



- [Staci's Corner](#)
- [USDA Announces Grassland Conservation Reserve Program Signup for 2023](#)
- [NRCS Refines Nutrient Management Strategies to Improve Conservation Outcomes](#)
- [Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers](#)
- [USDA Announces Signup for Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program](#)

Staci's Corner

It looks like Spring might have found us. As the weather warms up and you get your fields ready for planting, please remember that **Monday, July 17th is the deadline for the 2023 Crop Acreage Reports** to be completed. These are what keep you eligible for ALL FSA programs. **EVERYONE has to do these EVERY YEAR.** Look in your mailbox for your appointment card reminders.



If the winter of 2022-2023 taught us anything, it should be that when Winter decides to visit us, it will stay however long it wants. We will encourage you to remember to keep calendars with weather data on them, journals with information, take pictures, screenshot your weather, etc. These records make it so much easier to process and approve applications for livestock losses.

As of May 1st, Weston County has been in a D2 status on the drought monitor for 8 or more consecutive weeks. Due to policy and procedure updates, that means Weston County qualifies for ELAP for Water Transportation and additional feed costs incurred above normal, STARTING on May 1, 2023 and moving forward.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

For ELAP water transportation assistance, a producer must be transporting water to eligible livestock on eligible grazing land where the producer had adequate livestock watering systems or facilities in place before the drought occurred and where they do not normally require the transportation of water. Payments are for costs associated with personal labor, equipment, hired labor, equipment, and/or contracted water transportation fees. Cost of the water itself is not covered. The ELAP payment formula uses a national average price per gallon.

ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING FEED

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who incur above normal expenses for transporting feed to livestock during drought. The payment formula excludes the first 25 miles and any mileage over 1,000 miles. The reimbursement rate is 60% of the costs above what would normally have been incurred during the same time period in a normal (non-drought) year.

Don't Miss Your Opportunity to be Represented in Ag Census Data

Time is running out to respond to the 2022 Census of Agriculture! Thank you to the producers who have already completed the ag census. If you have not responded, there is still time. **By federal law, the ag census questionnaire needs to be completed by everyone who received it, including landowners who lease land to producers, those involved in conservation programs, even those who may have received the ag census and did not farm in 2022.**

Strong response means strong data; these data will inform decisions that will help shape the future of American agriculture for the next five or six years. **By not responding, you risk being unrepresented and therefore underserved in farm programs and funding, crop insurance rates, rural development, disaster assistance, and more.** Return your ag census by mail or fill it out online at agcounts.usda.gov.

Learn more at nass.usda.gov/AgCensus and respond today. Learn more at nass.usda.gov/AgCensus and respond today.

IMPORTANT DATES

May 26th – Grassland CRP Signup DEADLINE

May 29th – Office CLOSED – Memorial Day Observed

June 2nd – DEADLINE to sign up for ERP Phase II and PARP

June 2nd – DEADLINE to sign up for 2022 LFP

June 19th – Office CLOSED – Juneteenth

July 4th – Office CLOSED – 4th of July

July 17th – DEADLINE for Spring Crop Acreage Reporting

Very Sincerely,

Staci L. Green-Steiner, Acting CED

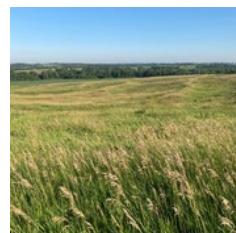
Weston County Natural Resource District

It is that time again for the Black Hills Natural Resource Youth Camp! Weston County Natural Resource District (WCNRD) is excited to partner with Campbell County Conservation District and Powder River Conservation District to host the camp again this year at Mallo. The 2023 camp will take place from June 7-9. Registration is open now and you can get the form at our office or on our website at <https://westoncountynrd.org/black-hills-natural-resources-youth-camp/>. And the best part is that the District covers all registration for Weston County kids!

