



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Montana Newsletter - July 2023

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Montana FSA Program Dates/Deadlines

USDA in Montana reminds agricultural producers of important Farm Service Agency (FSA) program dates. Contact your local service center to apply and with any questions. Visit online at farmers.gov and fsa.usda.gov/mt.

July 14, 2023: ERP Phase 2 application period ends. To view information about ERP Phase 2, go to the [Emergency Relief Program](#) website. For more information on payment calculations, payment limitations or how

to determine allowable gross revenue, please reference the [ERP Phase 2 fact sheet](#). You can also read the [News Release](#) that was issued earlier this year in Jan.

July 14, 2023: PARP application period ends. For more information on determining allowable gross revenue visit farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/parp or review the [PARP fact sheet](#). You can also read the [News Release](#) that was issued earlier this year in Jan.

July 17, 2023: 2023 acreage reporting deadline for spring seeded alfalfa seed, forage seeding, CRP, perennial forage not covered under NAP and all other crops not required to be reported by a previous reporting date. *Note- Producers who acquire land after the crop reporting date (July 17, 2023), have 30 days from the date they acquire the land to timely file a crop report on the new land.

July 17, 2023: Deadline to certify ARC-IC Yields

July 26, 2023: ODMAP signup deadline. You can also read the [News Release](#) for more information.

July 31, 2023: CRP CLEAR30 signup ends

August 1, 2023: Deadline to request a farm reconstitution or farm transfer for program year 2023.

August 1, 2023: County Committee (COC) Nomination period for the 2023 Election Cycle Closes.

Sept. 1, 2023: NAP application closing date for fall and spring seeded Canola and all Value Loss Crops.

Sept. 30, 2023: NAP application closing date for all perennial forage, fall and spring seeded garlic, rye, speltz, triticale, wheat, and mixed forage crops. *Please note that the acreage reporting date for your NAP covered crops is the earlier of the established FSA acreage reporting date for the crop or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.*

Oct. 31, 2023: OCCSP signup is open now until October 31, 2023. You can read the [News Release](#) to learn more about OCCSP.

ELAP notice of loss must be filed within **30 days** of when loss is apparent for **livestock and farm-raised fish** losses.

ELAP notice of loss must be filed within **15 days** of when loss is apparent for **honeybee** losses.

***Note for ELAP Notice of Loss-** If you are hauling feed/livestock/water due to a qualifying drought during the 2023 grazing period, a new NOL is required - even if you already submitted a NOL prior to the 2023 grazing period.

LIP notice of loss must be filed within **30 days** of when the loss is apparent.

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Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting nominations for county committee members for elections that will occur later this year. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is unveiling a new GIS tool to make it easier for producers to participate in the nomination and election processes for county committee members, who make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally.

All nomination forms for the 2023 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2023.

Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for members. LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and they may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Customers can locate their LAA through a new GIS locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Agricultural producers may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee if they:

- Participate or cooperate in a USDA program; and
- Reside in the LAA that is up for election this year.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

Urban and Suburban County Committees

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to form urban county committees as well as make other advancements related to urban agriculture, including the establishment of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. FSA established county committees specifically focused on urban agriculture. Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Urban county committee members will provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs and serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

A list of cities with county committees for urban agriculture can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

More Information

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election, including if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. Urban farmers should use an Nomination forms and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 6, 2023.

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

Meeting will take place August 1, 3-6pm ET

We're inviting urban producers, innovative producers, and other stakeholders to virtually attend a public meeting of the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production on August 1 from 3-6pm. [Learn more and register.](#)

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Non-Emergency Haying and Grazing Conservation Reserve Program

USDA reminds producers that all non-emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts must be discussed and approved with your local FSA county office prior to starting the activity. Under no circumstances may non-emergency haying or grazing be permitted if such activity would cause long-term damage to the vegetative cover on the land, determined on a site-by-site basis. Available to start 12 months after cover is fully established.

- Non-emergency activities may occur according to the conservation plan during drought / natural disaster conditions, but the site conditions should be taken into consideration and the plan modified, as needed.
- Non-emergency harvesting for hay or biomass may occur only once during the approved event. Haying/harvesting may not occur later than August 31. Participants must leave 25 percent of the contract acres unharvested or hayed.
- Non-emergency grazing must not exceed 120 days. During the primary nesting season (PNS), there must be a 50 percent carrying capacity reduction.
- Participant may rent or sell the hay or grazing rights. However, the CRP participant is responsible for any damages to the stand.
- Non-emergency haying and grazing requires a 25 percent reduction in annual rental payment.

