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

Greetings,

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) encouraged farmers to keep the tillage equipment in the machine shed during No-Till November.

This NRCS campaign encourages farmers to “keep the stubble” on their harvested crops fields. The campaign has reached more than two million people nationally through Twitter and local media since 2017.

No-till farming is a cornerstone soil health conservation practice used to minimize disturbance and maximize soil cover, which also promotes water quality while saving farmers time and money. It is also a key climate smart practice, that helps store more carbon in the soil. One of the first soil health principles to support high functioning soils is to minimize soil disturbance. Tillage is a common type of soil disturbance in agriculture, excessive disturbance can destroy soil structure, increase soil erosion and compaction, and degrade soil organic matter. This campaign is a great way to remind farmers about the important relationship between tillage and soil health.

According to the Arkansas Soil Health Alliance (ASHA) the benefits of no-till are multiplied when no-till is used in conjunction with other sustainable practices such as cover crops. Improving soil health increases soil biological activity, which provides erosion control, higher infiltration, improves nutrient availability, and increase soil organic matter. Other core and supporting conservation practices that can help us protect and feed the soil are Residue and Tillage Management (329/345), Conservation Cover (327), Nutrient Management (590), Pest Management Conservation System (595), Cover Crops (340), Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Mulching (484) and Shallow Water Development and Management (646).

Watch this link from the Conservation At Work video series to learn more about no-till farming <https://youtu.be/DBYeb66dN80>. Additional videos on no-till and soil health can be found on YouTube by searching Arkansas Soil Health Alliance.

### **Save Money on Fuel with No-Till Farming**

USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) has released a new report quantifying the potential fuel savings of conservation tillage practices. You may [access the report here](#). A blog highlighting key findings – including annual fuel savings a farmer could expect by switching from conventional tillage to continuous no-till, and resulting dollars saved per acre – is published on [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) [here](#).

### **State-Level Data on No-Till**

We know there is interest in state-level data related to no-till and other conservation practices. While the [new fuel savings report released by the Conservation Effects Assessment Project](#) focuses on averaged national data, there are other data resources available for state-specific insights. Two resources are outlined below.

### **2017 Census of Agriculture**

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) provides state-level data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture. You may navigate to [this page](#) for a wide range of state-specific data, including state/county level data on no-till.

*Steps for state-level no-till data are:*

1. Open the [NASS webpage linked above](#).
2. Under Census Chapter, select: 2 – State/County Level Data.
3. Under Census Table, select: 41 – Land Use Practices.
4. Under State, select your state of interest.
5. Under County, input a county of interest if needed. This is optional and may be left blank for statewide data.
6. Click the “Update Grid” button on the far left.

This will provide multiple rows of 2017 data, including the number of operation and acres in no-till in your state of interest and, separately, conservation tillage excluding no-till. Data for conventional tillage is also provided.

Please note, this NASS data captures all farm operations regardless of conservation support from NRCS or other agencies or entities.

**Important Dates to Remember:**

November 30 – December 1 – Arkansas Farm Bureau Convention and Tradeshow at the Hot Springs Convention Center

December 16 - Deadline to approve Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) payments for participants who elected to receive payment in calendar year 2022

December 30 - CSP- Grassland Conservation Initiative (GCI) Obligation deadline

December 30 - FY23 CSP-Renewal obligation deadline

January 26, 2023 - Arkansas Rice Annual Meeting at the Grand Prairie Center in Stuttgart

January 25 - January 28, 2023 - Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo at Embassy Suites in Little Rock

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

Greetings

November is National Veterans and Military Families Month. On Veterans Day, we recognized all the brave men and women who have served in the U.S. armed forces and their families for the tremendous sacrifices they have made to protect our democracy and the liberties and freedoms that we cherish. I know that we have many veterans who are part of our Farm Service Agency (FSA) family, and we also have many Veterans that are customers. I want to take this opportunity to recognize your service to our Nation and thank each one of you.

FSA has mailed ballots, for County Committee Elections, to eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the state. Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots be postmarked by December 5, 2022, in order for those ballots to be counted. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from their local FSA county office. Visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator) to find your local USDA Service Center and [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) for more information.

Newly elected committee members will take office January 1, 2023.

