

- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [USDA Partners with FarmRaise to Offer Educational Tools and Resources to Promote Financial Access and Equity for Agricultural Producers](#)
- [Current FSA Loan Interest Rates](#)
- [USDA Reminds Producers of Climate-Smart Opportunities Using Farm Loan Programs](#)
- [Opportunity to Request a Referendum: Soybean Promotion, Research, and Information Program](#)
- [Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips](#)
- [Wisconsin NRCS to Host Series of Public Conservation Meetings](#)
- [USDA Hosts Informational Workshops on Newly Expanded Nursery Insurance Option](#)

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## Dates to Remember

**May 6 – May 31, 2024:** Soybean Promotion and Research Order Request for Referendum

**May 17, 2024:** [NRCS Announces Second EQIP & RCPP Signup for 2024 Funding](#)

**May 27, 2024:** USDA Offices Closed for Memorial Day

**May 31, 2024:** MAL Final Availability Date for Corn, Cotton, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Rice, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, Sunflower Seed

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## USDA Partners with FarmRaise to Offer Educational Tools and Resources to Promote Financial Access and Equity for Agricultural Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) unveiled a new, online Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Decision Tool and farm loan resources available to agricultural producers and cooperators who help producers access USDA disaster assistance, farm loans and

other federal farm programs. The new LIP tool and the farm loan informational video resources were developed in partnership with FarmRaise and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). These tools are now available at [www.farmraise.com/usda-fsa](http://www.farmraise.com/usda-fsa).

### **Current FarmRaise Tools and Resources**

[FarmRaise, Inc.](#) has created an online, [educational hub](#) -- called [Farm Service Agency 101](#) -- comprised of videos, and resources that enable cooperators and the agricultural producers they serve to learn about and access major FSA programs.

The newly launched LIP Decision Tool assists livestock producers who suffered losses from eligible adverse weather events and other causes of loss as well as cooperators who are helping disaster-impacted livestock producers navigate available federal disaster assistance programs. The optional decision tool gives producers guidance on what is needed to gather and submit required loss documentation, reducing the amount of time needed to complete applications and enabling FSA county office staff to deliver much-needed assistance faster. Using this tool, however, is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility.

Through use of the LIP tool, livestock producers can provide supporting documentation, inventory numbers, and loss numbers to FSA county offices. Doing so, in advance of the initial county office visit, will help FSA staff serve customers more effectively and efficiently. Producers will also need to complete an application for LIP assistance and, upon request, may be asked to provide additional supporting documentation.

[LIP](#) offers payments to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by qualifying adverse weather events. LIP also covers losses due to eligible diseases and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. This includes attacks by wolves and predatory birds.

In addition to the new LIP Decision Tool, the FarmRaise educational hub offers several, easily navigated farm loan programs how-to videos designed to introduce producers to FSA's many farm loan programs options and guide them through the application process.

More FSA program resources and tools will soon be added to the FarmRaise educational hub. Cooperators and agricultural producers are encouraged to visit the FarmRaise educational hub often to access all available resources.

### **About the Partnership**

USDA cooperators are organizations on the frontlines of access and often are the first point of contact connecting farmers to USDA programs. The partnership between FarmRaise, Inc. and FSA, through a cooperative agreement, aims to improve producer participation and customer experience in USDA programs through education and technical assistance to young, beginning, and small-scale to mid-sized producers, producers with disabilities, and veterans.

By developing a digital educational hub that delivers free, user-friendly, producer and cooperator-tested resources USDA and FarmRaise, Inc. will help FSA expedite program delivery to agricultural producers. The hub offers how-to videos and visual aids that

educate producers about FSA programs and prepares them for submitting applications for program participation.

### More Information

For more information about FSA farm and farm loan programs, visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov) or contact your local USDA Service Center - [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator). To learn more about FarmRaise, visit [Farmraise.com](https://Farmraise.com).

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## Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

**Current loan rates as of May 1, 2024.**

### Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	5.250%
Farm Operating - Microloan	5.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.500%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	5.500%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	3.500%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%

### Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):

3-year FSFL	4.625%
5-year FSFL	4.375%
7-year FSFL	4.375%
10-year FSFL	4.375%
12-year FSFL	4.500%

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

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## USDA Reminds Producers of Climate-Smart Opportunities Using Farm Loan Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that Farm Loan Programs can be used to support a variety of climate-smart agriculture practices, which build on many practices that farmers and ranchers already use, like cover cropping, nutrient management and conservation tillage.

Climate-smart agricultural practices generate significant environmental benefits by capturing and sequestering carbon, improving water management, restoring soil health and more. Farm loan funding complements other tools to help producers adopt climate-smart practices, such as FSA's [Conservation Reserve Program](#), [crop insurance options](#) that support conservation, and conservation programs offered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

FSA offers [multiple types of loans](#) to help farmers and ranchers start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. These loans can provide the capital needed to invest in climate-smart practices and equipment including the establishment of rotational grazing systems, precision agriculture equipment or machinery for conversion to no-till residue management. Additionally, for programs like Conservation Reserve Program and NRCS conservation programs where USDA and the producer share the implementation cost, a farm loan could be used for the producer's share, if consistent with the authorized loan purpose.

