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USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organic certification, up to \$750 per category, through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP). Wyoming Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages organic agricultural producers and handlers to apply for OCCSP by Oct. 31, 2023, for expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023.



As part of USDA's broader effort to support organic producers and in response to stakeholder feedback, this year FSA increased the cost share to the maximum amount allowed by statute.

The WY State FSA Offices are taking steps to better support Wyoming organic producers. We've heard about this program's value in helping organic producers and handlers obtain or renew their certifications under the National Organic Program, and I'm pleased that we're able to increase and restore the cost share to the statutory limit this year. Organic certification costs have long been identified as a barrier to certification, and this assistance, at its full levels, will help WY organic producers participate in new markets while supporting and growing our local and regional food systems.

Cost Share for 2023

The cost share provides financial assistance for organic certification, and producers and handlers are eligible to receive 75% of the costs, up to \$750, for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and state organic program fees (California only).

WY producers have until Oct. 31, 2023, to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

How to Apply

To apply, WY producers and handlers should contact their local FSA office [USDA Service Center](#). As part of completing the OCCSP application, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses.

Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating state departments of agriculture. Additional details can be found on the [OCCSP](#) webpage.

Opportunity for State Departments of Agriculture

FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA will post a synopsis of the funding opportunity on grants.gov and will electronically mail the notice of funding opportunity to all eligible state departments of agriculture.

If a state department of agriculture chooses to participate in OCCSP, both the state department of agriculture and FSA County Offices in that state will accept OCCSP applications and make payments to eligible certified

operations. However, the producer or handler may only receive OCCSP assistance from either FSA or the participating state department of agriculture.

Other USDA Organic Assistance

USDA offers other assistance for organic producers, including the new [Organic Transition Initiative \(OTI\)](#), which includes direct farmer assistance for organic production and processing, conservation and crop insurance.

For conservation, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is helping producers adopt the new organic management standard, which allows flexibility for producers to get the assistance and education they need such as attending workshops or requesting help from experts or mentors. It supports conservation practices required for organic certification and may provide foregone income reimbursement for dips in production during the transition period.

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds producers interested in the Transitional and Organic Grower Assistance Program, also part of OTI, to visit with their crop insurance agent for more information. Premium benefits for eligible policies will be automatically applied to the producer's billing statement later this year.

For producers that participated in the Transitional and Organic Grower Assistance Program, also part of OTI, premium benefits for eligible policies will be automatically applied to the producer's billing statement later this year.

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) also administers federal crop insurance options, including [Whole Farm Revenue Protection](#) and [Micro Farm](#), which may be good options for organic producers.

Also under OTI, is the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) National Organic Program's (NOP) Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). TOPP builds mentorship relationships between transitioning and existing organic farmers to provide technical assistance and wrap-around support in six U.S. regions.

On May 10 USDA AMS announced the availability of approximately \$75 million in grant funding for the Organic Market Development Grant (OMDG) program. OMDG will fund businesses transitioning to organic or initiating new organic production or processing and support new, improved and expanded markets for domestically produced organic products with a focus on processing capacity, market access, and product development.

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USDA Offers Livestock Disaster Program Flexibilities; Responds to Needs Expressed by Producers Hard-Hit by Natural Disasters



Program Application Deadlines Extended to June 2

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has provided additional flexibilities and further enhanced disaster recovery assistance provided by the Emergency Assistance for Livestock Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) in response to needs expressed by livestock producers across the U.S. who have experienced significant feed, forage and animal losses from natural disasters. These livestock disaster program policy enhancements include an extended June 2, 2023, deadline to submit notices of loss and applications for payment for 2022 losses. The deadline extension and program flexibilities are available to eligible producers nationwide who

incurred losses from a qualifying natural disaster event.

Impacted producers are encouraged contact their FSA county offices to take advantage of ELAP enhancements. Expenses eligible for assistance can include above normal feed purchases, above normal freight and in some cases, even snow removal. This Administration continues to demonstrate our understanding of and commitment to livestock production. Last year, we changed a policy in LIP to better reflect the investment producers have in newborn livestock. This year, we are extending the deadline to apply for these critical programs to allow these producers the time they need to manage their recovery.