If you are a farmer, rancher or forest manager, please share your vital feedback with USDA by taking a nationwide survey at [farmers.gov/survey](https://farmers.gov/survey)! The survey is completely anonymous, will take about 10 minutes to complete, is available in multiple languages, and will be open until March 31, 2023. The survey focuses on gathering feedback about the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA). The survey will help USDA enhance support, improve programs and services, increase access, and advance equity for new and existing customers.

USDA has launched a new online tool to help farmers and ranchers better navigate the farm loan application process. This uniform application process will help to ensure all farm loan applicants receive equal support and have a consistent customer experience with FSA regardless of their individual circumstances. FSA experiences a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, particularly among underserved customers, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-based application process. The Loan Assistance Tool is available 24/7 and gives customers an online step-by-step guide that supplements the support they receive when working in person with a USDA employee, providing

materials that may help an applicant prepare their loan application in one tool. Farmers can access the Loan Assistance Tool by visiting [farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool](https://farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool). The Loan Assistance Tool is the first of multiple farm loan process improvements that will be available to USDA customers on farmers.gov in the future.

The new Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program will provide up to \$200 million in assistance for specialty crop producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 or 2023. The FSCSC application period for 2022 runs through January 31, 2023. The application period for 2023 will be announced at a later date. Producers can visit [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://farmers.gov/food-safety) for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

Visit [www.farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov) to learn more about FSA Programs.

Happy Thanksgiving! I hope your thoughts venture to those things for which you are most grateful. Until next month...

## **USDA Releases Nationwide Farmer, Rancher and Forest Manager Prospective Customer Survey USDA needs your vital feedback to make programs more accessible, equitable and easier to use**



As a farmer, rancher or forest manager, your on-the-ground contribution to American agriculture is vitally important. Your efforts are key to the Nation's production of food, fuel and fiber, and your feedback is essential in helping the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) improve government programs and services to support you. Please consider taking this very important nationwide farmer, rancher and forest manager survey by March 31, 2023.

USDA has released a nationwide survey asking for feedback from all farmers, ranchers, and forest managers. USDA would like to hear from existing customers, and they hope to also reach a new audience of prospective customers, specifically those that don't know

about USDA, have yet to work with USDA, and those who were unable to participate in the past.

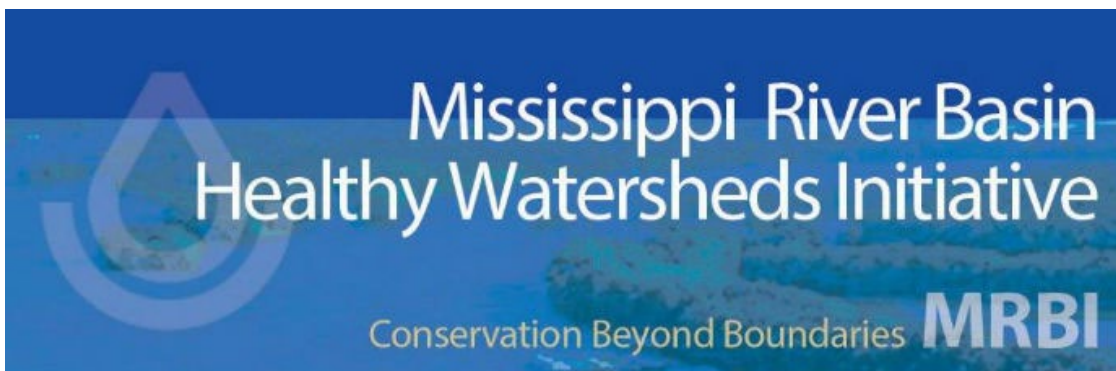
**Please visit [www.farmers.gov/survey](http://www.farmers.gov/survey) by March 31, 2023, to access the survey online in multiple languages! The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and responses are anonymous.**

**Background.** USDA works hand in hand with farmers, ranchers, forest managers, and agricultural partners to help mitigate the risks of farming through crop insurance, conservation programs, farm safety net programs, lending, and disaster programs. From helping farmers recover after natural disasters and market fluctuations, to providing financial and technical assistance to improve operations through voluntary conservation, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA), work together to protect and enhance the natural resources vital to our Nation.

