



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Montana Newsletter - June 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.

June 15, 2023: County Committee Nomination Period opens. Closes August 1, 2023.

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

July 31, 2023: CRP CLEAR30 signup 59 ends

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

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

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 still hauling feed/water/livestock in 2023 due to the 2022 drought, a new NOL is required for the 2023 calendar year - even if you already submitted a NOL in 2022.

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

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USDA Extends Application Deadline for Revenue Loss Programs to July 14

Nine Partner Organizations to Provide Assistance with ERP Phase Two Applications

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending the deadline for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two and Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) to July 14, 2023, to give producers more time to apply for assistance. The original deadline was June 2.

Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is partnering with nine organizations to provide educational and technical assistance to agricultural producers and provide assistance in completing an ERP Phase Two application. The extended deadline will give producers more time to work with these partner organizations and apply for assistance.

Cooperative Agreements for ERP Phase Two Application Assistance

Through cooperative agreements with FSA, the following organizations are providing free assistance to producers across the United States and territories.

- [Alabama State Association of Cooperatives](#)
- [Farmers Legal Action Group, INC.](#)
- [Flower Hill Institute](#)
- [Intertribal Agriculture Council, Inc.](#)
- [North South Institute](#)
- [Renewing the Countryside II](#)
- [Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA](#)
- [Rural Coalition](#)
- [Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers CBO](#)

Depending on a producer's location, these nine partners can provide assistance either by phone or through online meeting software like Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

There is never a charge for technical assistance provided by FSA employees or cooperative agreement recipients. These organizations will assist producers with completing the application and any follow-up future insurance coverage requirements. Producers who receive ERP payments are statutorily required to purchase crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for the next two available crop years. These organizations will not collect producer records, complete or sign the application form, or act on the producer's behalf in any way throughout this process.

Find more information on FSA cooperative agreements and contact information for the nine organizations please visit fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/cooperative-agreements/index.

PARP Application Assistance

USDA will host a webinar that focus on completing the PARP application form on June 8, 2023 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. eastern with members of the National Farm Income Tax Extension Committee. Register [here](#).

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.

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 Assistance to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)

ODMAP signup begins May 24th and runs through July 26, 2023

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), announces assistance for dairy producers with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP). ODMAP is 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. Specifically, under the ODMAP, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is making \$104 million available to organic dairy operations to assist with projected marketing costs in 2023, calculated using their marketing costs in 2022.

FSA will begin accepting applications for ODMAP on May 24, 2023. Eligible producers include certified organic dairy operations that produce milk from cows, goats and sheep.

How ODMAP Works

FSA is providing financial assistance for a producer's projected marketing costs in 2023 based on their 2022 costs. ODMAP provides a one-time cost-share payment based on marketing costs on pounds of organic milk marketed in the 2022 calendar year.

ODMAP provides financial assistance that will immediately support certified organic dairy operations during 2023 keeping organic dairy operations sustainable until markets return to more normal conditions.

How to Apply

FSA is accepting applications from May 24 to July 26, 2023. To apply, producers should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#). To complete the ODMAP application, producers must certify to pounds of 2022 milk production, how documentation of their organic certification, and submit a completed application form.

Organic dairy operations are required to provide their USDA certification of organic status confirming operation as an organic dairy in 2023 and 2022 along with the certification of 2022 milk production in hundredweight.

ODMAP complements other assistance available to dairy producers, including Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and Supplemental DMC, with more than \$300 million in benefits paid for the 2023 program year to date. Learn more on the [FSA Dairy Programs webpage](#).

More Information

To learn more about USDA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and other programs 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. In 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's Organic Certification Cost Share Program Assists Organic Producers Recover Costs Associated with Organic Certification.

OCCSP signup is open now until October 31, 2023.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organic certification, up to \$750 per category, through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers and handlers to apply for OCCSP by Oct. 31, 2023, for expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023.