For more information on non-emergency haying and grazing eligible CRP contracts, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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USDA Accepts More Than 1 Million Acres in Offers Through Conservation Reserve Program General Signup

CRP helps producers invest in the long-term health, sustainability, and profitability of their land and resources.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting more than 1 million acres in this year's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup. This is one of several signups that USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is holding for the program, and these results reflect the recognition the agricultural community give to CRP as a resource for climate-smart agriculture that helps promote plant and animal biodiversity as well as healthier soil. The signup's results include 94833 acres in Montana.

While offers for new land in this General CRP signup totaled about 295,000 acres nationwide, producers submitted re-enrollment offers for 891,000 expiring acres, reflecting the successes of participating in CRP longer term. The total number of CRP acres will continue to climb in the coming weeks once FSA accepts acres on the Grassland CRP signup, which closed May 26. Additionally, so far this year, FSA has received 761,000 offered acres for the Continuous CRP signup, for which FSA accepts applications year-round.

The number of accepted acres that are actually enrolled in General CRP will be decided later this year. Participating producers and landowners should also remember that submitting and accepting a CRP offer is the start of the process, and producers still need to develop a conservation plan before enrolling their land on DATE, 2023. Each year, during the window between offer acceptance and land enrollment, some producers change their mind and ultimately decide not to enroll some accepted acres without penalty.

General CRP Signup

The General CRP Signup 60 ran from February 27 through April 7, 2023.

Through CRP, producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve soil health and water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat on agricultural land. In addition to the other well-documented benefits, lands enrolled in CRP are playing a key role in climate change mitigation efforts across the country.

In 2021, FSA introduced improvements to the program, which included a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This incentive provides a 3, 5, or 10 percent incentive payment based on the predominant vegetation type for the practices enrolled – from grasses to trees to wetland restoration.

Other CRP Signups

[Grassland CRP](#) is a *working lands program* that helps producers and landowners protect grassland from conversion while enabling haying and grazing activities to continue. Lands enrolled support haying and grazing operations and promotes plant and animal biodiversity. Lands are also protected from being converted to uses other than grassland. This year's signup for Grassland CRP ran from April 17 through May 26.

Under [Continuous CRP](#), producers and landowners can enroll throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Continuous CRP includes the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Also available is the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative. CLEAR30, a signup opportunity under that initiative, was originally piloted in twelve states but has since been expanded nationwide, giving producers and landowners across the country the opportunity to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices.

More Information

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and view other farm records data and customer information by [logging into their farmers.gov account](#). If you don't have an account, [sign up today](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and

committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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USDA Reminds Agricultural Producers of July 14 Deadline to Apply for Pandemic and Natural Disaster Revenue Loss Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers of the July 14 deadline to apply for both the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) Phase Two](#) and the [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program \(PARP\)](#). These revenue-based programs help offset revenue losses from 2020 and 2021 natural disasters or the COVID-19 pandemic.

ERP and PARP offer a holistic approach to disaster assistance and provide economic support for producers who bear the financial brunt of circumstances beyond their control.

Eligibility

To be eligible for ERP Phase Two, producers must have suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event. Assistance will be primarily to producers of crops that were not covered by Federal Crop Insurance or NAP, since crops covered by Federal Crop Insurance and NAP were included in the assistance under ERP Phase One. To be eligible for PARP, an agricultural producer must have been in the business of farming during at least part of the 2020 calendar year and had a 15% or greater decrease in allowable gross revenue for the 2020 calendar year, as compared to a baseline year. FSA offers an online [ERP tool](#) and [PARP tool](#) that can help producers determine what is considered allowable gross revenue for each respective program. Through cooperative agreements with FSA, [nine organizations](#) are also providing free ERP Phase Two application assistance to producers across the United States and territories.

ERP Phase Two Policy Updates

[USDA recently updated ERP Phase Two](#) to provide a method for valuing losses and accessing program benefits to eligible producers of certain crops, including grapes grown and used by the same producer for wine production or forage that is grown, stored and fed to livestock, that do not generate revenue directly from the sale of the crop.

The value of the eligible crop intended for on-farm use will be based on the producer's actual production of the crop and a price for the crop as determined by FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs based on the best available data for each crop such as published crop price data or the average price obtained by other producers in the area. Acceptable, published sources including but are not limited to Federal Crop Insurance Corporation established prices, FSA established National Crop Table prices and National Agricultural Statistic Service prices.

[Revenue and pricing guidelines](#) for expected revenue for wine grapes and on-farm forage is available online for producer reference and convenience when applying for ERP Phase Two.

Requirement to Purchase Crop Insurance or NAP Coverage

All producers who receive ERP Phase 2 payments must purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, in the next two available crop years as determined by the Secretary. Purchased coverage must be at 60/100 level of coverage or higher for insured crops, or at the catastrophic coverage level or higher for NAP crops.

Crops that are not eligible for crop insurance or NAP are still eligible for ERP Phase Two, but producers must obtain [Whole Farm Revenue Protection](#) or [Micro Farm Program](#) policy to meet linkage requirements.