**Feedback Benefits.** USDA works to improve services, making government agricultural programs more accessible, equitable and easier to use. Survey feedback will assist these agencies, specifically the FSA, NRCS and RMA, in learning about ways to enhance support and improve programs and services, increase access and advance equity for new and existing customers. One of the ways the USDA works to engage landowners to improve services is by regularly asking for their valuable input. USDA takes that feedback and works directly with agencies to streamline processes, programs, paperwork and much more, making it easier for customers to access programs and services. Your input will help shape FSA, NRCS and RMA policies and programs going forward. The more participation, the better data USDA will have to inform future agency and program decisions to benefit the nations producers and landowners.

**Act Now.** USDA really needs your help! If you are a farmer, rancher or forest manager, don't delay! Please take the survey now, and share the link or QR code with farmers, ranchers and forest managers you may know, and in farmer networks you have access to. USDA looks forward to hearing your feedback!

## **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Accepting EQIP Applications through Dec 23, 2022, for Three Arkansas Water Quality Projects**



The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is investing in three new landscape-level water quality efforts for the [Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative](#) (MRBI).

"We have learned that when we work with producers and partner to install conservation practices within critical watersheds, we see a positive impact," said NRCS State Conservationist in Arkansas Mike Sullivan. "Through these partnerships, we accelerate

and maximize the delivery of our conservation efforts which yields greater results to water quality and benefits the public, our natural resources and farmers' bottom lines.”

Arkansas has three new MRBI projects that will be receiving financial assistance dollars in fiscal year 2023. NRCS accepts program applications on a continuous basis but sets dates to batch and rank applications as funding allows. Farmers and landowners in Arkansas who submit applications to their local NRCS office by Dec, 23, 2022, will be considered for this round of funding. Applications received after Dec. 23, 2022, will be considered in later funding periods, subject to funding availability.

Arkansas's project areas are:

#### **MRBI**

- North Big Creek-Strawberry River – Portions of Sharp and Izard counties
- West Craighead – Portions of Craighead, Jackson, Greene, and Lawrence
- Arkansas County Lower White – Portions of Arkansas county

NRCS has strengthened its focus on watershed assessment and partner engagement in selecting priority small watersheds in recent years. Partners are encouraged to work with Arkansas NRCS for new project area interests.

All applications will be evaluated for funding based on local, state and nationally developed criteria to optimize environmental benefits. Applications ranking highest in a funding category will be funded according to priority and is subject to availability of program funds.

For more information, visit <http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/> or contact the local your local [USDA Service Center](#).

## **USDA Requests Public Input on Implementation of Inflation Reduction Act Funding**



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is asking for public input through a Federal Register request for information on implementation of more than \$19 billion provided by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will use the investments provided through IRA-funded conservation programs to support farmers and ranchers in adopting and expanding climate-smart activities and systems. NRCS asks for comments on how to target program benefits, quantify impact, and improve program delivery and outreach, especially for underserved producers. Comments are due Dec. 21, 2022. NRCS will identify immediate changes that can be made in fiscal year 2023 and will continue to identify and adopt additional changes in future years.

"Agriculture is at the forefront of the nation's effort to address climate change, and we want to hear from people on the ground how to implement our programs to maximize climate benefits, promote equity and assist all producers," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "From climate-smart agriculture, to supporting healthy forests and conservation, to tax credits, to biofuels, infrastructure and beyond, this legislation provides USDA with significant additional resources to lead this historic charge."

The Inflation Reduction Act provided unprecedented funding levels for several of the existing programs that NRCS implements. The increased funding levels begin in fiscal year 2023 and rapidly build over four years, totaling these additional amounts:

- \$8.45 billion – Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- \$3.25 billion – Conservation Stewardship Program
- \$4.95 billion – Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- \$1.4 billion – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
- \$1 billion – Conservation Technical Assistance

NRCS is asking for public input on how to best maximize benefits for climate mitigation, including targeting practices and programs that provide quantifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, NRCS is requesting feedback to help identify strategies and provide recommendations on how to maximize, target, monitor, and quantify improvements to soil carbon, reductions in nitrogen losses, and the reduction, capture, avoidance, or sequestration of carbon dioxide, methane or nitrous oxide emissions associated with agricultural production. NRCS is also seeking ideas for how to further streamline and improve program delivery to increase efficiencies and expand program access for producers, especially underserved producers.

"NRCS will look to identify immediate changes that can be implemented for funding available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and will continue to identify and adopt additional changes in future years," said Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist Mike Sullivan.

