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CED Comments, Upcoming Dates/Deadlines, and a Few Jokes

Happy National Beef Jerky Day! While all of this rain has made it hard for our hay producers to get their 1st cutting on the ground, we are sure glad to see it!

Acreage Reporting- We have maps printed for each of the farms for the 2023 season. Please call or swing by the office to report your acres after they are planted or to pick up your maps. **The deadline to complete acreage reports for spring crops, perennial grasses, and CRP is July 15, 2023.**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)- We expect General results back any day now. If you had an offer, please look for a letter with the results in your mailbox or email inbox soon!

ERP Phase 2 & PARP- The signup for these programs has been extended. See the article below. Please contact Kate to make an appointment to complete these applications or for more information. You will need to gather your Schedule F for 2018-2020 to complete these forms. The signup process takes about 15-30 minutes to complete. **The signup deadline for these programs is now July 14, 2023.**

Drought Related Livestock Programs- We are closely monitoring the drought monitor. While we did slip out of the D3 drought rating, Goshen County's did trigger eligibility for 2023 LFP as well as 2023 ELAP for water, feed, and livestock hauling. Please start gathering your leases, livestock documents, and transportation records for these programs. Payments for LFP will be approximately \$100/head on eligible livestock. Please contact Kate to complete these applications or for more information.

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Upcoming Deadlines/Dates:

June 19- Office Closed- Juneteenth

July 4- Office Closed- Independence Day

July 14- PARP & ERP Phase II Deadline

July 15- Acreage Reporting Deadline- Spring Planted Crops & Perennial Grasses

A Few Jokes to Brighten a Day

What happens when Doctors get frustrated? They lose their patients.

How do you get a squirrel's attention? Act like a nut.

How do you cook an alligator? With a croc-pot.



USDA Extends Application Deadline for Revenue Loss Programs to July 14

USDA is extending the deadline for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two and Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) to July 14, 2023, to give producers more time to apply for assistance. The original deadline was June 2.



Eligibility To be eligible for ERP Phase Two, producers must have suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event. Assistance will be primarily to producers of crops that were not covered by Federal Crop Insurance or NAP, since crops covered by Federal Crop Insurance and NAP were included in the assistance under ERP Phase One.

To be eligible for PARP, an agricultural producer must have been in the business of farming during at least part of the 2020 calendar year and had a 15% or greater decrease in allowable gross revenue for the 2020 calendar year, as compared to a baseline year.

FSA offers an online [ERP tool](#) and [PARP tool](#) that can help producers determine what is considered allowable gross revenue for each respective program.

Producers should contact their local FSA office to make an appointment to apply for ERP Phase Two and PARP assistance. Producers should also keep in mind that July 15 is a major deadline to complete acreage reports for most crops. FSA encourages producers to complete the ERP Phase Two application, PARP application and acreage reporting during the same office visit.

More Information For more information, view the [ERP Phase Two Fact Sheet](#), [PARP Fact Sheet](#), the [ERP Phase Two-PARP Comparison Fact Sheet](#), [ERP Phase Two application video tutorial](#), [PARP application video tutorial](#), [myth-buster blog](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has several loan programs to help you start or continue an agriculture production. Farm ownership and operating loans are available.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.



Protect Your Investments in the Soil: USDA's Modernized Lab Data Mart Website Provides User-Friendly, State-of-the-Art Data

Understanding your specific soil and its dynamic properties, which can change over time due to human impacts, land management, and climate change, can be invaluable. The USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#), through the [National Cooperative Soil Survey \(NCSS\)](#), has a team of soil and data scientists who are bringing customers the best soil information using the newest technology through the Lab Data Mart.



The newly updated [Lab Data Mart](#) website, also known as the National Cooperative Lab Characterization Database, brings valuable soil data to the public's fingertips through a user-friendly, state-of-the-art interactive map. It includes data estimating soil properties such as organic carbon, clay content, calcium carbonate equivalent, and pH, which is beneficial in soil health assessments. Architects, educators, engineers, farmers, landowners, researchers, scientists, and anyone looking to learn more about their soil can access the latest data to make more informed decisions and reduce potential [soil risks and hazards](#).

