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USDA U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Colorado USDA Newsletter - October 11, 2023

Farm Service Agency | Natural Resources Conservation Service | Risk Management Agency

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From Colorado FSA's State Executive Director, Kent Peppler

All,

Several years ago, we began having the perfect storm in northwestern Colorado when it came to distributing farm program benefits to producers. It started with a county office fire that destroyed years of records which were not backed up and ended with a massive turnover of employees at all levels in our state FSA system. We knew there was a problem brewing and once we determined the extent of the issues, FSA does what FSA does; everybody from across the state put their collective heads together and developed a plan to rectify the situation. The amount of effort, creativity, and willingness to help each other out was at full speed. From an outsider, such as myself, to witness the intensity and professionalism, it was truly gratifying and confirmed what a special organization Colorado FSA is. It's like this situation to a litter of pigs, when one of the little pigs begins to squeal in a panic, the whole barn can be disrupted. That's what could have happened here with the northwest problem, but it didn't! It took already busy employees from across the state volunteering for jump teams and other employees willing to back-fill the workload left in the county due to the volunteers leaving. It took DD's, CED's, and COC's working together with State Office employees to create a plan to efficiently "catch up".

With support from the Administration section as well as Farm Loan Programs and the willingness of the national office to literally reopen programs and give us the authority to pay for late benefits, Colorado has created a template on how to handle this type of situation because we all know Colorado is not the only state that has these types of issues. The last time I checked FSA has paid close to $11,000,000 in back payments and that number will only increase.

I just want to give a big THANKS to all of Colorado FSA for this accomplishment. It makes me so proud, and makes me realize what a privilege it is to work for all of you.

Keep it rolling.

KP

USDA Extends Deadline to October 12 for Input on Crop Insurance Coverage for Prevented Planting

USDA is extending the deadline for its Request for Information to Oct. 12, 2023, to solicit public comments on possible changes to prevented planting crop insurance coverage. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) believes extending the deadline will enable additional time for comments and feedback from commenters and key stakeholders.

The request for information seeks stakeholder input on prevented planting topics, specifically:

- Harvest Price Option – Feedback on whether to allow the prevented planting payment calculations to be based on the higher of projected price or harvest price under the revenue protection plan of insurance.
- "1 in 4" Rule – Input on the challenges or experiences since the rule was implemented nationwide (to be eligible for a prevented planting coverage acreage, a producer must have planted, insured, and harvested a crop in at least 1 out of the previous 4 crop years)
- 10 percent additional coverage option – Input on if RMA should reinstate the option to buy-up prevented planting coverage by 10 percent.
- Contract price – Whether prevented planting costs are higher for contracted crops and how prevented planting payments should be calculated for contract crops.
- General topics – Willingness to pay additional premium for expanded prevented planting benefits, recommendations on other prevented planting limitations, etc.

The request for information, which includes details for submitting feedback, is available in this Federal Register notice.

In addition to the Request for Information, RMA held in-person and virtual listening sessions June through August to hear directly from producers. The in-person listening sessions were held in Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, New Mexico, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas. RMA will accept written comments through its extended request for information until Oct. 12, 2023.

Prevented planting insurance provisions provide valuable coverage when extreme weather conditions prevent expected plantings. Prevented planting is when a producer is unable to plant an insured crop due to an insurable cause of loss in time to grow a viable crop. Final planting dates and late planting periods are detailed in a producer's crop insurance policy, and they vary by crop and location. Prevented planting coverage is intended to assist with normal costs associated with preparing the land up to the point of seed going into the ground (pre-plant costs).

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov or by contacting your RMA Regional Office.

Let’s Talk GRANTS: Join USDA Rural Development at a FARMERS FORUM near you!

USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and Value Added Producer Grants are tailored for farmers, ranchers, and ag producers.

Want to save costs through renewable energy & efficiency? What about solar panels for pivot irrigation, pumps. Or consider wind, hydropower and geothermal. The REAP program could be a good fit.

Transform your agricultural dreams into reality with the Value- Added Producer Grant to cultivate your success. Diversify revenue and enter new markets, one innovation at a time.