Public comments should be submitted through the this [Federal Register notice](#) by Dec. 21, 2022. If you have questions, contact [NRCS.IRA.Input@usda.gov](mailto:NRCS.IRA.Input@usda.gov).

### **More Information**

On August 16, President Biden signed the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) into law. It is a historic, once-in-a-generation investment and opportunity for the agricultural communities that USDA serves. The Inflation Reduction Act will help producers stay on the farm, prevent producers from becoming ineligible for future assistance and promote climate-smart agriculture by increasing access to conservation assistance. In October, USDA took action using Inflation Reduction Act funds to immediately [provide relief to qualifying distressed borrowers](#) whose operations are at financial risk while working on making transformational changes to loan servicing.

USDA has already provided nearly \$800 million in assistance to financially distressed borrowers and has outlined steps to administer up to an additional \$500 million in payments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under 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 [usda.gov](https://usda.gov).

## **Urban Producers, Public Invited to Attend November Meeting of Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages urban producers, innovative producers, and other stakeholders to virtually attend the third public meeting of the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (Committee) on November 29. This Committee will discuss recommendations it intends to submit to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to remove barriers to urban and innovative producers and increase access of urban and innovative producers to USDA programs and services.

"The federal advisory committee's expertise and guidance is helping us dig into issues facing urban producers, enabling us to determine ways USDA can better serve them," said Terry Cosby, Chief of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which leads USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). "This partnership helps urban producers as well as the neighborhoods they grow in, supporting equity and resilient local food systems and access to nutritious food."

The Committee is part of USDA's efforts to support urban and innovative agriculture, creating a network for feedback. Members include agricultural producers, and representatives from the areas of higher education or extension programs, non-profits, business and economic development, supply chains and financing. The inaugural public meeting of the Committee was held in March 2022 and a second public meeting was held in August 2022.

### **About the Meeting**

Topics include:

- Election of the next Chairperson; and
- Discussion, deliberation and voting on recommendations for the Secretary.

The meeting will be held from 3-5 p.m. ET on November 29. To attend virtually, register by Nov. 28 on the [Committee's webpage](#).

If you have written comments, submit by 11:59 p.m. November 22 through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Docket #2022-24020.

For special accommodations, contact Markus Holliday at [UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov).



USDA will share the agenda between 24 to 48 hours prior to the meeting on [www.usda.gov/partnerships/federal-advisory-committee-urban-ag](http://www.usda.gov/partnerships/federal-advisory-committee-urban-ag). Additionally, other resources include the [November 4 Federal Register notice](#) and the [Committee's webpage](#).

## More Information

OUAIP was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by NRCS and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture and innovative production. The Committee is part of a broader USDA investment in urban and innovative agriculture. Other efforts include:

- Renewing the [People's Garden Initiative](#), which celebrates collaborative gardens across the country and worldwide that benefit their communities by growing fresh, healthy food and supporting resilient, local food systems using sustainable practices and providing greenspace.
- Providing [grants for urban agriculture and innovative production](#) that target areas of nutrition access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers, and policy development related to zoning and other urban production needs. This year, USDA invested [\\$14.2 million in 52 projects](#) announced in late October as well as \$18.7 million in 75 grant-worthy projects that were not able to be funded in 2021. The American Rescue Plan Act was a major source of funds for these grants.
- Providing [cooperative agreements](#) that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans.
- Investing in [risk management education](#) to broaden reach of crop insurance among urban producers.
- Organizing 17 FSA urban county committees to make important decisions about how FSA farm programs are administered locally. Urban farmers who participate in USDA programs in the areas selected are encouraged to participate by nominating and voting.

Learn more at [usda.gov/urban](http://usda.gov/urban). For additional resources available to producers, download our [Urban Agriculture at a Glance brochure](#) or visit [farmers.gov/urban](http://farmers.gov/urban).

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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. Producers interested in attending these conferences/workshops should follow the registration or RSVP instructions listed below.

### **Nov 30<sup>th</sup> – Dec 1<sup>st</sup> – Arkansas Farm Bureau Convention and Tradeshow**

Arkansas Farm Bureau will be hosting their annual convention and tradeshow at the Hot Springs Convention Center, 134 Convention Blvd, Hot Springs, AR. **FSA will have an informational Booth.** For additional information, please contact Farm Bureau: [Arkansas Farm Bureau \(arfb.com\)](http://ArkansasFarmBureau(arfb.com)).