Are you getting that itch to get growing? Did you know that Newcastle has a community garden? The Weston County Natural Resource District and the Weston County Senior Services partner on maintaining the garden for anyone that wants a place to grow, and we still have beds available for rent! And the price is great, ranging from just \$5 up to \$20 each depending on size. We also have a pumpkin patch with large plots available for pumpkins and squash available for an additional \$10 per row. You can't beat that! The garden is located by the Weston County Senior Services and plots can be reserved by calling them at (307) 746-4903. For more information visit our website at <https://westoncountynrd.org/community-garden/>

USDA Announces Grassland Conservation Reserve Program Signup for 2023

USDA announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin signing up for the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) starting today and running through May 26, 2023. Among CRP enrollment opportunities, Grassland CRP is a unique working lands program, allowing producers and landowners to continue grazing and haying practices while conserving grasslands and promoting plant and animal biodiversity as well as healthier soil.



More than 3.1 million acres were accepted through the 2022 Grassland CRP signup from agricultural producers and private landowners. That signup—the highest ever for the program—reflects the continued success and value of investments in voluntary, producer-led, working lands conservation programs. The current total participation in Grassland CRP is 6.3 million acres, which is part of the 23 million acres enrolled in CRP opportunities overall.

Since 2021, USDA's FSA, which administers all CRP programs, has made several improvements to Grassland CRP to broaden the program's reach, including:

- Creating two [National Priority Zones](#) to put focus on environmentally sensitive land such as that prone to wind erosion.
- Enhancing offers with 10 additional ranking points to producers and landowners who are historically underserved, including beginning farmers and military veterans.

- Leveraging the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP) to engage historically underserved communities within Tribal Nations in the Great Plains.

How to Sign Up for Grassland CRP

Landowners and producers interested in Grassland CRP, or any other CRP enrollment option, should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before the deadlines.

Producers with expiring CRP acres can enroll in the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter into a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.

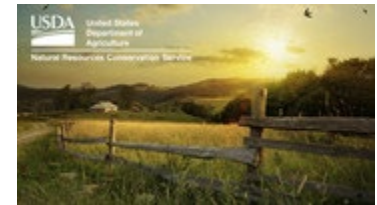
Other CRP Signups

Under [Continuous CRP](#), producers and landowners can enroll throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Continuous CRP includes a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping producers and landowners establish trees and permanent grasses, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands.

FSA offers several additional enrollment opportunities within Continuous CRP, including the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Also available is the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR30) Initiative, which was originally piloted in twelve states but has since been expanded nationwide, giving producers and landowners across the country the opportunity to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices.

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, including nutrient management. 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.

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. For more information, please contact Eilish Hanson at the Campbell County FSA, 307-682-8843 ext 2 or Eilish.hanson@usda.gov

USDA Announces Signup for Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program

The Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) will assist eligible producers of agricultural commodities who experienced revenue decreases in calendar year 2020 compared to 2018 or 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. PARP will help address gaps in previous pandemic assistance, which was targeted at price loss or lack of market access, rather than overall revenue losses.

USDA's Farm Service Agency will accept PARP applications from January 23, 2023, through June 2, 2023.



Eligible and Ineligible Commodities

For PARP, eligible agricultural commodities include crops, aquaculture, livestock, livestock byproducts, or other animals or animal byproducts that are produced as part of a farming operation and are intended to be commercially marketed. This includes only commodities produced in the United States or those produced outside the United States by a producer located in the United States and marketed inside the United States.

The following commodities **are not eligible** for PARP:

- Wild free-roaming animals.
- Horses and other animals used or intended to be used for racing or wagering.
- Aquatic species that do not meet the definition of aquaculture.
- *Cannabis sativa L.* and any part of that plant that does not meet the definition of hemp.
- Timber.

Program Eligibility

PARP payments will be made on a whole-farm basis, not commodity-by-commodity. 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 must have experienced a 15 percent decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020, as compared to either:

- The 2018 or 2019 **calendar year**, as *elected by the producer*, if they received allowable gross revenue during the 2018 or 2019 **calendar years**, or
- The producer's expected 2020 calendar year allowable gross revenue, if the producer had no allowable gross revenue in 2018 or 2019.

PARP payments will be issued after the application period ends on June 2, 2023.

For more information on determining allowable gross revenue visit farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/parp or review the [PARP fact sheet](#).

More Information

To apply for PARP, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).



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