As part of USDA's broader effort to support organic producers and in response to stakeholder feedback, this year FSA increased the cost share to the maximum amount allowed by statute.

Cost Share for 2023

The cost share provides financial assistance for organic certification, and producers and handlers are eligible to receive 75% of the costs, up to \$750, for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and state organic program fees (California only).

Producers have until Oct. 31, 2023, to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

How to Apply

To apply, organic producers and handlers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). As part of completing the OCCSP application, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses.

Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through department of agriculture. Additional details can be found on the [OCCSP](#) webpage.

Opportunity for State Departments of Agriculture

FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA will post a synopsis of the funding opportunity on grants.gov and will electronically mail the notice of funding opportunity to all eligible state departments of agriculture.

If a state department of agriculture chooses to participate in OCCSP, both the state department of agriculture and FSA County Offices in that state will accept OCCSP applications and make payments to eligible certified operations. However, the producer or handler may only receive OCCSP assistance from either FSA or the participating state department of agriculture.

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USDA Seeks Members for Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

Nominations open until July 15

USDA is seeking nominations for four positions on the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. Nominations will be open to public from May 15, 2023, to July 15, 2023. The 12-member Committee, which assembled in March 2022, is part of USDA's efforts to increase support for urban agriculture and innovative production. Members of the committee provide input on policy development and to help identify barriers to urban agriculture as USDA works to promote urban farming and the economic opportunities it provides in cities across the country. Learn more by reading the full news release [here](#).

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Start a New Career Path: Crop Insurance Agent & Loss Adjuster Training Program Pilot

Are you ready to start your career path as a crop insurance agent or adjuster? Then, join the Building Resiliency pilot program to gain education, certification, and potential placement with an agency.

Building Resiliency emphasizes the value of including people from various social and ethnic backgrounds in the crop insurance industry to utilize agriculture insurance products beneficial to underserved communities.

Fill out the intake form today at the link below. The recruitment period ends on Friday, June 23rd, at 11:59 PM (ET). <https://www.indianag.org/building-resiliency-crop-insurance>

For more information or assistance in completing the intake form, contact the [Intertribal Agriculture Council \(IAC\)](#).

The Points of Contact for the Rocky Mountain Region, which encompasses Montana and Wyoming, are:

Zane Not Afraid	Craig Harry
Technical Assistance Specialist	Technical Assistance Specialist
(406) 665-5394	(307) 349-7469
zane@indianag.org	craig@indianag.org

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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 and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

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

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

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, [contact their local Service Center](#) or visit farmers.gov.

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Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be successful. FSA staff will provide guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial credit. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

If a farm loan borrower can't make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, 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 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has announced the availability of \$500 million in funding to advance partner-driven solutions to conservation on agricultural land through 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. Increased funding for fiscal year 2023 is made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act, and this year's funding opportunity reflects a concerted effort to streamline and simplify the program.

The application period is now open for RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). RCPP Classic projects are implemented using NRCS contracts and easements with producers, landowners and communities, in collaboration with project partners. Through RCPP AFA, the lead partner must work directly with agricultural producers to support the development of new conservation structures and approaches that would not otherwise be available under RCPP Classic.

NRCS will accept applications now through Aug. 18, 2023, via the [RCPP portal](#). Please note that to request access to the portal, you must have a level 2 verified eAuthentication account with USDA. This can be obtained by following the instructions on the [USDA eAuthentication page](#).

See the [RCPP How to Apply](#) website.

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Montana Range Tour – Register Now

Register today for Montana Range Tour (MRT), July 6, in the Paradise Valley, south of Livingston!

MRT will feature a tour of the 2022 Leopold Conservation Award winner, Barney Creek Livestock. In addition to the ranch tour, special guest speaker Nicole Masters with Integrity Soils will present on topics of soil health and the vital role it plays for grazing land managers. Registration cost is \$65 per person and includes the tour, presentations, lunch, and a banquet dinner. Participants are responsible for their own lodging and travel costs. A block of rooms has been reserved at Chico Hot Springs in Emigrant, MT; the room block ends June 5 and event registration ends June 22.

