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| |  | | --- | | [View as a webpage / Share](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAFARMERS/bulletins/3868f9f" \t "_blank) | | |  | | --- | | US Department of Agriculture | | **Maine USDA Service Center Newsletter** January 2024 | |  | | [**Farm Service Agency**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffsa.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892304623%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Bvw1KTmTzu9LNT9xtd9T7ojExZDE6wmv%2FGNJSfdqYhQ%3D&reserved=0)**|**[**Natural Resources Conservation Service**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nrcs.usda.gov%2Fwps%2Fportal%2Fnrcs%2Fsite%2Fnational%2Fhome%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892316668%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=8zvfQikwTp7Buk0ThSiFH%2BvuL0pOXcTNP7Hrt3sLmcA%3D&reserved=0)**|**[**Risk Management Agency**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Frma.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892323975%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=29Y3iQe8TlNDsYKVMYnUlrluMN%2FpieoNpnY1Xh4NPcg%3D&reserved=0) | | In This Issue:  * [Dates to Remember](#link_7) * [The Maine Message](#link_5) * [Overview of Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations](#link_8) * [Maine Producers Encouraged to Apply for USDA’s Continuous Conservation Reserve Program](#link_6) * [Signature Policy](#link_4) * [Tree Assistance Program](#link_10) * [Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction](#link_3) * [Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers](#link_2) * [Applying for Youth Loans](#link_1)  |  | | --- | |  |  Dates to Remember    |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Jan 30** | [**Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Fdisaster-assistance-program%2Flivestock-indemnity%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892330088%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uNayULilMAgVEGWg1ahOni%2B8G5HCLqWreoOMryAHhRQ%3D&reserved=0) **Deadline** | | **Jan 30** | [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm Raised Fish Program (ELAP)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Fdisaster-assistance-program%2Femergency-assist-for-livestock-honey-bees-fish%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892335791%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dB2sHYYkN9MXjb0wQeBHnybTHgibI%2BxpQ%2By1JRZSpEU%3D&reserved=0) Notice of Loss and Application for Payment **Deadline** | | **Jan 31** | [**The Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program**](https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/food-safety?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) **(FSCSC) applications for calendar year 2023 from February 1, 2023, through January 31, 2024** | | **Feb 19** | All Offices Closed for Washington’s Birthday | | **March 15** | **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**Application Deadline for Spring Seeded Crops | | **March 15** | [ARC/PLC Program](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Farcplc_program%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892341353%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=hkMMDVdMrVJof3wGgguFpbjO2pe%2BX%2BzS00wdZxB%2Fmic%3D&reserved=0) 2024 Election Revision and Enrollment Period Ends | | **Ongoing** | [**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Continuous**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2FAssets%2FUSDA-FSA-Public%2Fusdafiles%2FFactSheets%2Fcrp-continuous-enrollment-period-factsheet.pdf%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892346745%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=76gDOKiSu5TKHkB6oDSJN55E%2FypGe9BZ4U0GtHZUEmk%3D&reserved=0)**Enrollment** |      |  | | --- | |  |  The Maine Message Welcome 2024!  We started the new year pulling together, supporting our neighbors and friends, as we struggled (and continue) to recover from the recent severe weather events.  As a result of these events, we had the pleasure to welcome USDA Secretary Vilsack to Maine earlier this month to discuss disaster recovery and resiliency.  A small group of Maine stakeholders and producers shared their personal stories and perspectives on 2023 and the ongoing weather events we have encountered.  We thank those who took the time to participate; your challenges and concerns were heard.  As we have seen, these winter storms create significant challenges and often result in catastrophic loss for agricultural producers. Despite every attempt to mitigate risk, your operation may suffer losses. As you continue to prepare for these potential impacts of upcoming winter weather, know that USDA offers several programs to help with recovery. For producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LnJtYS51c2RhLmdvdi9GZWRlcmFsLUNyb3AtSW5zdXJhbmNlLUNvcnBvcmF0aW9uIiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDI0MDExMi44ODQ2MzUwMSJ9.bCTDQDWfUSCtl8SPW64i407x0UQUXXPLlInU75B-VKY/s/1519276657/br/234968739615-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)or the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LmZzYS51c2RhLmdvdi9wcm9ncmFtcy1hbmQtc2VydmljZXMvZGlzYXN0ZXItYXNzaXN0YW5jZS1wcm9ncmFtL25vbmluc3VyZWQtY3JvcC1kaXNhc3Rlci1hc3Npc3RhbmNlL2luZGV4IiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDI0MDExMi44ODQ2MzUwMSJ9.anEq4KYNWUN9zUjaXF-IVFN9YlUOzBWThK0BIg37hZ8/s/1519276657/br/234968739615-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (NAP), we want to remind you to report crop damage to your crop insurance agent or the local [Farm Service Agency](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LmZzYS51c2RhLmdvdi9pbmRleCIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyNDAxMTIuODg0NjM1MDEifQ.D6szya-DEMmSE_9HlC0idt5OypICu569q58neFIXBlQ/s/1519276657/br/234968739615-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (FSA) office.  If you have crop insurance, contact your agency within 72 hours of discovering damage and be sure to follow up in writing within 15 days. If you have NAP coverage, file a Notice of Loss (also called Form CCC-576) within 15 days of loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.  