The updated LIP payment rate is effective immediately and will be applied retroactively starting Jan. 1, 2023, for all eligible causes of loss including excessive heat, tornado, winter storms, and other qualifying adverse weather. Producers who have already received LIP payments for 2023 losses will receive an additional payment, if applicable, commensurate with this updated rate. For details on eligibility and payment rates, review the [LIP fact sheet](#).

FSA recognizes that an annual update of LIP payment rates does not account for the volatile nature of livestock markets and is further exploring flexibilities to establish more current payment rates.

#### **More Information**

On [farmers.gov](#), [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Loan Assistance Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their [local USDA Service Center](#).

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## **Wisconsin Conservation Partners Celebrate a Groundbreaking Easement Closing Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program**

Several key partnership stakeholders from county Land and Water Departments, land trusts, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, and Wisconsin Natural Resources Conservation Service visited with Kewaskum, Wisconsin farmer, David Lettow, on his family's dairy farm in the Milwaukee Watershed area to celebrate the historic easement closing and acknowledge the work and effort put into the multi-agency collaboration made possible through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

[Click here to read the full article](#)

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# Wisconsin Farm Service Agency

8030 Excelsior Drive  
Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53717

Phone: 608-662-4422

## State Executive Director

Gene Schriefer  
[eugene.schriefer@usda.gov](mailto:eugene.schriefer@usda.gov)

## Farm Loan Chief

Tom Brandt  
[tom.brandt@usda.gov](mailto:tom.brandt@usda.gov)

## Farm Program Chief

Greg Biba  
[greg.biba@usda.gov](mailto:greg.biba@usda.gov)

## Farm Program Chief

John Palmer  
[john.palmer@usda.gov](mailto:john.palmer@usda.gov)

## State Committee:

Josh Tranel  
Clara Hedrich  
Tina Hinchley  
Joe Koch  
Heidi Randall

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