Maximize FSA Office Visits

Producers should contact their local FSA office to make an appointment to apply for ERP Phase Two and PARP assistance. Producers should also keep in mind that July 15 is a major deadline to complete acreage reports for most crops. FSA encourages producers to complete the ERP Phase Two application, PARP application and acreage reporting during the same office visit.

More Information

For more information, view the [ERP Phase Two Fact Sheet](#), [PARP Fact Sheet](#), [the ERP Phase Two-PARP Comparison Fact Sheet](#), [ERP Phase Two application video tutorial](#), [PARP application video tutorial](#), [myth-buster blog](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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USDA Offers Montana Producers Many Conservation Choices with Continuous CRP

Continuous CRP offers sound conservation and climate-smart options.

Agricultural producers and landowners interested in conservation opportunities for their land in exchange for yearly rental payments can find many possibilities through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (Continuous CRP) enrollment. This option offers conservation benefits similar to others, like General and Grassland CRP, but also offers unique flexibility and several program choices.

The long-term goal of all CRP opportunities is to re-establish valuable land cover—helping to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality in exchange for a yearly rental payment.

Under Continuous CRP, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. The Climate-Smart Practice Incentive is also applicable to Continuous signup.

There are several enrollment options within [Continuous CRP](#), including:

- [CLEAR30](#)
 - The Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers Initiative provides the opportunity to reenroll expiring CRP water quality practices in a 30-year CRP contract, which promotes continued maintenance of established waterways, wetlands, and buffer practices.
- [State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement \(SAFE\)](#)
 - The SAFE initiative restores vital habitat in order to meet high-priority state wildlife conservation goals.
- Highly Erodible Lands Initiative ([HELI](#))
- HELI provides participants with the opportunity to establish long-term cover on highly erodible cropland that has a weighted erodibility index (EI) greater than or equal to 20. [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP)

- Through an approved CREP Agreement, FSA works with conservation partners to leverage federal and non-federal resources to target specific state, regional, or nationally significant conservation and environmental objectives.
- [Farmable Wetlands Program](#)
 - Producers and landowners can enroll land in CRP to restore previously farmed wetlands and wetland buffers, improving both vegetation and water flow.

To sign up, producers should contact the Farm Service Agency at their local USDA Service Center.

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Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

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.

To receive payment, you had to purchase NAP coverage for 202# crops and file a notice of loss the earlier of 15 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.

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, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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Intertribal Agriculture Council Reminds Producers about Webinar Opportunities and Events for Tribal Communities

Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) for the Rocky Mountain Region reminds Montana producers about Webinar Opportunities and Local Events

- **JULY 11, 2023 | 12 PM (MT) WEBINAR: Financing Readiness 2: Alternative Solutions for Financing your Business - CDFIs, Patient Capital & Beyond.** To register click go to: <https://bit.ly/M2M-July11>
- **JULY 19, 2023 | 12 PM (MT) WEBINAR: Grants & Grassroots Funding.** To register go to: <https://bit.ly/M2M-July19>
- **AUGUST 2-3, 2023 -IAC Rocky Mountain Regional Summit -** At the Holiday Inn Great Falls - Convention Center, Great Falls, MT Attendees will participate in 2 days of learning sessions that focus on providing information about USDA meat processing programs, grants, and various topics surrounding health inspection requirements. This summit will delve into ranking and scoring for USDA grant applications, navigating State and Federal inspections, and discussing Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plans

(HACCP). Breakfast & lunch are provided. Lodging Information Holiday Inn Great Falls (406) 727-7200 A limited block of rooms is reserved for participants at the Holiday Inn for \$159.00 per night. For the group rate, please make a reservation by July 2nd under "IAC Rocky Mountain Regional Summit" or "Navigating Meat Processing Programs, Inspections, & Grants."

Zane Not Afraid	Craig Harry
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USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can also help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, producers should [contact their local Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

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Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre-authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful if you use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines. Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a “filter” on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three-month period, the preauthorized debit agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

For more information about PAD, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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\$500 Million Available for USDA’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The application period is now open for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). RCPP leverages a voluntary approach to conservation that expands the reach of conservation efforts and climate-smart agriculture through public-private partnerships. In addition to the funding opportunity, NRCS has embarked on a concerted effort to streamline and simplify RCPP and improve the experience for partners, producers and employees. NRCS will accept applications now through Aug. 18, 2023 via the [RCPP portal](#).

Read the [press release](#) for more information.

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SAVE THE DATE: RCPP Easement Information Session

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) invites potential partners to join an information session to hear about Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) easements. The session will focus on easement-related aspects of RCPP project proposal development, project planning and implementation.