**Dec 15th – 16th – National Black Growers Council (NBGC) Annual Meeting**  
NBGC will be hosting their Annual Meeting and Conference at the Westin Hotel, Memphis, TN this year. **FSA will have an informational Booth and Employees will be available to discuss programs and answer questions.** Registration will begin December 14, 2022 and the annual meeting/conference will be held December 15-16, 2022. Please save the date! Information will be forthcoming. Please visit [NBGC's Website](#) for additional information.

**Jan 25<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> – Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo**  
The Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Arkansas Grown program is partnering with Arkansas agriculture associations and organizations to host the first-ever Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo! The Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo. **FSA will have an informational Booth.** The conference and expo will be held at the Embassy Suites, West Little Rock, AR. Please visit [Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo - Arkansas Grown](#) for additional information.

**Apr 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> - Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference (AWIA)** Arkansas Women in Agriculture is hosting the 2023 Conference on April 3 & 4, 2023. Please save the date! The conference will be held at the Hot Springs Convention Center, 134 Convention Blvd, Hot Springs, AR. **FSA will have an Information Booth and Employees will be available to discuss programs and answer questions.** Information will be forthcoming. Please visit: [AWIAs Website](#) for additional information.

## December 5 is the Last Day to Return County Committee Election Ballots

**County Committee Elections 2022**

Date	Action
Jun. 15 2022	Beginning of nomination period. Forms available at <a href="https://fsa.usda.gov/elections">fsa.usda.gov/elections</a> .
Aug. 1 2022	Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.
Nov. 7 2022	Ballots mailed to eligible voters.
Dec. 5 2022	Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.
Jan. 1 2023	Newly elected county committee members take office.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began mailing ballots this week for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [county and urban county committee elections](#) to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the country. Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these committee members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots be postmarked by Dec. 5, 2022, in order for those ballots to be counted.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits. Additionally, producers who are not of legal voting age but

supervise and conduct farming operations for an entire farm are eligible to vote in these elections.

Each committee has from three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms, and at least one seat representing an LAA is up for election each year. Ballots must be in the mail or delivered in person by close of business Dec. 5, 2022, to be counted. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2023.

Producers can find out if their LAA is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from their local FSA county office. Visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator) to find your local USDA Service Center and [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) for more information.

**More Information** 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 [usda.gov](https://usda.gov).

## Dairy Producers Can Now Enroll for 2023 Signup for Dairy Margin Coverage

Dairy producers can now enroll for 2023 coverage through the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) Program, an important safety net program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that helps producers manage changes in milk and feed prices. Last year, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) took steps to improve coverage, especially for small- and mid-sized dairies, including offering a new Supplemental DMC program and updating its feed cost formula to better address retroactive, current and future feed costs. These changes continue to support producers through this year's signup, which begins today and ends Dec. 9, 2022.

DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

So far in 2022, DMC payments to more than 17,000 dairy operations have triggered for August for more than \$47.9 million. According to DMC margin projections, an indemnity payment is projected for September as well. At \$0.15 per hundredweight for \$9.50 coverage, risk coverage through DMC is a relatively inexpensive investment.

DMC offers different levels of coverage, even an option that is free to producers, aside from a \$100 administrative fee. Limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or a military veteran farmers or ranchers are exempt from paying the administrative fee, if requested. To determine the appropriate level of DMC coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can use the [online dairy decision tool](#).

### Supplemental DMC

Last year, USDA introduced Supplemental DMC, which provided \$42.8 million in payments to better help small- and mid-sized dairy operations that had increased production over the years but were not able to enroll the additional production. Supplemental DMC is also available for 2023.

Supplemental DMC coverage is applicable to calendar years 2021, 2022 and 2023. Eligible dairy operations with less than 5 million pounds of established production history may enroll supplemental pounds.

For producers who enrolled in Supplemental DMC in 2022, the supplemental coverage will automatically be added to the 2023 DMC contract that previously established a supplemental production history.

Producers who did not enroll in Supplemental DMC in 2022 can do so now. Producers should complete their Supplemental DMC enrollment before enrolling in 2023 DMC. To enroll, producers will need to provide their 2019 actual milk marketings, which FSA uses to determine established production history.