Our team will be hosting informational sessions for interested parties to talk about these programs and how your operation can benefit. Join us at a location near you. Stop by anytime between 10 AM to Noon:

- Oct 24: Delta (690 Industrial Blvd)
- Oct 24: Las Animas (760 Bent Ave.)
- Oct 25: Alamosa (101 S. Craft Dr.)
- Oct 26: Craig (145 Commerce St)

GOT QUESTIONS? Alamosa Area: John Reddy, 719-992-3651 Craig Area: Kisha Westcott, 970-329-3162, Delta Area: Jessica Akers, 970-399-8200, Las Animas: Kathy Spain, 719-456-0210, ext. 120. For REAP inquiries email SM.CO.REAP@usda.gov

USDA To Provide Additional Financial Assistance to Qualifying Guaranteed Farm Loan Borrowers Facing Financial Risk

The USDA announced it will begin providing additional, automatic financial assistance for qualifying guaranteed Farm Loan Programs (FLP) borrowers who are facing financial risk. The announcement is part of the $3.1 billion to help certain distressed farm loan borrowers that was provided through Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act.

Since the Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law by President Biden in August 2022, USDA has provided approximately $1.15 billion in assistance to more than 20,000 distressed borrowers as a part of an ongoing effort to keep borrowers farming, remove obstacles that currently prevent many borrowers from returning to their land, and improve the way that USDA approaches borrowing and loan servicing in the long-term. The financial assistance announced today will provide qualifying distressed guaranteed loan borrowers with financial assistance similar to what was already provided to distressed direct loan borrowers. Based on current analysis, the financial assistance announced today will assist an estimated approximately 3,500 eligible borrowers, subject to change as payments are finalized. An FLP guaranteed loan borrower is distressed if they qualify under one of the options below. FLP guaranteed borrowers who qualify under multiple options will receive a payment based on the option that provides the greatest payment amount:

Payment of any outstanding delinquency on all qualifying FLP guaranteed loans as of Oct. 18, 2022. This includes any guaranteed loan borrowers who did not receive an automatic payment in 2022 on that loan because they were not yet 60 days delinquent as of Sept. 30, 2022, as well as guaranteed borrowers that became delinquent on a qualifying FLP guaranteed loan between September 30, 2022, and Oct.18, 2022.

Payment on a qualifying FLP guaranteed loan for which a guaranteed loan borrower received a loan restructure, which modified the guaranteed loan maturity date, between March 1, 2020, and Aug. 11, 2023. The payment amount will be the lesser of the post-restructure annual installment or the amount required to pay the loan in full. The guaranteed loan must not have been paid in full prior to Aug. 11, 2023.

Payments on certain deferred amounts on qualifying FLP guaranteed loans, not to exceed $100,000, for guaranteed borrowers who received a deferral or another type of payment extension, for at least 45 days, between March 1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2022, from their guaranteed lender on that qualifying guaranteed loan in response to COVID-19, disasters, or other revenue shortfalls. The Inflation Reduction Act payment amount will be the lesser of the most recent deferral or extension amount on the qualifying FLP guaranteed loan, or the amount required to pay that loan in full. The guaranteed loan must not have been paid in full prior to Aug. 11, 2023.

This assistance is only available for FLP guaranteed loan borrowers who did not or will not receive an initial payment on the same FLP guaranteed loan under Inflation Reduction Act assistance announced in October 2022. Distressed guaranteed borrowers qualifying for this assistance will receive a United States Department of the Treasury check that is jointly payable to the borrower and the lender. These borrowers will also receive a letter from FSA informing them of Inflation Reduction Act assistance they will receive as well as instructions to make an appointment with their lender to process the payment and apply it to their qualifying guaranteed loan accounts. Guaranteed lenders will receive an email in the coming days informing them of this assistance and any next steps. Lenders will also receive letters informing them which borrowers will receive assistance and the amount of assistance they will receive. Any distressed guaranteed borrowers who qualify for these forms of assistance and are currently in bankruptcy will be addressed using the same case-by-case review process announced in October 2022 for complex cases. FSA will also provide relief to qualifying FLP guaranteed loan borrowers determined to be distressed borrowers based on liability for remaining federal debt subject to debt collection and garnishment after the liquidation of their guaranteed loan account as of July 31, 2023. This will allow some borrowers to potentially return to farming. Guaranteed borrowers who qualify for this assistance will have their federal debt paid automatically by FSA and will receive a letter informing them of the payment made on their federal debt. All letters to qualifying guaranteed loan borrowers will contain instructions for opting out of assistance if a borrower chooses to do so.

Important Tax Information
Similar to other USDA Inflation Reduction Act assistance, payments provided to borrowers and payments to be applied to FSA farm loan accounts will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Borrowers receiving this assistance will receive a 1099 form from FSA. Please note that payments over $600 are subject to Federal and State Income Taxes and will be reflected on your annual 1099 form. Borrowers are encouraged to consult a tax professional with all tax-related questions regarding any Inflation Reduction Act assistance received. USDA also has tax-related resources at farmers.gov/taxes.