Some additional ways farm loans can be leveraged to invest in climate-smart agriculture practices or equipment include:

- **Precision Agriculture Equipment** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment like GPS globes, monitors, or strip till fertilizer equipment.
- **Cover Crops** - Eligible producers could use an Annual Operating Loan for seed costs.
- **No/Reduced Till** - Eligible producers could use a Term Operating Loan to purchase equipment.
- **Livestock Facility Air Scrubber or Waste Treatment** - Eligible producers could use a Farm Ownership Loan for capital improvements to livestock facilities.
- **Cross Fencing** - Eligible producers could use an Annual or Term Operating Loan to purchase fencing and installation equipment.

Visit the [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry webpage on farmers.gov](#) to learn more and see detailed examples of how an FSA farm loan can support climate-smart agriculture practices.

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## Opportunity to Request a Referendum: Soybean Promotion, Research, and Information Program

**Dates to Request Referendum:** May 6, 2024, and ending May 31, 2024.

### Summary:

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announces that soybean producers may request a referendum to determine whether producers want the Secretary to conduct a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act). Participation in

the request for referendum is voluntary. Producers should participate only if they wish to request a referendum on the program.

If at least 10 percent, not to exceed  $\frac{1}{5}$  of producers from any one State of the 515,008 eligible producers determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) participate in the request for referendum, a referendum will be held within one year from that determination. If results of the request for referendum indicate that a referendum is not supported, a referendum will not be conducted. The results of the request for referendum will be published in a notice in the Federal Register.

**To Request Referendum:**

Soybean producers may request a referendum during the 4-week period beginning **May 6, 2024, and ending May 31, 2024.**

To be eligible to participate in the request for referendum, producers must certify that they or the producer entity they are authorized to represent paid an assessment at any time between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023.

Form LS-51-1, Soybean Promotion and Research Order Request for Referendum, can be obtained from **May 6, 2024, to May 31, 2024**, by mail, FAX, or in person from Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Offices, or can be downloaded from <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/soybean>. Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate FSA County Office:

**By FAX or in person** no later than **COB on May 31, 2024.**

**By mail** postmarked by midnight on **May 31, 2024**, and must be received in the FSA County Office by **COB on June 7, 2024.**

**Contact:**

Notice of the Request for Referendum was published in the February 2, 2024, Federal Register. For more information, contact Jeana Harbison, Research and Promotion Division, Livestock and Poultry Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0249 - Room 2092-S; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, D.C. 20250-0249; tel. (202) 720-5705; or via the Internet at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/soybean>.

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## Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips

*USDA offers programs to help producers recover from disasters; FEMA can help you prepare ahead of time.*

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a free mobile app that explains what to do before, during and after emergencies. The app is available for download for Apple, Android and Blackberry mobile devices.

Download the app to:

- Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations
- Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters and customize your emergency checklist
- Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone)
- Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders.

For more information about the FEMA app, visit [fema.gov/mobile-app](https://fema.gov/mobile-app). To download the FEMA app from the Apple Store visit [itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8). To download the FEMA app on Google Play for Android visit: [play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en)

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## Wisconsin NRCS to Host Series of Public Conservation Meetings

*Conservation-forward farmers, landowners encouraged to attend*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin has announced four in-person [Local Working Group](#) (LWG) meetings to include a statewide presentation followed by NRCS administrative areas breakout sessions for further feedback. The meetings will be held June 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from 10:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. Input gathered during these meetings is taken into strong consideration as an integral part of the success of NRCS programs in determining local priority natural resource concerns.

[Click here for more information.](#)

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## USDA Hosts Informational Workshops on Newly Expanded Nursery Insurance Option

USDA has [expanded its Nursery Value Select \(NVS\) crop insurance](#) program to all counties in all states, and the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) is encouraging interested nursery producers to learn more about the program through upcoming informational workshops. These sessions will be valuable for producers in the newly expanded areas and especially for the Nursery Field Grown and Container (FG&C) crop insurance program, which ends beginning with the 2026 crop year.

Nursery Value Select is a pilot program that enables nursery producers to select the dollar amount of coverage that best fits their risk management needs. Its expansion is part of RMA's efforts to provide insurance options for a broader group of producers, including specialty crop producers.

There is one more Nursery Value Select workshop on **July 18**. [See more details here.](#)

RMA has administered the Nursery FG&C crop insurance program for nearly 30 years. However, the program relies on a partnership between RMA and a private contractor to update and maintain the Eligible Plant List and Plant Price Schedule and associated software packages. The private contractor will be closing after providing all necessary contractual obligations for the 2025 crop year. Without access to the price schedule and associated software, the Nursery FG&C program will no longer be available to nursery producers beginning with the 2026 crop year.

Nursery Value Select will be able to offer comparable but improved risk management options for those who currently have coverage with the Nursery FG&C program, making RMA's informational workshops a valuable opportunity to learn more about Nursery Value Select and any required transitions.

Prior to the expansion, Nursery Value Select was only available in select counties in Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Washington. Beginning with the 2025 crop year, Nursery Value Select **will be available in all counties in all states**. The sales closing date for the 2025 crop year is May 1, 2024, or Sept. 1, 2024, as provided in the actuarial documents.

Nursery Value Select was first available in the 2021 crop year, and producers insured more than \$460 million in liabilities in crop year 2023.

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](#). Producers can learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at [rma.usda.gov](http://rma.usda.gov) or by contacting their [RMA Regional Office](#).

## 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 Program Chief

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

### Farm Loan Chief

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

### Farm Program Chief

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

**State Committee:**

Clara Hedrich  
Tina Hinchley  
Joe Koch, Chairperson  
Heidi Randall