Wednesday, July 12, 2023 2:00 pm ET

[Join Meeting \(Zoom\)](#)

Meeting ID: 160 940 1378 Passcode: 803806

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USDA Expands Wildlife Conservation with New Investments in Working Lands for Wildlife

USDA announces a five-year commitment to focus its delivery of working-lands conservation in key geographies across the country

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is expanding its work on wildlife conservation, leveraging a suite of voluntary, incentive-based tools. Leveraging resources of the Conservation Reserve Program and the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), the five-year commitment includes significant funding and staff resources, focusing their delivery to working lands in key geographies across the country through a series of new Frameworks for Conservation Action. To Learn more, read the full news release here: [USDA Announces Historic Investment in Wildlife Conservation, Expands Partnership to Include Additional Programs](#)

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USDA NASS Conducts Montana Wheat and Barley Variety Survey

USDA NASS will be conducting the Montana Wheat and Barley Variety survey this month. This survey is paid for and used by the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee. Foreign buyers use this data in their purchasing decisions. MSU uses the data to justify and promote their breeding programs. It is critical that producers participate in the survey since it is their survey.

In July and August, the Ag Production survey will be conducted, this data is used to track the condition of the various crops through the growing season. With the weather the way it has been so far this year across the country it is important that Montana Producers share their story.

Thank you, producers, for taking the time to share your story. To find results of the Wheat and Barley Varietal survey and other NASS surveys please visit: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Montana/index.php

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Public Notice Announcing Scoping Meetings for St. Mary Canal Modernization Project

The Milk River Joint Board of Control (MRJBOC), in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), proposes to rehabilitate and modernize the St. Mary Canal and associated infrastructure along its existing alignment to improve agricultural water management. The project may include lining and/or reshaping select sections of the St. Mary Canal, stabilizing slide areas, and modernizing existing siphons, drop structures, wasteways, and underdrains. These measures would improve water delivery reliability, restore historic flows in the St. Mary's Canal, and mitigate the risk of infrastructure failure.

Members of the public are invited to provide input to help guide planning efforts during three in-person scoping meetings.

Babb Public Meeting*
July 13, 2023
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Hooks Hideaway Motel
291 Camp Nine Rd., Babb, MT 59411

*Babb Public Meeting: Lunch will be provided at 11:30 a.m. prior to the meeting start time at noon. An RSVP is requested if joining for lunch at milkriver.project.comments@gmail.com or (541) 716-6085.

Havre Public Meeting
July 18, 2023
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Best Western Plus Havre Inn & Suites
1425 U.S. Rte 2, Havre, MT 59501

Malta Public Meeting
July 18, 2023
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Great Northern Hotel
2 S 1st Street E, Malta, MT 59538

Public comments may be submitted from June 21, 2023, through August 7, 2023. Comments may be emailed to milkriver.project.comments@gmail.com, submitted online at www.milkriverproject.com/projects/watershed, left as a voice message at (406) 587-6712, or mailed to: USDA NRCS, Alyssa Fellow, Environmental Compliance Specialist, 10 East Babcock Street, Room 443, Bozeman, MT 59715.

See the [full announcement](#).

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USDA to Host In-Person Listening Session in West Fargo, North Dakota to Hear About Crop Insurance Coverage for Prevented Planting

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is inviting agricultural producers and other program stakeholders from Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming to participate in a special in-person listening session to provide comments on the Prevented Planting Request for Information published in the Federal Register on May 23, 2023. The event will give producers the opportunity to meet with members of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) and directly comment on their needs and possible changes to prevented planting crop insurance coverage. The event will be on **August 8, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. CDT at the DoubleTree by Hilton West Fargo Conference Center (Ballroom A/B), 825 E. Beaton Drive, West Fargo, North Dakota 58078.**

"We are excited to have this opportunity to meet with producers and receive comments about such an important issue as prevented planting and the topics that are being considered," said Eric Bashore, Director of the RMA Billings Regional Office. "One of our top priorities at RMA is providing the best risk management tools we can by listening to our nation's producers. This session helps us accomplish this priority and help our customers the best we can."

The May 23 request for information on prevented planting outlines several questions for the listening session focusing on topics including:

- Harvest Price Option – Feedback on whether to allow the prevented planting payment calculations to be based on the higher of the projected price or the harvest price under the revenue protection plan of insurance.
- "1 in 4" Rule – Input on the challenges or experiences since the rule (to be eligible for prevented planting coverage, acreage must have been planted to a crop, insured, and harvested in at least 1 out of the previous 4 crop years) was implemented nationwide.

- 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 – Willingness to pay additional premium for expanded prevented planting benefits, recommendations on other prevented planting limitations, etc.

“The direct feedback and input that will come out of this session is vital in improving insurance coverage for prevented planting,” Bashore added.

The request for information, which includes specific questions and instructions for submitting written feedback by September 1, is available in this [Federal Register notice](#).

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).

More Information

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](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](#).

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