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## Message from Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has extended the deadline to enroll in Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage (SDMC) for program year 2022. FSA opened DMC and SDMC signup in December 2021 to help producers manage economic risk brought on by milk price and feed cost disparities. Dairy operations are encouraged to take advantage of the extended deadline and join the 8,969 operations that have already enrolled for 2022 coverage. At 15 cents per hundredweight at the \$9.50 level of coverage, DMC is a very cost-effective risk management tool for dairy producers. The deadline to apply for 2022 coverage is now **March 25, 2022**.



Sign-up is open for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Producers and landowners enrolled 4.6 million acres into CRP signups in 2021, including 2.5 million acres in the largest Grassland CRP signup in history. There are currently 22.1 million acres enrolled, and FSA is aiming to reach the 25.5-million-acre cap

statutorily set for fiscal year 2022. The General CRP signup will run from **January 31 to March 11**, and the Grassland CRP signup will run from **April 4 to May 13**.

There is a new online tool that allows farmers, ranchers, and other producers and growers to easily report Anticompetitive Practices. There is a one-stop shop to help ensure they are treated fairly. The new [www.farmerfairness.gov](http://www.farmerfairness.gov) portal was developed jointly by USDA and DOJ. It allows potential violations of livestock and poultry antitrust laws, including the Packers and Stockyards Act, to be reported. Anyone who suspects a violation of Federal law governing fair and competitive marketing and contract growing of livestock and poultry, including the Packers and Stockyards Act, may submit a tip.

Also, USDA is delivering on its promise to expand markets by investing \$1 billion in partnerships to support America's climate-smart farmers, ranchers and forest landowners. This new opportunity will finance pilot projects that create market opportunities for U.S. agricultural and forestry products that use climate-smart practices and include innovative, cost-effective ways, to measure and verify greenhouse gas benefits. USDA is now accepting project applications for fiscal year 2022. Funding will be provided in two funding pools, and applicants must submit their applications via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **April 8, 2022**, for the first funding pool (proposals from \$5 million to \$100 million), and by **May 27, 2022**, for the second funding pool (proposals from \$250,000 to \$4,999,999). A wide range of organizations may apply, but the primary applicant must be an entity, not an individual. Visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) for additional information including Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities and resources to support your application.

FSA County Offices are still available to customers. Please contact your local office to determine whether in-person or phone appointments are available. Our Staff is available to continue helping Producers with program signups, loan servicing and other important actions. Our Staff will also continue to work with our customers by phone, email and by using online tools whenever possible.

For more information, contact your [local USDA service center](#) or visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

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## Message from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Mike Sullivan

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$1 billion in a new partnership funding opportunity – **Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities**. This new opportunity will provide support to farm groups, businesses, states, and/or non-profit organizations that are working with multiple producers and landowners applying climate-smart practices on America's farms, ranches and forest lands.

The goal of Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities is to expand climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices nationally. At the same time, we want to increase our understanding of how to most efficiently monitor, measure and track the impacts of these climate-smart practices on greenhouse gas emissions over time and at scale.

Climate-smart agriculture and forestry must work for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners or it won't work for the climate. Therefore, we at USDA believe it's important to establish partnerships in this effort and ensure that the program is voluntary, incentive-based and producer-led. USDA will work with partners through the pilot projects to provide financial and technical assistance to producers and landowners to help them implement climate-smart production practices, activities and systems on working lands; quantify and monitor the carbon and greenhouse gas benefits associated with those practices; and market the resulting climate-smart commodities.

American agriculture is very diverse, so we also want the program to be reflective of this, and USDA is committed to equity in program delivery. Therefore, we are strongly encouraging partners to apply that serve small or historically underserved producers.

Please see additional information in this newsletter on how USDA is investing in climate-smart commodity markets.

### **Reminder for Historically Underserved Producers**

If you are a historically underserved producer and participating in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), you can receive an advance conservation practice payment before you implement a practice.

Under the advance payment option, such producers may request payments when they have final designs & job sheets and are ready to begin their EQIP practices. Advance payments provide at least 50 percent of the payment rate for each practice. The funds must be spent within 90 days of receipt and practices must be completed as agreed to in an EQIP plan of operations. Producers also may opt to have NRCS pay the contractors or vendors directly.