The Lab Data Mart includes mid-infrared (MIR) soil spectroscopy data gathered during soil analysis at the NRCS' Kellogg Soil Survey Laboratory, one of the largest libraries of such data in the world. MIR soil spectroscopy uses the interactions between soil matter and infrared radiation to estimate soil properties.

The Lab Data Mart's interactive map also links to a national database of soil characterization data, allowing users to locate soil samples and "pedons" analyzed in the lab. A pedon is the smallest unit of soil, containing all the soil horizons of a particular soil type. The customized data in the Lab Data Mart is downloadable to multiple applications and web services and is continuously updated as more sampled soil sites are added or re-visited.

How Can the Lab Data Mart Help You?

- **Determining carbon credits or improving carbon sequestration:** The data can help you determine how much carbon is currently in the top 12 inches of soil and decide whether you want to sequester more carbon and consider methods and management practices to do so.
- **Leasing or buying land:** The data may help determine if your planned management practices will work; and if not, what could be the added cost to do things differently. Understanding the mineralogy of your soil can help you determine if it requires soil amendments, a new tool or piece of equipment to accomplish your goals, or a change to what you farm or your tillage operation.
- **Taking a more systematic view of your land:** Whether working with an NRCS conservation planner or on your own, the data helps you know more about your soil and ties into how you look at the whole [ecological site](#).

Who Can Help You Use Lab Data Mart and Help You Understand Your Data?

NRCS State Soil Scientists and their staff, as well as technical service providers, can assist with obtaining the data in Lab Data Mart and understanding it. Contact NRCS at your [local USDA Service Center](#) for help and more information. Visit the [Lab Data Mart website](#), or learn more about NRCS' [Soil Science](#).

NRCS Refines Nutrient Management Strategies to Improve Conservation Outcomes

For decades, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has supported producers and landowners in addressing their nutrient management and water quality concerns. We continue to refine our strategies as we learn more, including from data in a [recent report on cropland conservation outcomes](#) from our [Conservation Effects Assessment Project](#).

This report showed that despite many wins in conservation outcomes, there was an [increase in soluble nitrogen and phosphorus lost to the environment nationally](#) over a ten-year period. This increase was due to many factors, including changing trends in production, climate, and technology. Preventing nutrients from fertilizers and other sources from entering local waters ensures that they can be utilized by crops and benefits both water quality and farmer finances.

These findings can help NRCS more effectively support farmers nationwide by refining applied conservation to address site-specific risk for nutrient losses. In 2022, we developed a strategic operational plan to address these changing trends, enhancing our existing nutrient management conservation efforts. This plan includes promoting [SMART Nutrient Management](#) planning and highlighting the importance of comprehensive, site-specific assessment of nutrient loss risks.

The plan also includes several [science-based nutrient management and water quality strategies](#) for improving conservation outcomes, and NRCS continues to move this work forward. To date NRCS has:

- **Updated how producers can be paid for utilizing nutrient management related practices.** NRCS has allowed payments to producers for soil, source nutrient, and water testing. Testing is key to determine the proper rate of nutrient application. NRCS has also created new payment scenarios to more closely align with the technology that farmers are encouraged to adopt, including enhanced efficiency fertilizers and precision application technology, which can help ensure nutrients are available at the right time, the right rate and in the right place.
- **Initiated development of a new mapping tool to help conservation planners identify areas on the land that can be more sensitive to nutrient loss.** The Sensitive Area Analysis Tool uses soil survey data to show the areas of a field at risk for nutrient loss that can benefit from site-specific nutrient management plans and other practices that can help mitigate nutrient losses. The tool will be available for use in early 2023. Ask NRCS at your [local USDA Service Center](#) for details.
- **Updated manure testing protocols through an agreement with the University of Minnesota (*Recommended Methods of Manure Analysis, Second Edition*).** These new testing protocols for manure testing take management practices into account and deliver more accurate values specific to the farm. These protocols will be used to update NRCS nutrient management policy including laboratory testing procedures and determination of accredited laboratories.
- **Led an effort to create four new, long-term assessments to better understand the importance of legacy (historical) sources of nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrate, as well as sediment.** Effective conservation options for addressing legacy sources are being evaluated. For example, NRCS is supporting a stakeholder-driven study of a perennial grass buffer to enhance plant uptake of legacy nutrients, reduce losses and improve on-farm nutrient cycling.