In addition, please check out our Disaster Recovery Tool to see what options may be available to you: [https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/disaster-tool](https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/disaster-tool?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).  County Office Committee (COC) elections have been completed in all counties with the exception of Aroostook (a make-up election will be completed shortly).  Welcome to our new COC members – we look forward to working with you!  And thank you to those members who served previously, your knowledge and expertise is appreciated.  This month we celebrate our dairy farmers ….  January 11th is National Milk Day.  The United States and Australia export more milk and milk products than any other country. Those products include cheese, yogurt, ice cream, butter, cream, powdered milk, and much more. Throughout the world, more than 6 billion people consume milk and the products we make from it.  As of September 2023, there were 153 dairy farms in Maine (53 organic) across 15 counties, producing approximately 50 million gallons of milk/year.  As always, please feel free to contact me directly if you have questions or concerns, or if you would like FSA representation at an upcoming meeting or event.  Stay safe –  Sherry Hamel SED Signature       Sherry Hamel, SED   |  | | --- | |  |  Overview of Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations  |  | | --- | | Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger.  FSA administers four types of disaster designations.  **USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation**   * The designation process can be initiated by individual farmers, local government officials, State governors, State agriculture commissions, tribal councils or the FSA State Executive Director * This designation is triggered by a 30-percent or greater production loss to at least one crop because of a natural disaster, or at least one producer who sustained individual losses because of a natural disaster and is unable to obtain commercial financing to cover those losses * In 2012, USDA developed a fast-track process for disaster declarations for severe drought. This provides for a nearly automatic designation when, during the growing season, any portion of a county meets the D2 (Severe Drought) drought intensity value for eight consecutive weeks or a higher drought intensity value for any length of time as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor ([http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fdroughtmonitor.unl.edu%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892352432%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=vFaxaLMrfq%2BVx1DSxz8AqLNk1BSuhmD%2FmOA2cZqb63Q%3D&reserved=0))   **Administrator’s Physical Loss Notification**   * This designation is initiated by the FSA State Executive Director. * The designation is triggered by physical damage and losses because of a natural disaster, including but not limited to dead livestock, collapsed buildings, and destroyed farm structures.   **Presidential Designation**   * A Presidential major disaster designation and emergency declaration is initiated by the Governor of the impacted state through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). * This designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the State and local governments.   **Quarantine Designation**   * This designation is requested of the Secretary of Agriculture by the FSA State Executive Director. * A quarantine designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by the effects of a plant or animal quarantine approved by the Secretary under the Plant Protection Act or animal quarantine laws.   All four types of designations immediately trigger the availability of low-interest Emergency loans to eligible producers in all primary and contiguous counties. FSA borrowers in these counties who are unable to make their scheduled payments on any debt may be authorized to have certain set asides. Additional disaster assistance requiring a designation may also be provided by new programs in the future.  For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/disaster](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fdisaster%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892357691%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2QJUTF0Gsjgz1xoCWh6suG6apbrtthVv02M%2FZXzd5Rg%3D&reserved=0). |  |  | | --- | |  |  Maine Producers Encouraged to Apply for USDA’s Continuous Conservation Reserve Program **Enroll or re-enroll today!**  The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting applications for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (Continuous CRP). USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers and landowners in STATE who are interested in conservation opportunities for their land in exchange for yearly rental payments to consider the enrollment options available through Continuous CRP, which also includes the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offered by FSA partners. Additionally, producers participating in CRP can now apply to re-enroll, if their contracts will expire this year.  To submit an offer, producers should contact the FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) by July 31, 2024, in order to have an offer effective by Oct. 1, 2024. To ensure enrollment acreages do not exceed the statutory cap, FSA will accept offers from producers on a first-come, first-served basis and will return offers for approval in batches throughout the year.  Additionally, producers with acres enrolled in Continuous CRP set to expire Sept. 30, 2024, can now offer acres for re-enrollment. A producer can both enroll new acres into Continuous CRP and re-enroll any acres expiring Sept.30, 2024.  FSA water quality practices, such as riparian buffers, prairie strips, grassed waterways, and wetlands, will receive an additional 20% incentive. Buffer practices have a positive impact on water quality. Additionally, the Climate-Smart Practice Incentive launched in 2021 is also available in the Continuous signup.   |  | | --- | |  |  Signature Policy Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits.  The following are FSA signature guidelines:   * A married woman must sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe * For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from the minor’s parent   Note, by signing a document with a minor, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc.  