



- [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) 2022](#)
- [Applying for FSA Direct Loans](#)
- [Conservation Practices Can Protect Livestock from Harmful Algal Blooms This Summer](#)

---

## Courtney's Corner- CED Comments, Upcoming Deadlines, and a Few Jokes

Hello Sheridan and Johnson Counties! Happy Halloween (tomorrow)!

The phones for all of the FSA offices in the state, and even many nationwide, have been having technical issues with our phone system. If you try to call the office and are unable to get through, just keep trying. We are also experiencing long delays on our end- we pick up the receiver and it can take up to 30 seconds for the call to come through to us. We are sorry for the inconvenience this has caused and appreciate your patience while our IT department researches this issue.



There has been some major construction and pavement maintenance on Sugarland Drive leading to the Sheridan office for the last few weeks. Traffic is shut down to one lane, but the office is still open! We have been warned that on the day they lay the new asphalt, the road will be completely shut down for a period of 8-10 hours, with no traffic allowed in either direction. We are still able to be reached by phone and email if access to the building is limited.

The Election ballots for our County Committee members begin to go out next week. We have the following candidates running for election this year.

- LAA1- J.D. Hill
- LAA5- Joni Harlan

Thank you to those folks who agreed to serve on our County Committee. Please return all ballots by December 4, 2023.

Finally, Johnson County producers- we are planning to bring back our workdays in Buffalo and Kaycee! Look in future bulletins for a schedule of those dates.

-CY

### **Upcoming Deadlines/ Dates:**

*November 10- Office Closed- Veteran's Day (Observed)*

*November 15- Fall Planted Crop (Winter Wheat) Acreage Reporting Deadline*

*November 23- Office Closed- Thanksgiving*

*December 1- NAP Application for Coverage Deadline for Perennial Grasses and Fall Planted Crops*

*December 4- Deadline to return COC election ballots for LAA's 1 & 5*

*December 25- Office Closed- Christmas*

### **A Few Jokes to Brighten Your Day-**

What does a panda ghost eat? Bam-BOO

What kind of underwear do mummies buy? Fruit of the Tomb

What is a witch's favorite makeup? Ma-SCARE-a

---

## Emergency Relief Program (ERP) 2022

The U. S Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide more than \$3 billion to commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2022. Eligible impacted producers can apply for financial assistance through the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) 2022](#). The program will help offset the financial impacts of crop yield and value losses from qualifying disasters occurring in 2022.



### Background

On Dec. 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the *Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328)* that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by eligible natural disasters that occurred in calendar year 2022.

ERP 2022 covers losses to crops, trees, bushes and vines due to qualifying, calendar year 2022 natural disaster events including wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought and related conditions.

ERP 2022 program benefits will be delivered to eligible producers through a two-track process. FSA intends to make both tracks available to producers at the same time. This two-track approach enables USDA to:

- Streamline the application process.
- Reduce the paperwork burden on producers.
- Proactively include provisions for underserved producers who have not been well served by past emergency relief efforts.
- Encourage producer participation in existing risk management programs to mitigate the impacts of future severe weather events.

It's important to note that disaster-impacted producers may be eligible for ERP 2022 assistance under one or both tracks. To avoid duplicative benefits, if a producer applies for both tracks, the Track 2 payment calculation will take into account any payments received through Track 1.

### ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 1

ERP 2022 Track 1 leverages existing federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data as the basis for calculating payments for eligible crop producers who received indemnities through these risk management programs. Although FSA is sending pre-filled ERP 2022 Track 1 application forms to producers who have crop insurance and NAP data already on file with USDA, producers indemnified for losses resulting from 2022 natural disasters do not have to wait to receive the application before requesting ERP 2022 assistance. Effective Oct. 31, 2023, producers can apply for ERP 2022 benefits whether they have received the pre-filled application or not. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP 2022 Track 1 payment.

USDA estimates that ERP Track 1 benefits will reach more than 206,000 producers who received indemnities for losses covered by federal crop insurance and more than 4,500 producers who obtained NAP coverage for the 2022 crop year.

### ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 2

Track 2 is a revenue-based certification program designed to assist eligible producers who suffered an eligible decrease in revenue resulting from 2022 calendar year disaster events when compared with revenue in a benchmark year using revenue information that is readily available from most tax records. In cases where revenue does not reasonably reflect a normal year's revenue, Track 2 provides an alternative

method for establishing revenue. Likewise, Track 2 affords producers of crops that are used within an operation and do not generate revenue from the sale of the crop a method for establishing revenue for the purpose of applying for ERP 2022 benefits. Producers are not required to submit tax records to FSA unless requested by the County Committee if required for an FSA compliance spot check.

Although not required when applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, applicants might find the following documents useful to the process:

- Schedule F (Form 1040)
- *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023.

Track 2 targets gaps in emergency relief assistance for eligible producers whose eligible losses were not covered by crop insurance or NAP including revenue losses too small (shallow loss) to be covered by crop insurance.

Producers interested in applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, should contact their local FSA county office. Additional reference resources can be found on FSA's [emergency relief website](#).

### **Additional Required Forms**

For both ERP 2022 tracks, all producers must have certain required forms on file with FSA within 60 days of the ERP 2022 deadline. Producers can apply for ERP 2022 starting Oct. 31, 2023. The application deadline has not yet been determined and will be announced at a later date. If not already on file, producers can update, complete and submit required forms to FSA at any time.