To register and to view the agenda, visit: <https://dnrc.mt.gov/Conservation/Conservation-Programs/Rangeland-Resources/>.

When you click on the link provided or the photo below, you will be redirected to the DNRC's registration page where you will be asked to select your payment type, then you will need to select "Montana Range Tour." Once

you've selected the event, proceed with the checkout process as directed until you have a receipt for payment. Upon successful registration you will receive a confirmation email.

If you need assistance registering or have questions, contact Stacey Barta at (406) 594-8481 or Shantell Martin at (406) 531-4584.

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USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Compost and Food Waste Reduction

Applicants in Montana encouraged to apply by June 15, 2023.

USDA has announced the availability of up to \$9.5 million for Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CFWR) pilot projects for fiscal year 2023. The cooperative agreements support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans. Eligible entities in Montana are encouraged to apply.

A pre-recorded webinar will provide an overview of the cooperative agreements' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting applications. The [webinar](#) will be posted at farmers.gov/urban.

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

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The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at nass.usda.gov/Publications and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be.

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USDA Announces Modifications to the Annual Forage and Rainfall Index Program

USDA is modifying the Annual Forage Insurance Program to make it more sustainable and to allow producers more flexibility. This includes allowing producers to choose the areas which they insure, rather than being required to insure all eligible acres. The changes will take effect for the 2024 crop year.

The Annual Forage insurance program is a rainfall index area-based plan that provides coverage to acreage planted each year and used as feed and fodder by livestock. The rainfall index does not directly measure an individual producer's annual forage production or loss. Rather, it measures the normal precipitation deviation that occurs in and around the insured area, which is correlated with forage production. The Annual Forage insurance program includes all counties in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Texas.

The modifications to the Annual Forage pilot program include:

- Allowing producers to insure the acres they choose – no longer requiring all eligible acres to be insured.
- Modifying the program design from four growing seasons to 12 growing seasons.
- Moving the Acreage Reporting Date to the fifth day of the month after the month of planting, which creates 12 acreage reporting dates.
- Adding planting dates to designate the planting month and corresponding acreage reporting date.
- Allowing producers in Kansas and Nebraska to have coverage in growing season 10 through 12 and a corresponding growing season at the start of the next crop year, which is consistent with other states where the insurance is offered.
- Updating the Rainfall Index Basic Provisions to incorporate existing guidance on the record requirements in double cropping situations when one of the crops follow a different plan of insurance.

The Annual Forage Insurance Program began in 2014. Producers have enrolled for coverage on more than 6.2 million acres.

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USDA Invites Input on Crop Insurance Coverage for Prevented Planting

WASHINGTON, May 23, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published a Request for Information today, announcing public listening sessions and soliciting public comments on possible changes to prevented planting crop insurance coverage. Coinciding with the public comment period, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) will hold in-person and virtual listening sessions June through August. This includes in-person listening sessions in Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, New Mexico, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas. Meanwhile, RMA will accept written comments through its request for information until September 1.

"We truly care what our customers – the Nation's agricultural producers – have to say. That's why we're hosting listening sessions in 12 states in addition to accepting written comments," said RMA Administrator Marcia Bunker.

“We listen to their needs so that we can adapt, improve, and help them manage their risks and provide better opportunities to protect their operations.”

The request for information on prevented planting requests input on prevented planting topics to include:

- 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 (to be eligible for a 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.

RMA will hold a virtual listening session via Microsoft Teams on June 8 and at least a dozen in-person sessions over the next few months. Additional details on the listening sessions are available on the [RMA website](#).

The request for information, which includes details for submitting feedback, 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](#).

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Note: The news release was updated on May 24 to say in-person listening sessions will occur in 12 states, including Iowa.

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

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Regional Director:
ERIC BASHORE

Contact information for your local office, visit: www.farmers.gov.

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