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

Greetings and Happy New Year!

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is here to provide one-on-one support to our customers at our 61 USDA Service Centers statewide. NRCS staff can help guide farmers to the best USDA assistance based on their conservation goals.

Farmers who work with us at their local USDA Service Center can:

- Verify eligibility for USDA programs
- Discuss their business and conservation goals
- Create a conservation plan

- Learn how to meet conservation compliance provisions

A conservation plan is critical to maintain and improve your farm's productivity. Plans of any kind are important as they set goals and outline how to reach them. Conservation plans are roadmaps for improving your operation while conserving natural resources.

They provide proven strategies that landowners can use to solve identified natural resource concerns and take advantage of conservation opportunities. If you're interested in finding out more about conservation planning, I encourage you to [check the status of your local USDA Service Center](#) and make an appointment to discuss your operation's needs.

## Urban Agriculture

NRCS is working to support urban agriculture as it plays an important role in growing not only fresh, healthy food, often where grocery stores are scarce, but also providing jobs, responding to climate change and increasing green spaces.

Urban agriculture includes cultivating, processing and distributing agricultural products in urban and suburban areas. Community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and vertical production are all examples of urban agriculture.

NRCS serves all agriculture – large to small, conventional to organic, rural to urban. As Arkansas agriculture continues to grow in new directions, NRCS conservation assistance is growing along with it. By bringing technical and financial assistance, cultivation and opportunity, to both rural and urban areas, we can address many conservation needs.

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to Urban growers in:

- **Soil Health** - As experts in soil health, NRCS conservationists can advise urban growers on things like what cover crops to grow, using farmers' soil tests and our soil surveys.
- **Irrigation and Water Conservation** - We can help urban growers conserve water, by assisting with conservation practices including drip irrigation.
- **Weeds and Pests** - We can assist with pest and weed management by planting buffers for beneficial insects, through mulching, using cover crops and various other conservation practices.
- **High Tunnels** – NRCS can provide financial assistance for high tunnels, used to extend the growing season and to protect plants from harsh weather, air pollution and pests. By making local produce available for more months in the year, fewer resources are used to transport food to plates.

Starting an urban farm comes with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. NRCS can assist with the challenges of conservation and support urban farmers in their efforts to achieve local, healthy, sustainable food and economic opportunity for their communities. To learn more, start by contacting your local NRCS Service Center.

## Important Dates to Remember:

- January 25, 2023: Arkansas Soil and Water Education Conference, Jonesboro Red Wolf Convention Center at Embassy Suites
- January 25-28, 2023: Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo, Embassy Suites, Little Rock
- January 27, 2023: Deadline to sign-up for Buffalo River Partnership RCPP Project and The East Arkansas Delta Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project

- February 3, 2023: Environmental Quality Incentives Program 2023-1 Ranking Deadline
- February 8, 2023: Deadline to sign-up for Saline Headwaters National Water Quality Initiative project and Upper Village Creek National Water Quality Initiative project

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

Greetings,

This month we celebrate the enduring legacy and influence of Martin Luther King, Jr. The 2023 [MLK Jr. Day](#) theme at USDA is “We Can Be the Dream”. As Dr. King once stated, “Somewhere along the way, we must learn that there is nothing greater than to do something for others.” This year’s theme honors that spirit. This month we are also highlighting our 1890 Land-Grant Universities --minority-serving institutions of higher learning. The 19 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) deliver high-quality agricultural and natural resource research, education, and extension programs while producing skilled graduates in the sciences. USDA partners with HBCUs and in 1992 the [USDA/1890 National Scholars Program](#) was established. 1890 Land-Grant Universities were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890 to increase the number of minorities studying agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and related disciplines.

USDA has announced two new programs that wrap-up and fill remaining gaps in previous natural disaster and pandemic assistance. The [Emergency Relief Program](#) (ERP) Phase Two and the new [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program](#) (PARP) application period is open from January 23, 2023 through June 2, 2023. For more information, producers should contact their local USDA service center or reference the [ERP Phase Two Fact Sheet](#), [PARP Fact Sheet](#) or the [ERP Phase Two-PARP Comparison Fact Sheet](#).

USDA will soon begin accepting public comments on environmental and related aspects of 21 potentially viable projects to increase fertilizer production across the United States totaling up to \$88 million. These applicants have requested grant funding through the first round of the Department’s newly established [Fertilizer Production Expansion Program](#). Investing in projects to increase fertilizer production will bring production and jobs back to the United States, promote competition, and support American goods and services. USDA continues to create a competitive, resilient, secure and sustainable economy to support opportunities for local businesses and people across this nation. The Fertilizer Production Expansion Program is a critical part of that effort.