For more information, visit the [advance payments](#) webpage where you can download the [EQIP Advance Payment Fact Sheet](#).

### **Important dates to remember:**

**2021 CSP Payments:** All remaining 2021 CSP payments will be approved by NRCS no later than February 26, 2022. If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to your CSP payment(s), please contact your local FSC.

**Unfunded CSP Renewal Applications:** NRCS updated CSP to allow an agricultural producer to immediately re-enroll in the program following an unfunded application to renew an existing contract. Previously, if a CSP participant did not re-enroll the year their contract expired, they were ineligible for the program for two years. This ineligibility was imposed on CSP participants even if their failure to sign a renewal contract was due to the unavailability of funds, which is beyond their control. USDA is now waiving this two-year ineligibility restriction for all CSP applications. Applicants with unfunded fiscal year 2022 CSP renewals will receive letters this month, notifying them they are automatically eligible to apply for future CSP funding opportunities, rather than needing to wait two years to reapply.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program:** Project proposals for both components of Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) accepted through April 13, 2022. View the funding opportunity for RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

**East Arkansas Delta RCPP:** Lee, St. Francis, Monroe & Phillips County Farmers and Landowners in the East Arkansas Delta RCPP project who submit applications for **Conservation Planning Assistance** by April 29 will receive priority. For more information, visit <http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/> or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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## **Upcoming Events and Workshops**

The USDA Arkansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to educating producers on available programs and loans. FSA representatives will be available at the following workshops and conferences.

**Jul 21<sup>st</sup> – Vegetable Production Workshop** The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) is hosting a virtual workshop on Vegetable Production. **Paul Casey, Lonoke County Executive Director will present on New and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Obtaining a Farm Number, NAP, and FSA Information Resources.** This VIRTUAL



Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Please contact your local FSA Office (visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator)) if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the new text message option.

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## USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Signups for 2022

Agricultural producers and landowners can sign up soon for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a cornerstone conservation program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a key tool in the Biden-Harris Administration effort to address climate change and achieve other natural resource benefits. The General CRP signup will run from **Jan. 31 to March 11**, and the Grassland CRP signup will run from **April 4 to May 13**.

Producers and landowners enrolled 4.6 million acres into CRP signups in 2021, including 2.5 million acres in the largest Grassland CRP signup in history. There are currently 22.1 million acres enrolled, and FSA is aiming to reach the 25.5-million-acre cap statutorily set for fiscal year 2022.

### CRP Signups

General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland.

Meanwhile, Grassland CRP is a working lands program, helping landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as working grazing lands. Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations and provides important carbon sequestration benefits to deliver lasting climate outcomes.

Alongside these programs, producers and landowners can enroll acres in Continuous CRP under the ongoing sign up, which includes projects available through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE).

### Climate Benefits

Last year, FSA enacted a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive for CRP General and Continuous signups, to better target CRP on addressing climate change. This incentive aims to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. CRP's climate-smart practices include establishment of trees and permanent grasses, development of wildlife habitat and wetland restoration. The Climate-Smart Practice Incentive is annual, and the amount is based on the benefits of each practice type.

Additionally, in order to better target the program toward climate outcomes, USDA invested \$10 million last year in the CRP Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation (MAE) program to measure and monitor the soil carbon and climate resilience impacts of conservation practices over the life of new CRP contracts. This will enable the agency to

further refine the program and practices to provide producers tools for increased climate resilience.

### **More Information on CRP**

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program -- for General CRP before the **March 11 deadline**, and for Grassland CRP before the **May 13 deadline**. Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Due to the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Additionally, fact sheets and other resources are available at [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp).

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits.

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## **USDA Opens 2022 Signup for Dairy Margin Coverage, Expands Program for Supplemental Production**

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing efforts to support dairy farmers and rural communities, today the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) opened signup for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program and expanded the program to allow dairy producers to better protect their operations by enrolling supplemental production. This signup period – which runs from Dec. 13, 2021 to Feb. 18, 2022 – enables producers to get coverage through this important safety-net program for another year as well as get additional assistance through the new Supplemental DMC.