Individual Requests for Farmers Seeking Assistance
In addition to the automatic payments announced today for distressed guaranteed loan borrowers, FSA continues to accept and review individual distressed borrower assistance requests from direct loan borrowers who missed a recent installment or are unable to make their next scheduled installment on a qualifying direct FLP loan. All FSA direct borrowers should have received a letter detailing the eligibility criteria and process for seeking this type of assistance, which is available even before they become delinquent. As the letter details, borrowers who are within two months of their next installment may seek a cash flow analysis from FSA using a recent balance sheet and operating plan to determine their eligibility.

FSA direct borrowers also received a letter detailing an opportunity to receive assistance if they took certain extraordinary measures to avoid delinquency on their qualifying direct FLP loans, such as taking on or refinancing more debt, selling property, or cashing out retirement or college savings accounts.

Borrowers can submit requests for extraordinary measures or cash flow-based assistance in person at their local FSA office or by sending in a direct request using the farmers.gov 22006 assistance request portals at farmers.gov/loans/inflation-reduction-investments/assistance. All requests for assistance must be received by Dec. 31, 2023.

USDA Announces Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations Impacted by 2020, 2021 and 2022 Disaster Events

USDA announced Milk Loss Program (MLP) assistance for eligible dairy operations for milk that was dumped or removed, without compensation, from the commercial milk market due to qualifying weather events and the consequences of those weather events that inhibited delivery or storage of milk (e.g., power outages, impassable roads, infrastructure losses, etc.) during calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022. Administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), signup for MLP begins Sept. 11 and runs through Oct. 16, 2023.

Background
On Dec. 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 117-43), providing $10 billion for crop losses, including milk losses due to qualifying disaster events that occurred in calendar

years 2020 and 2021. Additionally, the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328) provides approximately $3 billion for disaster assistance for similar losses that occurred in calendar year 2022.

Eligibility
MLP compensates dairy operations for milk dumped or removed without compensation from the commercial milk market due to qualifying disaster events, including droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), and smoke exposure that occurred in the 2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years. Tornadoes are considered a qualifying disaster event for calendar year 2022 only.

The milk loss claim period is each calendar month that milk was dumped or removed from the commercial market. Each MLP application covers the loss in a single calendar month. Milk loss that occurs in more than one calendar month due to the same qualifying weather event requires a separate application for each month.

The days that are eligible for assistance begin on the date the milk was removed or dumped and for concurrent days milk was removed or dumped. Once the dairy operation restarts milk marketing, the dairy operation is ineligible for assistance unless after restarting commercial milk marketing, additional milk is dumped due to the same qualifying disaster event. The duration of yearly claims is limited to 30 days per year for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

How to Apply
To apply for MLP, producers must submit:

- FSA-376, Milk Loss Program Application
- Milk marketing statement from the:
    - Month prior to the month milk was removed or dumped.
    - Affected month.
- Detailed written statement of milk removal circumstances, including the weather event type and geographic scope, what transportation limitations occurred and any information on what was done with the removed milk.
- Any other information required by the regulation.

If not previously filed with FSA, applicants must also submit all the following items within 60 days of the MLP application deadline:

- Form AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet.
- Form CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, Member Information for Legal Entities (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, Request for an Exception to the $125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, (if applicable).

- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification) for the MLP producer and applicable affiliates.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms already on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm the status of their forms can contact their local FSA county office.

MLP Payment Calculation
The final MLP payment is determined by factoring the MLP payment calculation by the applicable MLP payment percentage.

The calculation for determining MLP payment is:

- ((Base period per cow average daily milk production x the number of milking cows in a claim period x the number of days milk was removed or dumped in a claim period) ÷ 100) x pay price per hundredweight (cwt.).

For MLP payment calculations, the milk loss base period is the first full month of production before the dumping or removal occurred.

The MLP payment percentage will be 90% for underserved producers, including socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource, and veteran farmers and ranchers and 75% for all other producers.

To qualify for the higher payment percentage, eligible producers must have a CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, form on file with FSA for the applicable program year.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations do not apply to MLP, however the payment limitation for MLP is determined by the person's or legal entity's average adjusted gross farm income (income derived from farming, ranching and forestry operations). Specifically, a person or legal entity, other than a joint venture or general partnership, cannot receive, directly or indirectly, more than $125,000 in payments under MLP if their average adjusted gross farm income is less than 75% of their average AGI or more than $250,000 if their adjusted gross farm income is at least 75% of their average AGI.

Financial Assistance Application Process Opens for USDA Farm Loan Borrowers Who Have Faced Discrimination

USDA announced the opening of the financial assistance application process for eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) directs USDA to provide this assistance. Since the law's passage, USDA has worked diligently to design the program in accordance with significant stakeholder input.

