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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](https://farmers.gov) and [fsa.usda.gov/mt](https://fsa.usda.gov/mt).

**Oct. 16, 2023:** Signup period ends for Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations Impacted by 2020, 2021 and 2022 Disaster Events. Read the full news release here: [USDA Announces Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations Impacted by 2020, 2021 and 2022 Disaster Events](#)

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

**Nov. 1:** Last day of 2023 CRP Summer/Fall Non-Emergency Grazing Period (prior approval required)

**Early November:** 2023 County Committee Election Ballots to be Mailed to Voters

**Nov 15:** 2023 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter), and all other Fall Seeded Small Grains. Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2022 reports for these crops.

**Dec. 4:** Voted FSA County Committee Election Ballots to be returned to the FSA County Office or post-marked.

**Dec. 31:** 2023 NAP Application for Coverage Deadline for Honey

**Jan. 13, 2024:** Inflation Reduction Act Assistance for Producers Who Experienced Discrimination in USDA Farm Loan Programs application period closes. Applications are due January 13, 2024. To ensure timely processing, there will be no extensions to the deadline.

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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## USDA Reminds Montana Producers to File Fall Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers in Montana are reminded to complete their [crop acreage reports](#) after planting for Apiculture and any fall-seeded crops, such as winter wheat, triticale, or other fall-seeded small grains.

Please make an appointment with the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office before the November 15, 2023, deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of USDA benefits.

Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2022 reports for these crops.

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## USDA Provides \$5 Million in Second Round of Payments to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs

USDA is announcing a second round of payments for dairy producers approved to receive assistance through the Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP). ODMAP was established to help mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs, and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) accepted applications for ODMAP between May 24 and August 11, 2023, and has already paid out almost \$15 million to eligible applicants. The second round of payments will be processed for dairy producers enrolled in ODMAP and will add approximately \$5 million in payments. Read the full news release here: [USDA Provides \\$5 Million in Second Round of Payments to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs](#)

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## Dairy Margin Coverage Program Provides Critical Support for Dairy Operations

### August Milk Margin Triggered the Eighth Consecutive DMC Payment

The August milk margin triggered the eighth consecutive payment for dairy producers who obtained [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) for the 2023 program year. August's income over feed margin is \$6.46 per hundredweight (cwt.) with projected DMC payments totaling \$120 million. To date, including the projected August payments, dairy producers have received more than \$1.2 billion in much needed economic support for 2023 and margin forecasts indicate the likelihood of more to come before the end of the calendar year. Read the full news release here: [Dairy Margin Coverage Program Provides Critical Support for Dairy Operations \(usda.gov\)](#)

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## USDA to Begin Issuing \$1.75 Billion to Agricultural Producers Through Critical Emergency Relief Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that it will begin issuing more than \$1.75 billion in emergency relief payments to eligible farmers and livestock producers. These much-needed payments are helping farming and ranching operations recover following natural disasters in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

"USDA provides substantial economic support for America's farmers and ranchers through its critical farm program payments. These payments are reflective of the incredible and cumulative financial hits brought on by devastating natural disasters that agricultural producers nationwide have endured while fulfilling their commitment to produce our food, fiber and fuel," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "This additional assistance helps offset the tremendous losses that these producers faced and is a valuable investment, not only for farmers and ranchers but in the economic successes of our communities – rural and urban – and in our nation's food security for generations to come." Read the full news release here: [USDA to Begin Issuing \\$1.75 Billion to Agricultural Producers Through Critical Emergency Relief Programs](#)

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# Disaster Assistance for 2023 Livestock Forage Losses in 14 Montana counties

## 14 MT Counties Triggered; U.S. Drought Monitor Updated Weekly

Livestock producers in **14 Montana counties** are eligible to apply for 2023 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass, and forage sorghum.

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or leased land, or fire on federally managed land.

County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought, or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire.