Supplemental DMC will provide \$580 million to better help small- and mid-sized dairy operations that have increased production over the years but were not able to enroll the additional production. Now, they will be able to retroactively receive payments for that supplemental production. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) updated how feed costs are calculated, which will make the program more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses.

### **Supplemental DMC Enrollment**

Eligible dairy operations with less than 5 million pounds of established production history may enroll supplemental pounds based upon a formula using 2019 actual milk marketings, which will result in additional payments. Producers will be required to provide FSA with their 2019 Milk Marketing Statement.

Supplemental DMC coverage is applicable to calendar years 2021, 2022 and 2023. Participating dairy operations with supplemental production may receive retroactive supplemental payments for 2021 in addition to payments based on their established production history.

Supplemental DMC will require a revision to a producer's 2021 DMC contract and must occur before enrollment in DMC for the 2022 program year. Producers will be able to revise 2021 DMC contracts and then apply for 2022 DMC by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](#).

### **DMC 2022 Enrollment**

After making any revisions to 2021 DMC contracts for Supplemental DMC, producers can sign up for 2022 coverage. DMC provides eligible dairy producers with risk management coverage that pays producers when the difference between the price of milk and the cost of feed falls

below a certain level. So far in 2021, DMC payments have triggered for January through October for more than \$1.0 billion.

For DMC enrollment, producers must certify with FSA that the operation is commercially marketing milk, sign all required forms and pay the \$100 administrative fee. The fee is waived for farmers who are considered limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged, or a military veteran. To determine the appropriate level of DMC coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can use the [online dairy decision tool](#).

### **Updates to Feed Costs**

USDA is also changing the DMC feed cost formula to better reflect the actual cost dairy farmers pay for high-quality alfalfa hay. FSA will calculate payments using 100% premium alfalfa hay rather than 50%. The amended feed cost formula will make DMC payments more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses.

### **Additional Dairy Assistance**

Today's announcement is part of a broader package to help the dairy industry respond to the pandemic and other challenges. USDA is also amending Dairy Indemnity Payment Program (DIPP) regulations to add provisions for the indemnification of cows that are likely to be not marketable for longer durations, as a result, for example, of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. FSA also worked closely with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to target assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program) and other conservation programs to help producers safely dispose of and address resource concerns created by affected cows. Other recent dairy announcements include \$350 million through the Pandemic Market Volatility Assistance Program and \$400 million for the Dairy Donation Program.

Additional details on these changes to DMC and DIPP can be found in a rule that will be published soon in the *Federal Register*. This rule also included information on the new Oriental Fruit Fly Program as well as changes to FSA conservation programs. A copy of the rule is available [here](#).

### **More Information**

To learn more or to participate in DMC or DIPP, producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some are open to limited visitors. Producers should contact their Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## **Foreign Buyers Notification**

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the [AFIDA form](#) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements. The data gained from these disclosures is used in the preparation of periodic reports to the President and Congress concerning the effect of such holdings upon family farms and rural communities. Click [here](#) for more information on AFIDA.

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# 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.

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## 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.

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## USDA Offers Expanded Conservation Program Opportunities to Support Climate Smart Agriculture in 2022

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing several new and expanded opportunities for climate smart agriculture in 2022. Updates include nationwide availability of the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) Conservation Incentive Contracts option, a new and streamlined EQIP Cover Crop Initiative, and added flexibilities for producers to easily re-enroll in the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP). These improvements to NRCS' working lands conservation programs, combined with continued [program opportunities in all states](#), are part of the Biden-Harris Administration's broader effort to support climate-smart agriculture.

**New Partnership Announced** NRCS is announcing a new partnership with Farmers For Soil Health, an initiative of the United Soybean Board, National Corn Growers Association and National Pork Board. Farmers For Soil Health works to advance use of soil health practices – especially cover crops – on corn and soybean farms. The initiative has a goal of doubling the number of corn and soybean acres using cover crops to 30 million acres by 2030. Other partners include the National Association of Conservation Districts, Soil Health Institute, and The Sustainability Consortium.

