



Wisconsin Farm Service Agency - August 2023

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Dates to Remember

August 9-10, 2023: [2023 Wisconsin & Minnesota Cooperative Soil Survey Workshop](#) in River Falls, Wisconsin.

August 11, 2023: Deadline to apply for [Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance](#).

September 4, 2023: USDA Offices Closed for Labor Day

USDA Offers Drought Impacted State Farmers and Ranchers Immediate Disaster Assistance

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 15th through August 1st), while producers are first eligible to Hay beginning August 2nd. 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](#), 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](#).

Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

Current loan rates as of August 1, 2023.

Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	4.875%
Farm Operating - Microloan	4.875%
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	4.375%
5-year FSFL	4.125%
7-year FSFL	4.000%
10-year FSFL	3.875%
12-year FSFL	3.875%

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

USDA Extends Deadline for Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Until August 11

USDA's Farm Service Agency is extending the deadline for the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) to Aug. 11, 2023. This extension gives organic dairy producers more than two additional weeks to apply for the program. ODMAP helps producers mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs, and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. This assistance will help keep organic dairy operations sustainable until markets return to more normal conditions.

Organic dairy producers should apply by August 11, 2023, at their local USDA Service Center. [Learn more.](#)

USDA Accepts Nearly 2.7 Million Acres in Grassland CRP Signup, Bringing the Program Closer to Acreage Cap

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting offers for nearly 2.7 million acres from agricultural producers and private landowners through this year's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grassland signup. This program allows producers and landowners to continue grazing and haying practices while protecting grasslands and further CRP conservation efforts. Grassland CRP is part of the Biden-Harris administration's broader effort to address climate change and conserve natural resources.

Additionally, USDA has accepted more than 1 million acres through the General CRP signup, and more than 465,800 acres have been submitted through the Continuous CRP signup so far this year.

Top states include:

- Colorado, 430,899 acres;
- Nebraska, 417,865 acres; and
- South Dakota, 325,443 acres.

Grassland CRP leverages working lands practices to improve biodiversity and conserve environmentally sensitive land. To target conservation in key geographies, USDA prioritizes land within two National Priority Zones: the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and the Dust Bowl area. FSA accepted more than 911,000 acres in these two zones. Land enrolled in these zones will contribute to broader USDA conservation efforts through [Working Lands for Wildlife](#) by conserving working grasslands and other lands that underpin iconic big game migrations.

Grasslands enrolled in CRP help sequester carbon in vegetation and soil, while enhancing resilience to drought and wildfire. Meanwhile, producers can still conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land, which supports agricultural production.

Broadening Reach of Program

As part of the Agency's Justice40 efforts, producers and landowners who are historically underserved, including beginning farmers, limited-resource producers, and military veterans, received 20 additional ranking points to enhance their offers. From more than 6,400 underserved producers, USDA accepted offers of more than 1.8 million acres, about 74% of those who submitted applications.

Additionally, USDA is working to broaden the scope and reach of Grassland CRP by leveraging the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP) to engage underserved communities. CREP is a partnership program that enables states, Tribal governments, and non-profit entities to partner with FSA to implement CRP practices and address high priority conservation and environmental objectives. Interested entities are encouraged to contact FSA.

More Information

Producers can still make an offer to participate in CRP through the [Continuous CRP signup](#), which is ongoing, by contacting FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Financial Assistance Application Process Opens for USDA Farm Loan Borrowers Who Have Faced Discrimination

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the opening of the financial assistance application process for eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) directs USDA to provide this assistance. Since the law's passage, USDA has worked diligently to design the program in accordance with significant stakeholder input.

The program website, [22007apply.gov](#), is now open. 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.

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination by USDA in its farm loan programs prior to January 1, 2021 and/or are currently debtors with assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was the subject of USDA discrimination that occurred prior to January 1, 2021, are eligible for this program.

To apply, borrowers have the option to apply via the e-filing portal at [22007apply.gov](#) or submit paper-based forms via mail or in-person delivery to the program's local offices. The application process will be open from July 7 to October 31, 2023. Under the planned timeline, applications will be reviewed in November and December, with payments reaching recipients soon thereafter. Importantly, applicants should know that the application process is not on a first come, first served, basis. All applications received or postmarked before the October 31 deadline will be considered.

To support producers throughout the application process, USDA is ensuring that organizations with extensive experience conducting outreach to farm organizations are able to support individuals who may be eligible for the program. These groups include [AgrAbility](#), [Farmer Veteran Coalition](#), [Farmers' Legal Action Group](#), [Federation of Southern](#)

[Cooperatives](#), [Intertribal Agriculture Council](#), [Land Loss Prevention Program](#), [National Young Farmers Coalition](#), and [Rural Coalition](#).

Vendors operating four regional hubs are also providing technical assistance and working closely with these and other community-based organizations to conduct outreach using digital and grassroots strategies, to ensure potential applicants are informed about the program and have the opportunity to apply. These hubs are operating a network of brick-and-mortar program offices and will conduct extensive outreach about the program. Windsor Group serves farmers in the eastern regions of the U.S. and Analytic Acquisitions serves the western regions. A national administrator, Midtown Group, is responsible for program oversight and integrity, and will lead a national call-center, operate the application website - 22007apply.gov, which is now open – and review and process applications and payments. All vendors have experience in professional services, supporting government contracts, and complex program operations.

On March 1, 2023, USDA shared initial [details on how the Section 22007 program will work](#), including that the Inflation Reduction Act specifies the Secretary of Agriculture is responsible for providing this assistance through qualified nongovernmental entities, under standards set by USDA. USDA entered into agreements with vendors and cooperators in May.

In addition to the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) opening today, the Inflation Reduction Act also created several other programs that are helping USDA rebuild trust, address systemic issues and improve service to people who may have been underserved by USDA in the past. Information about USDA's equity agenda and progress is available at www.usda.gov/equity.

In standing up this program, USDA has become aware of some lawyers and groups spreading misleading information about the discrimination assistance process, pressuring people to sign retainer agreements, and asking people to fill out forms with private and sensitive information. As of today, the official application process has begun and filling out an application is **free**.

No attorneys' fees will be paid to applicants or their counsel by USDA or by any other agency or department of the United States. The amount of financial assistance will not be increased for those claimants who are represented by an attorney. Applicants are not required to retain an attorney. USDA, the national administrator, and the regional hub vendors will neither recommend that any applicant retain counsel or retain a specific attorney or law firm, nor discourage an applicant from obtaining counsel or using a specific attorney or law firm. For more information, read our [fact sheet about the program timeline and ways to protect against possible scams](#).

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