Required forms:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, *Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs* (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, if applicable, for the 2022 program year.
- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm the status of their forms can contact their local FSA county office.

### **Future Insurance Coverage Requirements**

All producers who receive ERP 2022 payments must purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, in the next two available crop years as determined by the Secretary. Purchased coverage must be at the 60/100 coverage level or higher for insured crops or at the catastrophic coverage level or higher for NAP crops.

### **More Information**

ERP 2022 eligibility details and payment calculation factor tables are available on the [emergency relief website](#), in the [ERP Track 1](#) and [ERP Track 2](#) fact sheets and through your local [FSA county office](#).

---

## **Applying for FSA Direct Loans**

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain, or strengthen their farm or ranch. Direct loans are processed, approved and serviced by FSA loan officers.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.



Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for direct farm ownership loans is \$600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is \$400,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

---

## Conservation Practices Can Protect Livestock from Harmful Algal Blooms This Summer

Summer is the season for freshwater harmful algal blooms, which can produce toxins that are harmful to humans, livestock, working animals, and pets. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has several conservation practices that may help farmers and ranchers protect animals and people by restricting access to contaminated water or providing alternate water sources.



### The ABCs of HABs

Freshwater harmful algal blooms (HABs) are usually caused by rapid growth of blue-green algae (known as cyanobacteria) in water bodies such as lakes, ponds, and streams. These organisms can produce toxins (known as cyanotoxins) that are harmful to humans, livestock, working animals, and pets. Contacting or ingesting contaminated water (including water spray or mist) can result in irritation, illness, or even death.

Cyanobacteria are naturally found in water bodies, so they cannot be eradicated. Instead, it's important to understand how and why blooms occur. Cyanobacterial blooms and their potential toxicity often are a result of excess nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, in water bodies. Excess nutrients can come from adjacent agricultural lands, livestock waste, and leaky septic systems, among other sources. HABs typically form in summer, when warm, nutrient-rich, stagnant waters and more frequent sunlight increase the opportunity for their growth.

Treatment of current HABs involves chemical, biological, or mechanical treatment targeted directly at the contaminated waters. Prevention of future HABs involves changing the conditions that favor cyanobacteria, including nutrient management of the surrounding land and trapping or treating nutrient losses to waterbodies.

### Risks HABs pose to livestock, working animals, and pets

Symptoms\* of cyanotoxin exposure in animals include:

- vomiting
- excessive salivation
- fatigue

- staggered walking
- difficulty breathing
- weakness
- convulsions
- liver failure

In severe cases, HAB poisoning can lead to death. Therefore, any potential intoxication needs to be immediately addressed by qualified professionals.

NRCS is not the authority on HAB symptoms in animals and humans. Please refer to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) website](#) for further information on HAB symptoms or contact your state or county health department.

### **Steps you can take if a potential exposure to cyanotoxins has occurred:**

1. Eliminate animal access to the suspected contaminated water source.
2. Wash animals with clean water and monitor for symptoms of exposure to cyanotoxins. Isolate any animals exhibiting symptoms and seek veterinary care as soon as possible.
3. An alternative source of livestock drinking water might be needed.
4. Contact the appropriate state agency for sampling and testing guidance to test the water source for HABs and cyanotoxins. It is not safe for landowners to sample the water themselves without proper personal protective equipment and procedures.
5. If a HAB occurs, there is potential for recurrence. Therefore, the waterbody should be monitored.
6. Adopt conservation practices that reduce the risk of livestock exposure to HABs and prevent and reduce nutrient loading to waters to minimize the risk of future HABs occurrences.

### **Reduce livestock exposure to HABs**

If HABs or cyanotoxins have been detected in a water body, preventing exposure by restricting access is key to ensuring the health and well-being of people, livestock, working animals and pets on the farm.

NRCS has several conservation practices that may be useful to exclude livestock from contaminated waters or provide alternative water sources. Some examples are:

- Fencing
- Pond
- Access control
- Water well
- Watering facility

### **For more information or assistance:**

To learn more about how NRCS can help address HAB concerns or other natural resource concerns, visit the [NRCS website](#) or contact NRCS at your [local USDA Service Center](#).



**Sheridan USDA Service Center**

1949 Sugarland Drive, Suite 126  
Sheridan, WY 82801  
Phone: 307-683-4202  
Fax: 855-574-1670

**Courtney Yelton**  
*County Executive Director- FSA*

[Courtney.Yelton@usda.gov](mailto:Courtney.Yelton@usda.gov)

**Andrew Cassiday**  
*District Conservationist- NRCS  
Sheridan County*

[Andrew.Cassiday@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.Cassiday@usda.gov)

**Justine Scheeler**  
*Program Technician- FSA*

[Justine.Scheeler@usda.gov](mailto:Justine.Scheeler@usda.gov)

**Allison McKenzie**  
*District Conservationist- NRCS  
Johnson County*

[Allison.Mckenzie@usda.gov](mailto:Allison.Mckenzie@usda.gov)  
307-620-3020

**Eilish Hanson**  
*Farm Loan Manager- FSA  
Campbell, County Office*

[Eilish.Hanson@usda.gov](mailto:Eilish.Hanson@usda.gov)  
307-682-8843

**County Committee:**

John Buyok- Chair  
Gerry Miller- Vice-Chair  
Ray Daly- Voting Member  
Trevor Lutterman- Voting Member  
Joni Harlan- Voting Member