The [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. There is a mandated fee waiver for basic coverage for underserved producers. However, a previous set of procedures and regulations created a paperwork burden that stood in the way of many producers taking advantage of the basic coverage option. The recent rule removes barriers and establishes procedures through which an underserved producer with a CCC-860 (Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification) on file prior to the applicable NAP application closing date will automatically receive basic coverage for any NAP-eligible crops they plant. Underserved producers on file for 2022 will also receive retroactive basic coverage.

FSA has updated the following programs: The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP), the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Producers impacted by a natural disaster should report losses

and damages and file an application with their [FSA county office](#). Timelines for reporting losses and applying for payments differ by program. The [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance](#) fact sheet, and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, contact the local [USDA Service Center](#).

Reminding agricultural producers with perennial forage crops, of an option to report their acreage once (without having to report that acreage in subsequent years), as long as there are no applicable changes on the farm. Interested producers can select the continuous certification option after USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) certifies their acreage report.

Please visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) to learn more about FSA Programs.

## USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Accepting 2023 Applications for Two Regional Conservation Partnership Program Projects in Arkansas



Farmers and landowners in two USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project areas in Arkansas can apply to receive assistance to implement conservation activities. The projects will offer financial assistance to landowners in fiscal year 2023.

Farmers and landowners in Arkansas who submit applications to their local NRCS office by January 27, 2023, will be considered for this round of funding. Applications received after January 27 will be considered in later funding periods, subject to funding availability.

“RCPP is a unique program that leverages non-federal investments brought by conservation partners to accelerate conservation in selected project areas,” said Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist Mike Sullivan. “This approach helps us maximize use of our collective resources to address locally identified concerns.”

The RCPP projects and associated counties with projects are:

- **Buffalo River Partnership Project (portions of Baxter, Boone, Madison, Marion, Newton, Pope, Searcy, Stone, and Van Buren counties):** The project is designed to collaborate with interested farmers and landowners to increase agricultural sustainability by implementing voluntary conservation practices within the Buffalo River Watershed. Partners seek to collaborate with local farmers, landowners and community leaders in priority watersheds to identify resource concerns and conservation practices to improve farm sustainability and water quality, reduce sediment and nutrient loads to the Buffalo River by providing technical and financial assistance to implement practices that improves pasture and nutrient management, restore eroding streambanks to prevent loss of pastureland and reduce maintenance costs and sediment loads from erosion of unpaved roads, and assist interested landowners conserve key conservation lands to prevent future erosion and nutrient loads in the Buffalo River watershed. (Lead Partner: The Nature Conservancy)
- **The East Arkansas Delta RCPP project:** The 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 to 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.

Individuals and other entities actively engaged in agricultural production are eligible to participate in RCPP. RCPP offers a continuous application sign-up. However, to be considered for funding, applications must be received by January 27 2023. Applicants can sign up for the 2023 program year by contacting their local USDA Field Service Center.

All applications will be evaluated for funding based on how well they align with project priorities using procedures 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.

Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [www.farmers.gov](http://www.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 [www.farmers.gov/sign-in](http://www.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](http://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 your local USDA/NRCS Field Service Center.

## **Natural Resources Conservation Service Accepting 2023 Applications for Arkansas Louisiana Conservation Delivery Network Open Pine Landscape Restoration RCPP Project**



Farmers and landowners in the Arkansas Louisiana Conservation Delivery Network (CDN) Open Pine Landscape Restoration Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project in Arkansas can apply to receive financial assistance in fiscal year 2023.

Farmers and landowners in Arkansas who submit applications to their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office by February 17, 2023, will be considered for this assistance.

“RCPP is a unique program that leverages non-federal investments brought by conservation partners to accelerate conservation in selected project areas,” said Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist Mike Sullivan. “This approach helps us maximize use of our collective resources to address locally identified concerns.”

The RCPP project and associated counties with the project are:

**Conservation Delivery Network Open Pine Land Restoration Project (portions of Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Clark, Drew, Lincoln, Nevada, Ouachita counties)**

The AR-LA CDN Open Pine Landscape Restoration partnership will advance the recovery of species of conservation concern by implementing Desired Forest Condition management practices across 30,000 acres of private lands in Arkansas and Louisiana.

American Bird Conservancy and 19 partners plan to use several innovative tools and approaches to target funding to lands critical for the protection of species such as Northern Bobwhite, Henslow's and LeConte's sparrows, Louisiana Pine Snake, and Red-Cockaded Woodpecker. Partnerships with the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff and other entities will help ensure that Historically Underserved farmers participate meaningfully in the project.