The program website, 22007apply.gov, is now open. The website includes an English- and Spanish-language application that applicants can download or submit via an e-filing portal, information on how to obtain technical assistance in-person or virtually, and additional resources and details about the program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is extending the deadline for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program to **January 13, 2024**, to give eligible farmers, ranchers and forest landowners more time to apply for assistance. The original deadline was October 31, 2023.

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination by USDA in its farm loan programs prior to January 1, 2021 and/or are currently debtors with assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was the subject of USDA discrimination that occurred prior to January 1, 2021, are eligible for this program.

To apply, borrowers have the option to apply via the e-filing portal at 22007apply.gov or submit paper-based forms via mail or in-person delivery to the program's local offices. The application process closes January 13, 2024.

To support producers throughout the application process, USDA is ensuring that organizations with extensive experience conducting outreach to farm organizations are able to support individuals who may be eligible for the program. These groups include AgrAbility, Farmer Veteran Coalition, Farmers' Legal Action Group, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Intertribal Agriculture Council, Land Loss Prevention Program, National Young Farmers Coalition, and Rural Coalition. Vendors operating four regional hubs are also providing technical assistance and working closely with these and other community-based organizations to conduct outreach using digital and grassroots strategies, to ensure potential applicants are informed about the program and have the opportunity to apply. These hubs are operating a network of brick-and-mortar program offices and will conduct extensive outreach about the program. Windsor Group serves farmers in the eastern regions of the U.S. and Analytic Acquisitions serves the western regions. A national administrator, Midtown Group, is responsible for program oversight and integrity, and will lead a national call-center, operate the application website - 22007apply.gov, and review and process applications and payments. All vendors have experience in professional services, supporting government contracts, and complex program operations.

Applicants are not required to retain an attorney and should take precautions to protect themselves from potential scams. In standing up this program, USDA has become aware of some lawyers and groups spreading misleading information about the discrimination assistance process, pressuring people to sign retainer agreements, and asking people to fill out forms with private and sensitive information. As of today, the official application process has begun and filling out an application is free.

No attorneys' fees will be paid to applicants or their counsel by USDA or by any other agency or department of the United States. The amount of financial assistance will not be increased for those claimants who are represented by an attorney. Applicants are not required to retain an attorney. USDA, the national administrator, and the regional hub vendors will neither recommend that any applicant retain counsel or retain a specific attorney or law firm, nor discourage an applicant from obtaining counsel or using a specific attorney or law firm. For more information, read our fact sheet about the program timeline and ways to protect against possible scams.

Requesting Records
In addition to the application deadline change, the deadline to request records from USDA's Farm Service Agency for use in applications **has been extended to Friday, Nov. 3, 2023**. The application process was designed so that FSA records are not required, though relevant records may be attached to an application as additional evidence if they are available.

To learn more about the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program or receive assistance in English or Spanish, visit www.22007apply.gov, email info@22007apply.gov or contact the national call center at 1-800-721-0970 from 8 a.m. ET to 8 p.m. PT, every day except federal holidays. If you use sign language to communicate, you can use the 711 relay service to call. You may also email or contact the national call center if you have a disability and need another accommodation. Information about the program, resources, recent office openings and local events across the country is also available through a weekly e-newsletter.

USDA's commitment to equity spans the Department's mission areas and agencies. We are actively working to build a USDA that ensures none of our customers are ignored or left behind. The Discrimination Financial Assistance Program is just one of many programs helping USDA rebuild trust, address systemic issues and improve service to people who may have been underserved by USDA in the past. To learn more about USDA's equity work and resources, visit www.usda.gov/equity.

Applying for NAP Payments

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

In order to participate, you must obtain NAP coverage for the crop year by the applicable deadline using form CCC-471 "Application for Coverage" and pay the service fee. Application closing dates vary by crop. Producers are also required to submit an acceptable crop acreage report. Additionally, NAP participants must provide:

- The quantity of all harvested production of the crop in which the producer held an interest during the crop year
- The disposition of the harvested crop, such as whether it is marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended
- Acceptable crop production records (when requested by FSA)

Producers who fail to report acreage and production information for NAP-covered crops could see reduced or zero NAP assistance. These reports are used to calculate the approved yield.