### **DMC Payments**

Additionally, FSA will continue to calculate DMC payments using updated feed and premium hay costs, making the program more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses. These updated feed calculations use 100% premium alfalfa hay rather than 50%. The benefits of these feed cost adjustments were realized in the recent August 2022 margin payment as current high feed and premium hay costs were considered in payment calculations.

### **More Information**

In addition to DMC, USDA offers other risk management tools for dairy producers, including the [Dairy Revenue Protection \(DRP\)](#) plan that protects against a decline in milk revenue (yield and price) and the [Livestock Gross Margin \(LGM\)](#) plan, which provides protection against the loss of the market value of livestock minus the feed costs. Both DRP and LGM livestock insurance policies are offered through the Risk Management Agency. Producers should contact their local [crop insurance agent](#) for more information.

For more information on DMC, visit the [DMC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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## **FSA Offers Drought Assistance for Livestock Producers Through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)**

If you've suffered above normal expenses for hauling feed or water to livestock or hauling livestock to forage/grazing acres due to the impacts of drought, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

For eligible producers in qualifying counties, ELAP provides financial assistance for:

- the transportation of water to livestock;
- the above normal cost of mileage for transporting feed to livestock,
- the above normal cost of transporting livestock to forage/grazing acres.\*

*\*Hauling livestock one-way, one haul per animal reimbursement and no payment for "empty miles."*

Eligible livestock include cattle, buffalo, goats and sheep, among others, that are maintained for commercial use and located in a county where the qualifying drought

conditions occur. A county must have had D2 severe drought intensity on the U.S. Drought Monitor for eight consecutive weeks during the normal grazing period, or D3 or D4 drought intensity at any time during the normal grazing period. Producers must have risk in both eligible livestock and eligible grazing land in an eligible county to qualify for ELAP assistance.

## **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. **ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING LIVESTOCK TO FORAGE/GRAZING ACRES**

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who are hauling livestock to a new location for feed resources due to insufficient feed and/or grazing in drought-impacted areas. Assistance for Livestock transportation is retroactive to 2021 and available for 2022 and subsequent years. **Please contact your county FSA office for additional details.**

For calendar year 2022 forward, producers must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office **within 30 calendar days** of when the loss is apparent; producers should contact their county FSA office as soon as the loss of water resources or feed resources are known. For ELAP eligibility, documentation of expenses is critical. Producers should maintain records and receipts associated with the costs of transporting water to eligible livestock, the costs of transporting feed to eligible livestock, and the costs of transporting eligible livestock to forage/grazing acres.

ELAP also offers assistance to producers impacted by wildfire. Contact your county FSA office for more information on ELAP resources for wildfire losses. In addition, beekeepers also can benefit from ELAP provisions and should contact their county FSA office within 15 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent. For more information regarding ELAP, contact your local County USDA Service Center at or visit [fsa.usda.gov/disaster](https://fsa.usda.gov/disaster).

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## **Disaster Assistance for 2022 Livestock Forage Losses**

Producers in some counties are eligible to apply for 2022 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on, native pasture, improved pasture.

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land.

County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire. You

must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than [January 30, 2023, for 2022 losses.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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### **Applying for Beginning Farmer Loans**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

For more information contact, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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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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## **Rates and Dates**

**Selected Interest Rates for  
November 2022**

90-Day Treasury Bill	3.000
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	4.375
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.500
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500
Emergency Loans	3.750
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years)	4.250
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	4.000
Commodity Loans 1996- Present	5.250

**Dates to Remember**

12/05/22	Final Date for COC Ballots to be returned to the County Office.
12/15/22	Acreage reporting deadline for wheat oats and small grain
12/15/22	Final date to file prevented planted acreage for wheat & oats
12/31/22	NAP application deadline for grass (hay & grazing)
12/31/22	Acreage reporting deadline for NAP grass
01/02/22	Newly Elected COC Members take Office



**Arkansas USDA**

700 West Capitol Room 3416 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

FSA Phone: 501-301-3000  
FSA Fax: 855-652-2082

NRCS Phone: 501-301-3100  
NRCS Fax: 855-681-7044

*Please contact your local office for questions specific to your operation or county. To find contact information for your local office visit one of the websites below.*

[www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov)

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

[www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Arkansas/index](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Arkansas/index)

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

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

**NRCS State Conservationist**  
*Mike Sullivan*

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

*Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting/event should contact Rita Smith-Clay at 501-301-3200 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.*

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).