(Lead Partner: American Bird Conservancy)

Individuals and other entities actively engaged in agricultural production are eligible to participate in RCPP. RCPP offers a continuous application sign-up. However, to be considered for funding, applications must be received by February 17. Applicants can sign up for the 2023 program year by contacting their local USDA Service Center.

All applications will be evaluated for funding based on how well they align with project priorities using procedures 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.

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.

All USDA Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with NRCS should call ahead to schedule an appointment. Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) portal where producers can view and track certain USDA program applications and payments. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [www.farmers.gov/sign-in](http://www.farmers.gov/sign-in).

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

## **USDA NRCS Accepting EQIP Applications through February 8 for Two Arkansas Water Quality Projects**

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is investing in two new landscape-level water quality efforts for the [National Water Quality Initiative](#) (NWQI).

"We have learned that when we work with producers and partners 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 two new NWQI 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 February 8, 2023, will be considered for this round of funding. Applications received after February 8, 2023, will be considered in later funding periods, subject to funding availability.

The new Arkansas project areas are:

#### NWQI

- Saline Headwaters – Portions of Howard County
- Upper Village Creek - Portions of Lawrence and Randolph 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](#)

## 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.

### 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.

### Jan 27<sup>th</sup> – Catfish Farmers of Arkansas (CFAr) Annual Convention

The Board of the CFAr is hosting their annual convention on January 27<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme is "Wading Through Uncertain Times". **Tonya Washington, District Director, will provide FSA/ELAP updates during the morning session.** The convention will be held at the Embassy Suites in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Please contact the [Catfish Farmers of Arkansas](#) or Dr. Carol Engle at [cengle8523@gmail.com](mailto:cengle8523@gmail.com) for additional information.

### Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> – Arkansas Bait and Ornament Fish Growers Association Annual Meeting

The Board of the Arkansas Bait and Ornament Fish Growers Association is hosting their annual meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Doris Washington, State Executive Director, will provide FSA updates.** The meeting will be held at the Lonoke Community Center in Lonoke, Arkansas. Please contact Dr. Carol Engle at [cengle8523@gmail.com](mailto:cengle8523@gmail.com) 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.

# USDA Updates Farm Loan Programs to Increase Equity

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating its farm loan programs to better support current borrowers, including historically underserved producers. These improvements are part of USDA's commitment to increase equity in all programs, including farm loans that provide important access to capital for covering operating expenses and purchasing land and equipment.

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized FSA to provide equitable relief to certain direct loan borrowers, who are non-compliant with program requirements due to good faith reliance on a material action of, advice of, or non-action from an FSA official. Previously, borrowers may have been required to immediately repay the loan or convert it to a non-program loan with higher interest rates, less favorable terms, and limited loan servicing.

Now, FSA has additional flexibilities to assist borrowers in such situations. If the agency provided incorrect guidance to an existing direct loan borrower, the agency may provide equitable relief to that borrower. FSA may assist the borrower by allowing the borrower to keep their loans at current rates or other terms received in association with the loan which was determined to be noncompliant or the borrower may receive other equitable relief for the loan as the Agency determines to be appropriate.

USDA encourages producers to reach out to their local loan officials to ensure they fully understand the wide range of loan and servicing options available that can assist them in starting, expanding or maintaining their operation.

## Additional Updates

Equitable relief is one of several changes authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill that USDA has made to the direct and guaranteed loan programs. Other changes that were previously implemented include:

- Modifying the existing three-year farming experience requirement for Direct Farm Ownership loans to include additional items as acceptable experience.
- Allowing socially disadvantaged and beginning farmer applicants to receive a guarantee equal to 95%, rather than the otherwise applicable 90% guarantee.
- Expanding the definition of and providing additional benefits to veteran farmers.
- Allowing borrowers who received restructuring with a write down to maintain eligibility for an Emergency loan.
- Expanding the scope of eligible issues and persons covered under the agricultural Certified Mediation Program.

Additional information on these changes is available in the March 8, 2022 [rule on the Federal Register](#).

## More Background

FSA has taken other recent steps to increase equity in its programs. Last summer, USDA announced it was providing \$67 million in competitive loans through its new Heirs' Property Relending Program to help agricultural producers and landowners resolve heirs' land ownership and succession issues. FSA also invested \$4.7 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers, which contributed to a fourfold increase in

participation by historically underserved producers in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2), a key pandemic assistance program, since April 2021.