The following **14 Montana counties** have triggered the 2023 LFP drought criteria: **Blaine, Chouteau, Flathead, Glacier, Hill, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Pondera, Sanders, Teton, and Toole**. Producers must complete a CCC-853 and provide required supporting documentation no later than January 30, 2024, for 2023 losses.

Producers in these counties are also eligible to apply for benefits under the 2023 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) for losses relating to feed transportation, livestock transportation and water transportation costs. The deadline to file a Notice of Loss for livestock losses under ELAP is 30 days after the date that the loss is apparent. Applications for payment must be completed no later than January 30, 2024, for 2023 losses.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the local USDA Service Center and/or visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) and/or [fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://fsa.usda.gov/mt).

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## Reminders for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations
- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

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## 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.

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

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

- **Young Professionals Application:** Each Year, the Intertribal Agriculture Council's (IAC) Youth Program invites Young Professionals, ages 19-24 who are attending 2- year college or 4- year college programs to apply for a student leadership position at the 2023 IAC Annual Conference. This year the

IAC Annual Conference will be held December 12-14 at the Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada!

**Deadline: 11:59:59 pm PST, Tuesday, October 10, 2023. [Apply Here](#)**

- **2023 Youth Track Essay Contest** Each year, IAC offers youth scholarships to attend the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) Annual Conference. Sixty essay contestants will be awarded a full travel scholarship to attend the 2023 IAC Youth Conference in Las Vegas, December 12th-14th, 2023. Three finalists will be selected and honored as keynote speakers during the IAC Annual Conference general session. Click on the link for the full contest guidelines and to submit your essay!

**Deadline: Monday, October 23, 2023 [Apply Here](#)**

- **IAC Annual Conference December 12-14** | Palms Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, NV Annually, the IAC hosts a conference to continue redefining and rebuilding sovereign Tribal food systems. The organization's founding members convened the first IAC conference in 1987, with 87 Tribal Nations attending as charter members. IAC's organizational structure supports a comprehensive approach to removing systemic inequities and barriers by focusing on advocating for the policy priorities identified by our members, advising the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on programmatic implementation while supporting Tribes and Tribal producers in their agriculture endeavors. Click here for [More Information](#) or contact your IAC Specialists below.

Zane Not Afraid  
Inter-Regional Manager  
(406) 665-5394 [zane@indianag.org](mailto:zane@indianag.org)

Craig Harry  
Technical Assistance Specialist  
(307) 349-7469 [craig@indianag.org](mailto:craig@indianag.org)

Marlene Werk  
Technical Assistance Specialist  
(406)-673-7480  
[marlene@indianag.org](mailto:marlene@indianag.org)

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## **Biden-Harris Administration Provides Historic \$3 Billion through Inflation Reduction Act for Climate-Smart Practices on Agricultural Lands**

This funding will be used to meet producer demand for our oversubscribed programs and maximize climate benefits across the country.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (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. The announcement comes as the Biden-Harris Administration hosts the first-ever White House Climate Resilience Summit.

[Learn more about available programs and Climate-Smart Practices.](#)

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## **NRCS Sets Conservation Easement Funding Application Date for Three Partner-Based Projects in Montana as October 27, 2023**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Montana is accepting applications for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Entity Held Easements. To be considered for funding in the current cycle, producers and landowners should apply by October 27, 2023.

"Through conservation easements, NRCS, land trusts, and other partners leverage funding from multiple sources to help farmers and ranchers protect working agricultural lands," said Tom Watson, NRCS State Conservationist for Montana. "Keeping working lands in working hands helps to maintain stable rural communities into the future, intact tracts of undeveloped land for wildlife habitat and migration and protects productive soils and water resources from potential impacts of development."

The 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. Currently, there are three RCPP Entity Held Easement projects in Montana.

[Get more information about RCPP Entity Held Easements.](#)

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## **NRCS Sets Conservation Program Funding Application Date for October 27, 2023**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Montana is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE). To be considered for funding in the current cycle, producers and landowners should apply by October 27, 2023.