## **EQIP Cover Crop Initiative**

To complement the new partnership, NRCS is investing \$38 million through the new targeted Cover Crop Initiative in 11 states to help agricultural producers mitigate climate change through the widespread adoption of cover crops. States include Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and South Dakota. States were selected for this initial pilot based on their demonstrated demand for additional support for the cover crop practice.

Sign-up dates will be determined at the state-level, and applications will be selected for funding by Feb. 11, 2022. The initiative is aimed at improving soil health through a targeted, rapid, and streamlined application and contract approval process. NRCS will continue to build on this framework and streamlined application process to support farmers and ranchers across the country.

Cover crops offer agricultural producers a natural and inexpensive climate solution through their ability to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide into soils. Cover crops can provide an accelerated, positive impact on natural resource concerns. In fiscal 2021, NRCS provided technical and financial assistance to help producers plant 2.3 million acres of cover crops through EQIP.

## **EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts**

Conservation Incentive Contracts address priority resource concerns, including sequestering carbon and improving soil health in high-priority areas. Through these contracts, NRCS works with producers to strengthen the quality and condition of natural resources on their operations using management practices, such as irrigation water management, drainage water management, feed management and residue and tillage management that target resource concerns, including degraded soil and water quality, available water and soil erosion.

Conservation Incentive Contracts offer producers annual incentive payments to implement management practices as well as conservation evaluation and monitoring activities to help manage, maintain and improve priority natural resource concerns within state high-priority areas and build on existing conservation efforts. [Download our “Conservation Incentive Contracts” fact sheet](#) for a list of practices.

## **CSP Re-Enrollment Option**

NRCS updated CSP to allow an agricultural producer to immediately re-enroll in the program following an unfunded application to renew an existing contract. Previously, if a CSP participant did not re-enroll the year their contract expired, they were ineligible for the program for two years.

This ineligibility was imposed on CSP participants even if their failure to sign a renewal contract was due to the unavailability of funds, which is beyond their control. USDA is now waiving this two-year ineligibility restriction for all CSP applications.

This year, producers renewed 2,600 CSP contracts covering 3.4 million acres. Applicants with unfunded fiscal 2022 CSP renewals will receive letters this month, notifying them they are

automatically eligible to apply for future CSP funding opportunities, rather than needing to wait two years to reapply.

## How to Apply

NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs – including EQIP and CSP – year-round, however you should apply by [state-specific, signup dates](#) to be considered for each year's funding. To apply, you should contact your closest USDA service center.

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# USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Accepting 2022 Applications for Conservation Planning Assistance in One Arkansas RCPP Project

Farmers and landowners in the East Arkansas Delta Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project in Arkansas can apply to receive conservation planning assistance in fiscal year 2022.

Technical assistance is available for agriculture producers who want to work with NRCS and the East Arkansas Enterprise Community (EAEC) to develop a voluntary conservation plan. These are free plans that identify potential natural resource problems, evaluate alternatives, and recommend solutions that could make use of the land more effective and sustainable.

This planning effort is being conducted in advance of two years of financial assistance to be made available in the project area in 2023 and 2024. The anticipated financial assistance may help eligible participants offset a portion of the cost of implementing components of the conservation plans. Producers who request plans through this sign up and are treating project resource concerns may receive priority consideration for funding in future years.

Farmers and landowners in Lee, St. Francis, Monroe and Phillips counties who submit applications to their local NRCS office by April 29, 2022 will receive priority planning assistance.

The East Arkansas Delta RCPP project will implement innovative, effective and compelling solutions for the primary resource concerns related to land improvement/management/restoration of row crop and alternative crop producers and landowners in Lee, St. Francis, Monroe and Phillips counties. The objectives are to provide technical and financial assistance to all eligible producers and landowners, including socially disadvantaged producers and landowners in four select StrikeForce counties to improve their resource management and cropping systems and to help producers and landowners to identify the conservation activities they need to solve their conservation problems and install appropriate innovative conservation practices to decrease water quality degradation; improve habitat for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates; and reduce excess/insufficient water/drought.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with NRCS or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment.

Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [farmers.gov](#) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and payments and view and track certain USDA program applications and payments. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](#). Online NRCS services are available to customers through the [Conservation Client Gateway](#) link which can be found at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](#). Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents.

RCPP promotes coordination of NRCS conservation activities with partners that offer value-added contributions to expand our collective ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. Through RCPP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address.

For more information, visit <http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/> or contact by phone your local USDA/NRCS Field Service Center.

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## USDA to Invest up to \$225 Million in Partner-Driven Conservation on Agricultural and Forest Land

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced up to \$225 million in available funding for conservation partners through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). RCPP is a partner-driven program that leverages collective resources to find solutions to address natural resource challenges on agricultural land. This year's funding announcements include opportunities for projects that address climate change, benefit historically underserved producers and support urban agriculture.

There are two types of funding opportunities under RCPP: RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). RCPP Classic projects are implemented using NRCS contracts and easements with producers, landowners and communities, in collaboration with project partners. Through RCPP AFA, partners have more flexibility in working directly with agricultural producers to support the development of new conservation structures and approaches that would not otherwise be available under RCPP Classic. Project types that may be suited to AFA, as highlighted by the 2018 Farm Bill include:

- Projects that use innovative approaches to leverage the federal investment in conservation.
- Projects that deploy a pay-for-performance conservation approach.
- Projects that seek large-scale infrastructure investment that generate conservation benefits for agricultural producers and nonindustrial private forest owners.

USDA is accepting project proposals for both components of RCPP through 11:59 p.m. on April 13, 2022. View the funding opportunity on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for [RCPP Classic](#) and [RCPP AFA](#).

Additionally, a webinar with general program information for RCPP applicants is scheduled for 3-4:30 p.m. ET on Jan. 20, 2022. Visit the [RCPP website](#) for information on how to participate.

Funding is open to agriculture and silviculture associations, non-government organizations, Indian tribes, state and local governments, conservation districts and universities, among others.

Partners are expected to offer value-added contributions to amplify the impact of RCPP funding in an amount equal to or greater than the NRCS investment.

Private landowners can apply to participate in an RCPP project in their region through awarded partners or at their local [USDA service center](#).

### More Information

First authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill, RCPP has leveraged partner contributions of more than \$1 for every \$1 invested by USDA, resulting in nearly \$3 billion collectively invested in natural resource conservation on private lands. Since inception, RCPP has made 579 awards

involving over 3,000 partner organizations. Currently there are 408 active projects, with at least one active project in every state and area. Successful RCPP projects provide innovative conservation solutions, leverage partner contributions and offer impactful and measurable outcomes.

Today's RCPP announcement builds on other efforts by the Biden-Harris Administration to address climate change. Earlier this week, NRCS announced a new [Cover Crop Initiative](#), available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help agricultural producers mitigate climate change through the widespread adoption of cover crops. NRCS also announced the signup for [EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts](#) and [an improvement to the Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP).

Last week, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced details of the new [Post Application Coverage Endorsement](#), providing coverage for corn producers who "split apply nitrogen," a more conservation friendly way to apply fertilizer.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

## Producers with Crop Insurance to Receive Premium Benefit for Cover Crops

Agricultural producers who have coverage under most crop insurance policies are eligible for a premium benefit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) if they planted cover crops during the 2022 crop year. To receive the benefit from this year's Pandemic Cover Crop Program (PCCP), producers must report cover crop acreage by **March 15, 2022**.

< [Pandemic Cover Crop Program](#) >

## Rates and Dates

Selected Interest Rates for February 2022			
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125		
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.250	<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	2.875	1/31/22 thru	Conservation Reserve General Signup
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500	2/25/22	Dairy Margin deadline
Emergency Loans	3.250	3/15/22	ARCPLC deadline
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years)	1.375		
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years)	1.750		
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.375		



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[www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov)  
[www.ar.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.ar.fsa.usda.gov)  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

**FSA State Executive Director**  
*Doris Washington*

**NRCS State Conservationist**  
*Mike Sullivan*

*Please contact your local Office for questions specific to your operation or county.*

***FSA State Committee Meeting: 2nd Wednesday and Thursday of each Quarter***