Additionally, in January 2021, Secretary Vilsack announced a [temporary suspension of past-due debt collection and foreclosures](#) for distressed direct loan borrowers due to the economic hardship imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Producers can explore available loan options using the [Farm Loan Discovery Tool on farmers.gov](#) ([also available in Spanish](#)) or by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](#). 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. Producers can [contact their local Service Center](#) to set up an in-person or phone appointment to discuss loan options.

## **2023 Dairy Margin Coverage Deadline Extended – Jan. 31, 2023, Last Day to Enroll**

USDA extended the deadline for producers to enroll in [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) and [Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage \(SDMC\)](#) for program year 2023 to Jan. 31, 2023.

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.

Nearly 18,000 operations that enrolled in DMC for 2022 have received margin payments for August and September for a total of \$76.3 million. 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, and military veteran farmers and 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. The enrollment period for 2023 Supplemental DMC is also extended to Jan. 31, 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**

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

## **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 or visit [fsa.usda.gov/disaster](https://fsa.usda.gov/disaster).

## Noninsured Crop Coverage Helps Producers Manage Risks

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) helps you manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters. The eligible or "noninsured" crops include agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance.

*You must be enrolled in the program and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop in the crop year in which the loss incurred to receive program benefits following a qualifying natural disaster.*

### NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested.

Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

### NAP Service Fees

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

### NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans

Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification*.”

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, contact your local County USDA Service Center at or visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap).

## Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](https://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

### About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit

[farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool/step-1](https://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool/step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov).

## USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Producers

*Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates*

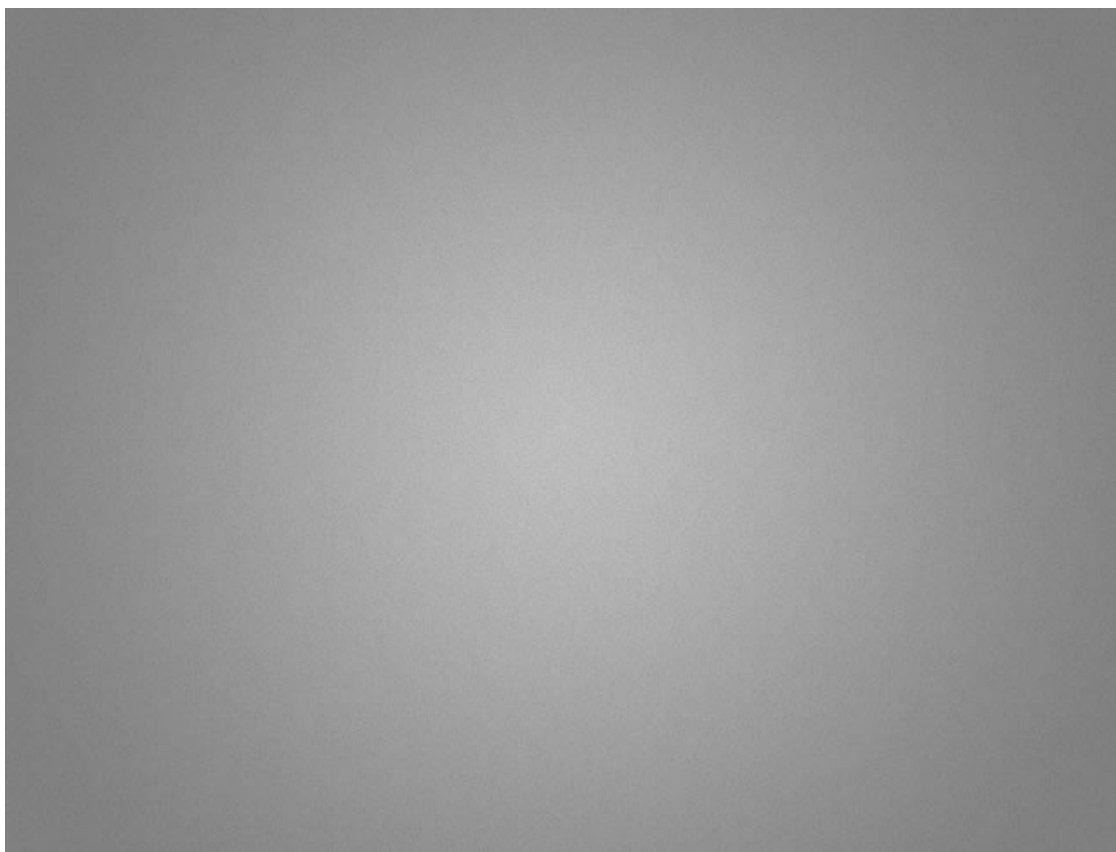
USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that farmers and ranchers in Arkansas now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

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.

## Rates and Dates





**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.*

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