If your NAP-covered crops are affected by a natural disaster, notify your FSA office by completing Part B of form CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment." This must be completed within 15 calendar days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date. For hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

To receive benefits, you must also complete Parts D, E, F and G of the CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment" within 60 days of the last day of coverage for the crop year for any NAP covered crops. The CCC-576 requires acceptable appraisal information. Producers must provide evidence of production and note whether the crop was marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Biden-Harris Administration Makes Available Historic $3 Billion for Climate-Smart Practices on Agricultural Lands Through Investing in America Agenda

USDA is making more than $3 billion in funding available for agricultural producers and forest landowners nationwide to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices in fiscal year 2024 as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda.

These funds are provided by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act – the largest climate and conservation investment in history. This law invests an additional $19.5 billion for USDA's popular conservation programs. These programs also advance the President's Justice40 Initiative, which aims to ensure 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain climate, clean energy, and other federal investments reach disadvantaged communities that have been marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. On the heels of last week's announcement that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) saw record producer interest in these resources in fiscal year 2023, the agency is now accepting applications from producers interested in this additional conservation assistance for fiscal year 2024.

These additional investments are estimated to help hundreds of thousands of farmers and ranchers apply conservation to millions of acres of land. These funds provide direct climate mitigation benefits, advance a host of other environmental co-benefits, and expand access to financial and technical assistance for producers to advance conservation on their farm, ranch or forest land through practices like cover cropping, conservation tillage, wetland restoration, prescribed grazing, nutrient management, tree planting and more.

USDA is opening up the application period for fiscal year 2024 conservation assistance giving producers the opportunity to apply for this historic funding. However, in the event of a lapse in government funding, technical assistance, one-on-one help in answering questions, and other support for producers in navigating the application process would not be immediately available until the funding lapse ends. In the event of a funding lapse, NRCS would notify producers when staff are available to assist.

What's New

Expansion of Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Activities supported by the Inflation Reduction Act

NRCS is increasing Climate-Smart Agricultural and Forestry Mitigation Activities eligible for Inflation Reduction Act funding for fiscal year 2024 through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). These in-demand activities are expected to deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions or increases in carbon sequestration as well as significant other benefits to natural resources like soil health, water quality, pollinator and wildlife habitat and air quality.

In response to feedback received from conservation partners, producers and NRCS staff across the country, NRCS considered and evaluated activities based on scientific literature demonstrating expected climate change mitigation benefits. To learn more, download the list of practices and a fact sheet.

When applied through this framework, these activities are expected to deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions or increases in carbon sequestration. NRCS will continue to evaluate additional practices as science progresses and will evaluate and identify quantification methodologies during the fiscal year.

Expansion of priorities for the ACEP investments through the Inflation Reduction Act

Additionally, NRCS is expanding the national priority areas eligible for Inflation Reduction Act funding for Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP) easements in fiscal year 2024.

For ACEP Agricultural Land Easements (ALE), NRCS is prioritizing securing:

- Grasslands in areas of highest risk for conversion to non-grassland uses to prevent the release of soil carbon stores.
- Agricultural lands under threat of conversion to non-agricultural uses.
- State-specific priorities including rice cultivation on subsiding highly organic soils.

For ACEP Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE), NRCS is prioritizing:

- Land with soils high in organic carbon.

- Eligible lands that will be restored to and managed as forests like bottomland hardwood forests.
- Eligible lands in existing forest cover that will be managed as forests.
- Several geographically specific priorities (i.e., former cranberry bogs, wet meadows, and ephemeral wetlands in grassland ecosystems).

Background

The Inflation Reduction Act provides funds to the EQIP, CSP, ACEP and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). For fiscal year 2024, which begins Oct. 1, 2023, the Inflation Reduction Act provides an additional $1.65 billion for EQIP, $472 million for CSP, and $189 million for ACEP, and $754 million for RCPP.

How to Apply

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round, but producers interested in this cycle of Inflation Reduction Act funding should apply as soon as possible. Producers interested in EQIP or CSP should apply by their state's ranking dates for consideration this year. Funding is provided through a competitive process and will include an opportunity to address the unmet demand from producers who have previously sought funding for climate-smart conservation activities.

Similarly, NRCS accepts applications year-round for ACEP Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE), producers interested in this funding cycle must apply by Nov. 13, 2023. NRCS will also consider previously unfunded applications in this round.

NRCS plans to roll out the next RCPP funding opportunity in late January 2024.

NRCS will announce other opportunities for agreements and partnerships at the state level for fiscal year 2024 in the coming months. The Inflation Reduction Act provides funding to support those strategic partnerships with local, regional and national organizations. This will include outreach to underserved producers to ensure Inflation Reduction Act climate funding is reaching those who have been previously unable to access conservation assistance.

Interested producers should contact the NRCS at their local USDA Service Center.

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Colorado State Office

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Denver, CO 80225

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Fax: 844.860.8238

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