These and many other efforts are continuing in 2023 and beyond. The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) is providing NRCS with an additional \$19.5 billion over the next four years to help support climate-smart agricultural practices. NRCS is targeting funding for nutrient management, increasing program flexibilities, and expanding partnerships to support the development and implementation of nutrient management plans. NRCS will keep partners and producers informed as we make further improvements and updates.

Save Money on Fuel with No-Till Farming

How much fuel can farmers save each year by transitioning from conventional tillage to continuous no-till? According to a [new report from USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project \(CEAP\)](#), 3.6 gallons per acre is a reasonable estimate. With current off-road diesel fuel prices, this could translate into approximately \$17 per acre saved annually.

Nearly 87 percent of all cropland acres nationwide are farmed using some form of conservation tillage, where tillage is reduced for at least one crop within a given field. Continuous no-till accounts for 33 percent of this total.

[Improving soil health](#) is one known benefit of limiting disturbance. Farmers who minimize tillage across their operation may reduce soil erosion, maximize water infiltration, improve nutrient cycling, build organic matter, and strengthen resilience to disaster events or challenging growing conditions. Based on the latest data, they may also use significantly less fuel than with conventional tillage and reduce their associated carbon dioxide emissions.

According to CEAP, farmers who implement conservation tillage practices instead of continuous conventional tillage:

- Reduce potential nationwide fuel use by 763 million gallons of diesel equivalents each year, roughly the amount of energy used by 2.8 million households.

- Reduce potential associated emissions by 8.5 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalents each year, equivalent to removing nearly 1.7 million gasoline-powered passenger vehicles from the road.

How is this possible? Annually, farmers who practice continuous no-till use approximately 3.6 fewer gallons of fuel per acre than if they practiced continuous conventional tillage. Farmers who practice seasonal no-till – farming without tilling for at least one crop – use approximately 3 fewer gallons of fuel per acre than they would with conventional tillage year-round.

Acre by acre, fuel saved is money saved. Let's assume an average off-road diesel fuel price of \$4.75 per gallon*. By transitioning from continuous conventional tillage to continuous no-till, a farmer can save just over \$17 per acre each year in fuel costs. A farmer who transitions from continuous conventional tillage to seasonal no-till can save more than \$14 per acre on fuel annually. These potential savings are significantly larger than with [CEAP's first fuel savings report](#), primarily due to the current price of diesel fuel.

The bottom line for farmers: Reducing tillage leads to fuel savings that deliver significant financial benefits while building healthier soils for a more resilient operation.

USDA Can Help

If you're a farmer interested in reducing tillage or pursuing other conservation efforts across your operation, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help.

- [This blog](#) offers five simple tips for farmers interested in trying no-till for the first time.
- [This 90-second video](#) provides a description of no-till and associated benefits according to a Delaware farmer.
- [This 23-minute video](#) follows five South Carolina farmers seeking to quantify the benefits of conservation practices that support soil health.
- [This webpage](#) details principles to improve soil health, including reduced tillage and complimentary conservation practices such as cover crops, crop rotations, and rotational grazing.

NRCS has local USDA Service Centers in nearly every county across the United States. You may [find contact information for your nearest Service Center here](#). NRCS staff are available to provide free, one-on-one assistance with a suite of practices to strengthen your operation, conserve natural resources, and boost your bottom line. [SMART nutrient management](#), for example, is important to consider with no-till and may help you [save money on fertilizer while improving water quality](#) – another win-win.

Visit the [new NRCS website](#) to learn more about conservation basics, getting assistance from NRCS, programs and initiatives, and resources to inform management decisions. Visit the [new CEAP webpage](#) for additional information about USDA's efforts to quantify the effects of conservation practices across croplands and other working lands.



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