LIP and ELAP reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that died because of a qualifying natural disaster event or for loss of grazing acres, feed, and forage. LFP provides benefits for grazing losses due to a qualifying drought or wildfire. For fire, losses must occur on federally managed lands. ELAP provides benefits for grazing losses not covered under LFP.

New Program Applications for 2022

FSA is accepting 2022 LIP notices of loss and applications for payment through June 2, 2023, for all covered livestock that may have been eligible in 2022.

Producers who did not sign up for ELAP assistance for hauling livestock, forage and feedstuff hauling or other losses covered under ELAP in 2022 can also apply through June 2, 2023.

FSA will accept LFP applications for only newly eligible covered livestock through June 2, 2023.

All required supporting documentation must be received and on file in the county office by the established deadline.

Revising 2022 Applications

Producers who have a 2022 ELAP, LIP or LFP application on file with FSA as of the program deadline or were placed on an approved register, may revise their application with the newly updated eligible livestock no later than June 2, 2023.

Filing a Notice of Loss for ELAP due to 2022 and 2023 Drought

To support program access for counties that do not currently have a 365-day grazing season, FSA is waiving the 30-day timeframe for producers to submit a notice of loss for the 2023 ELAP program year due to qualifying drought in calendar years 2022 or 2023. Producers can now submit a notice of loss from the date the loss is apparent, as far back as Jan. 1, 2023, for 2022 eligible losses and 2023 eligible losses that occur before June 2, 2023.

For counties that have a 365-day grazing season, producers must have a qualifying drought in the 2023 calendar year to be eligible for 2023 livestock, water and feed hauling in 2023.

More Information

Livestock producers must provide evidence that livestock death was due to an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition. In addition, livestock producers should bring supporting evidence, including documentation of the number and kind of livestock that died, photographs or video records to document the loss, purchase records, veterinarian records, production records and other similar documents. Owners who sold injured livestock for a reduced price because the livestock were injured due to an adverse weather event, must provide verifiable evidence of the reduced sale of the livestock.

Producers can apply for ELAP, LFP and LIP benefits at their local FSA county office. For more information or to submit a notice of loss or an application for payment, please contact your local FSA office or visit farmers.gov/recover.

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USDA Extends Application Deadline for Revenue Loss Programs to July 14



Nine Partner Organizations to Provide Assistance with ERP Phase Two Applications

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (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.

Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is partnering with nine organizations to provide educational and technical assistance to agricultural producers and provide assistance in completing an ERP Phase Two application. The extended deadline will give producers more time to work with these partner organizations and apply for assistance.

"Farm Service Agency recognizes that there is a learning curve for producers applying for our new revenue-based programs and we want to make sure producers have the time they need to apply for assistance," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "Partnering with these organizations through cooperative agreements provides additional educational and technical assistance to producers who may need help with the Emergency Relief Program Phase Two application process. The deadline extension gives producers more time to locate and work with these organizations to complete their program application."

Cooperative Agreements for ERP Phase Two Application Assistance

Through cooperative agreements with FSA, the following organizations are providing free assistance to producers across the United States and territories.

- [Alabama State Association of Cooperatives](#)
- [Farmers Legal Action Group, INC.](#)
- [Flower Hill Institute](#)
- [Intertribal Agriculture Council, Inc.](#)
- [North South Institute](#)
- [Renewing the Countryside II](#)
- [Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA](#)
- [Rural Coalition](#)
- [Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers CBO](#)

Depending on a producer's location, these nine partners can provide assistance either by phone or through online meeting software like Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

There is never a charge for technical assistance provided by FSA employees or cooperative agreement recipients. These organizations will assist producers with completing the application and any follow-up future insurance coverage requirements. Producers who receive ERP payments are statutorily required to purchase crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for the next two available crop years. These organizations will not collect producer records, complete or sign the application form, or act on the producer's behalf in any way throughout this process.

Find more information on FSA cooperative agreements and contact information for the nine organizations please visit fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/cooperative-agreements/index.

PARP Application Assistance

USDA will host a webinar that focus on completing the PARP application form on June 8, 2023 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. eastern with members of the National Farm Income Tax Extension Committee. Register [here](#).

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](#).

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