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Availability of Low-Interest Physical Loss Loans for Producers Affected by Natural Disasters

Physical loss loans can help producers repair or replace damaged or destroyed physical property essential to the success of the agricultural operation, including livestock losses. Examples of property commonly affected include essential farm buildings, fixtures to real estate, equipment, livestock, perennial crops, fruit and nut bearing trees and harvested or stored crops and hay.

State: Arizona

Triggering Disaster: Wildfire that occurred June 1, 2021 and continuing.

Application Deadline: **Feb. 28, 2022**

Primary Counties Eligible: **Gila and Pinal**

Contiguous Counties also Eligible: **Coconino, Graham, Maricopa, Navajo, Pima and Yavapai**

More Resources

On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help you determine program or loan options. To file a Notice of Loss or to ask questions about available programs, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Invests \$2 Million in Risk Management Education for Historically Underserved and Small-Scale Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing up to \$2 million in cooperative agreements this year for risk management education and training programs that support historically underserved producers, small-scale farmers, and conservation practices. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is investing in organizations, such as nonprofit organizations, universities, and county cooperative extension offices, to develop training and education tools to help producers learn how to effectively manage long-term risks and challenges.

RMA works with partners to assist producers, especially historically underserved, farmers and ranchers, in effectively managing long-term risks and challenges. RMA re-established its support of risk management education in 2021, investing nearly \$1 million in nine risk management education projects. From 2002 to 2018, RMA provided annual funding for risk management education projects, supporting more than \$126 million worth of projects in historically underserved communities.

How Organizations Can Apply

A broad range of risk management training activities are eligible for funding consideration, including training on Federal crop insurance options, record keeping, financial management, non-insurance-based risk management tools, and natural disaster preparedness among others. Partners can also train farmers at all levels on risk management options that help secure local food systems.

This selection process is competitive, and RMA will prioritize projects focused on underserved, organic, and specialty crop producers. Additionally, organizations providing training related to climate change, wildfire response, local foods, and urban ag will also be given stronger consideration.

Interested organizations **must apply by** 5:59 pm Eastern Time on **March 11** through the Results Verification System at rvs.umn.edu.

[Learn more.](#)

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

*Apply by **February 18, 2022** for funding consideration in this ranking cycle*

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Arizona is accepting applications for the Conservation Incentive Contracts component of its Environmental Quality Incentives Program through February 18, 2022.

Arizona was one of the four states that piloted this new component and focused those resources on building watershed health and wildfire resiliency on forest lands in 2021. NRCS in Arizona will continue to focus EQIP-CIC funding on preventative measures for forest fires such as thinning, prescribed burns and fuel breaks. There will also be a new requirement for projects to address wildlife management.

Forest lands statewide may apply, however [projects located in the identified areas](#) will be prioritized.

EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts

Conservation Incentive Contracts address priority resource concerns, including drought and wildfire suppression in high-priority areas. Through these contracts, NRCS works with producers to strengthen the quality and condition of natural resources on their operations using management practices to expand on the EQIP conservation activities.

Conservation Incentive Contracts last five years and offer producers annual incentive payments to use management practices as well as conservation evaluation and monitoring activities to help build on existing conservation efforts.

How to Apply

To learn more about Conservation Incentive Contracts, visit the [Arizona EQIP webpage](#).

In Arizona, **February 18, 2022** is the application deadline for Conservation Incentive Contracts. To apply, producers should contact their [local USDA Service Center](#).

NRCS Announces Application Deadline for the Arizona Urban Agriculture Initiative

*Apply by **February 18, 2022** for funding consideration in this ranking cycle*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Arizona announces **February 18, 2022** as the deadline for agricultural producers to apply for the FY22 Arizona Urban Agriculture Initiative.

This initiative provides technical and financial assistance to producers to improve soil health, increase water efficiency and add pollinator habitat in these metropolitan areas:

- [Flagstaff](#)
- [Prescott](#)
- [Phoenix](#)
- [Tucson](#)

Producers in these metropolitan areas who are currently growing crops or raising livestock are eligible to apply for assistance through this initiative.

NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs year-round. Applications received after **February 18, 2022** will be considered in the next funding period.

For more information about this initiative, email AZUrbanAg.NRCS@usda.gov or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Accepting Applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program in Arizona

*Apply by **February 11th** to be considered for this round of funding*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) encourages agriculture producers who want to enhance their current conservation efforts to apply for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) by **February 11, 2022**.

Through the program, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to participants for the conservation, protection, and improvement of soil, water, energy and other related natural resources and for any similar conservation purpose as determined by the agency.

The program also encourages the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques such as precision agriculture applications, on-site water management, and advanced grazing to improve soil health and plant diversity.

While applications for CSP are accepted year-round, applicants must apply by **February 11, 2022**, to their local field office to be considered for this funding period.

Applicants may apply for all categories for which they are eligible.

There are five funding opportunities listed under this announcement:

- Beginning Farmer and Rancher (BFR)
- Socially-disadvantage Farmer and Rancher (SDFR)
- Organic and transitioning-to-organic producers
- Agricultural land, including cropland, pasture, or rangeland
- Nonindustrial private forest land (NIPF)

Required Application Information:

- [Form NRCS-CPA-1200, "Conservation Program Application"](#)
- Provide a map that identifies and delineates the boundaries of all eligible land uses and acres included in the operation.
- Identify any ineligible land that is part of the operation as described above in section.

Producers interested in applying for the program should contact their [local NRCS field office](#).

For more information, visit the [Conservation Stewardship Program website](#).

Higher Loan Limit Now Available for USDA Guaranteed Farm Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a higher loan limit will be available for borrowers seeking a guaranteed farm loan starting Oct. 1, 2021, from \$1.776 million to \$1.825 million.

FSA farm loans offer access to funding for a wide range of producer needs, from securing land to financing the purchase of equipment. Guaranteed loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. FSA provides up to a 95% guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

In fiscal year 2021, FSA saw continued strong demand for guaranteed loans. FSA obligated more than \$3.4 billion in guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans. This includes nearly \$1.2 billion for beginning farmers. The number of guaranteed borrowers has grown by 10% to more than 38,750 farmers and ranchers over the last decade. FSA expects the increasing demand for farm loans to continue into fiscal year 2022.

Disaster Set-Aside Extension

USDA has additional support available to producers given the recent outbreaks of the COVID-19 Delta variant and has extended the availability of COVID-19 Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) for installments due through Jan. 31, 2022. In addition, FSA will permit a second DSA for COVID-19 and a second DSA for natural disasters for those who had an initial COVID-19 DSA. Requests for a COVID-19 DSA or a second DSA must be received no later than May 1, 2022.

Last year, FSA broadened the use of the DSA. Normally used in the wake of natural disasters, the DSA can now allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19 and determined to be eligible, to have their next payment set aside. The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This will improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting their [local USDA Service Center](#). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Applying for FSA Guaranteed Loans

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$1,825,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

For more information on guaranteed loans, contact your local USDA Service Center at or visit fsa.usda.gov.