"NRCS provides funding and technical assistance to help farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners implement conservation practices that improve their environmental and economic sustainability," said Tome Watson, NRCS State Conservationist for Montana. "Conservation work focused on local outcomes with support of local partners and land managers achieves meaningful conservation across a landscape. These opportunities are open to ag operations of any scale."

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

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## **USDA Invests about \$6.5 Million in Risk Management Education for Farmers, Including Underserved and Organic Producers**



**RENO, Nev., Sept. 14, 2023** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced it is awarding about \$6.5 million to 22 organizations to educate underserved, small-scale, and organic producers on farm risk management and climate-smart farm practices. The funding from USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) provides assistance through its Risk Management Education (RME) partnerships for organizations, such as nonprofits and land grant universities, to develop training and resources for producers about risk management options.

“This funding and these partnerships are integral to our outreach efforts in communities that historically have not had access to training about risk management options. Our Risk Management Education partnerships are part of USDA’s broader efforts to ensure equity and access to programs,” said RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger while visiting the University of Nevada, Reno, a 2023 RME recipient. “As a farmer, I know first-hand that agriculture is a risky business. We need to work with growers, and livestock producers to provide them training and resources about risk management options and how to apply them to their farming businesses.”

Read the full news release here: [USDA Invests about \\$6.5 Million in Risk Management Education for Farmers, Including Underserved and Organic Producers | RMA](#)

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## **USDA Hosts Third African Swine Fever Action Week October 2 - 6, 2023**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is hosting its third annual African Swine Fever (ASF) Action Week from October 2 - 6, 2023. We are encouraging U.S. swine producers, small farms, and pig owners to join us and learn about ASF and what they can do to help protect the U.S. swine herd. ASF has never been detected in the U.S., but since its detection in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in 2021, USDA has partnered with industry and states to enhance already strong safeguards to protect U.S. swine from this costly disease. “The longer ASF continues to circulate around the globe, the greater the threat to the U.S. swine industry,” said Dr. Rosemary Sifford, APHIS Veterinary Services Deputy Administrator, and Chief Veterinary Officer. “Prevention is our best investment. If introduced here, ASF would devastate the pig herds that Americans and our trading partners rely on for food. And, if it were to become endemic, it could take us more than 10 years and about \$75 billion to eradicate,” she added.

APHIS is asking producers and pig owners to join in efforts to stand vigilant against this disease. Join us all week on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and the website to learn more about what APHIS is doing, and what you can do, to [Protect our Pigs](#). To read the full announcement, visit: [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa\\_by\\_date/sa-2023/asf-action-week-2023](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2023/asf-action-week-2023).

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**Montana**



USDA Farm Service Agency  
PO Box 670  
Bozeman, MT 59771

Phone: 406.587.6872  
Fax: 855.546.0264  
Web: [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt)

State Executive Director:  
MAUREEN WICKS

State Committee:  
RYAN LANKFORD  
CASEY BAILEY  
STEVE CARNEY  
SARAH DEGN  
JAKE MERKEL

**FSA Policy Reminders:** [2021 Annual Notification to FSA Customers](#)

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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
10 East Babcock Street, Room 443  
Bozeman, MT 59715-4704  
Phone: 406-587-6811  
Fax: 855-510-7028  
Web: [nrcs.usda.gov/montana](http://nrcs.usda.gov/montana)

State Conservationist:  
TOM WATSON

---

USDA Risk Management Agency  
Billings Regional Office  
3490 Gabel Road, Suite 100  
Billings, MT 59102-7302  
Phone: 406-657-6447  
Fax: 406-657-6573  
Email: [rsomt@rma.usda.gov](mailto:rsomt@rma.usda.gov)  
Web: <https://www.rma.usda.gov/>

Regional Director:  
ERIC BASHORE

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**Contact information for your local office, visit:** [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

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