When signing on one’s behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc.  FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.  Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office.  Spouses cannot sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.  Likewise, a spouse cannot sign a document on behalf of the other in order to affirm the eligibility of oneself.  Any member of a general partnership can sign on behalf of the general partnership and bind all members unless the Articles of Partnership are more restrictive. Spouses may sign on behalf of each other’s individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office. Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts must consist of an indicator “by” or “for” the individual’s name, individual’s name and capacity, or individual’s name, capacity, and name of entity.  For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.   |  | | --- | |  |  Tree Assistance Program If you’re an orchardist or nursery tree grower who experienced losses from natural disasters, you must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.  TAP provides financial assistance to help you replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.  Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.  To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster, plus an adjustment for normal mortality. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.  If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which you can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 1,000 acres annually.   |  | | --- | |  |  Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction The USDA Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Ffarm-loan-programs%2Ffarm-ownership-loans%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892363220%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=GGKI%2Fs2eAuwFyNdQI9DfaoOf6KaaNwy15Bf1ZMBTORc%3D&reserved=0) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.  There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Ffarm-loan-programs%2Fmicroloans%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892368838%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=enIBAUAdwwgJUsXBEvph2%2F95Wzb9H%2BEdchriUPSQOeg%3D&reserved=0) option for smaller financial needs up to $50,000.  Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities, and to make improvements essential to an operation.  Applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.  Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. If applying for a direct loan to finance a construction project, the applicant must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.  A surety bond is required when a contract exceeds $100,000. An authorized agency official determines that a surety bond appears advisable to protect the borrower against default of the contractor or a contract provides for partial payments in excess of the amount of 60 percent of the value of the work in place.  Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant’s farming operation or work schedule.  Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.  For more eligibility requirements and information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892374170%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=utL4WwaCQX2flObxIKctEvaHMSYKVKzqowm6SYJ1s0A%3D&reserved=0).   |  | | --- | |  |  Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers A multi-agency guide for USDA assistance for underserved farmers and ranchers is now available. If you are a farmer or rancher and are a minority, woman, veteran, beginning, or limited resource producer, you can use this booklet to learn about assistance and targeted opportunities available to you. This includes programs offered through the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency. [Download the guide here](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/farmersgov-historically-underserved-factsheet-07-20-2022.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). The guide is also available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese on [farmers.gov/translations](http://www.farmers.gov/translations?utm_campaign=underservedfarmers&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).   |  | | --- | |  |  Applying for Youth Loans The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5,000.  **Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:**   * Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien * Be 10 years to 20 years of age * Comply with FSA’s general eligibility requirements * Be unable to get a loan from other sources * Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above * Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.   For help preparing the application forms, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892379493%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Yzfs7P6QCKnUJCL%2F6iCoftsrO4W7%2BPCSsiDWb6FjHdA%3D&reserved=0).   |  | | --- | |  |   Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting/event/function should contact Mary Anne Coffin at 207-990-9140 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.   |  | | --- | |  | | |  | | |  | | --- | | Icon  Description automatically generated |   Maine /USDA Service Center 967 Illinois Avenue Bangor, ME  04401     |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Farm Service Agency**  Sherry Hamel, 207-990-9140  State Executive Director  [sherry.hamel@usda.gov](mailto:sherry.hamel@usda.gov)  Website:  [www.fsa.usda.gov/me](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/me) | **Natural Resources Conservation Service**  Matt Walker, 207- 990-9585  State Conservationist [matt.walker@usda.gov](mailto:matt.walker@usda.gov)  Website:  [www.me.nrcs.usda.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.me.nrcs.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C02%7Cmaryanne.coffin%40usda.gov%7Cc5a7d2792b274507c69108dc1c501a91%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638416378892384624%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=LqMmf6MGtA24hwEsX%2FFN7cOwBhot5LyENKtUpncR83c%3D&reserved=0) | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | | |