



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Oregon FSA Newsletter - October 2022**

[Farm Service Agency](#) | [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) | [Risk Management Agency](#)

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## **State Executive Director's Message**

I am pleased to announce the selection of Oregon FSA's State Committee members recently made by USDA Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

State Committee members are responsible for the oversight of farm programs and county committee operations, resolving program delivery appeals from the agriculture community, maintaining cooperative relations with industry stakeholders, keeping producers informed about FSA programs and operating in a manner consistent with USDA equal opportunity and civil rights policies. *(Photo by Kathryn McCullough, Sherman County)*



The individuals appointed to serve on this committee for Oregon are:

- Committee Chair Katherine Minthorn - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation of Oregon, located near Pendleton, Umatilla County

- Vern Frederickson, Irrigon, Morrow County
- Bryan Harper, Junction City, Lane County
- Denver Pugh, Shedd, Linn County
- Anna Sullivan, Hereford, Baker County

We welcome back our previous State Committee members, and a special welcome to Bryan, who is a new Committee member. We will share their bio's when they are made available.

Gail Greenman  
State Executive Director (SED), Oregon FSA

## Interest Rates-October 2022

- Farm Operating Loans – Direct, 3.875%**
- Farm Operating – Microloans, 3.875%**
- Farm Ownership Loans – Direct, 4.125%**
- Farm Ownership – Microloan, 4.125%**
- Farm Ownership-Direct, Joint Financing, 2.500%**
- Farm Ownership-Down Payment, 1.500%**
- Emergency Loans Actual Loss, 3.750%**
- Farm Storage Facility Loans - 3 Years, 3.625%**
- Farm Storage Facility Loans - 5 Years, 3.375%**
- Farm Storage Facility Loans - 7 Years, 3.375%**
- Farm Storage Facility Loans - 10 Years, 3.125%**

See [Oregon FSA's website/News Releases](#) for information on USDA's Secretarial natural disaster designations to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through [emergency loans](#).

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. You can find out which of these loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

## Important Dates

- **October 31:** Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP) and Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) applications due.
- **October 31:** RCPP nutrient management grants due (see article below).
- **November 1: Loss Adjuster Applications for the 2023 crop year are due to the Oregon FSA State Office.** For more information see the [News Release](#).
- **November 11:** Veterans Day Federal Holiday, Offices Closed.
- **November 24:** Thanksgiving Day Federal Holiday, Offices Closed.

- **LFP (2022)** - Deadline January 30, 2023 - **Please make sure to have any grazing leases reported and CCC-855's completed for 2022 LFP.**
- **NAP** (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program): Report losses within 15 days of event. Notify FSA of event within 72 hours for hand-harvested crops. [Click here to learn more about local deadlines and ongoing programs.](#)

## USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can now apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program](#) (OTECP) and [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses. Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both **due October 31, 2022.**



OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).
- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per category of certification costs in 2022.

This cost share for certification is available for each of these categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and State organic program fees.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. Producers have until October 31, 2022, to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center. As part of completing the OCCSP applications, 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 participating State agencies.

Additional details can be found on the [OTECP](#) and [OCCSP](#) webpages.

# Biden-Harris Administration Makes \$500 Million Available to Increase Innovative American-Made Fertilizer Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the Biden-Harris Administration is making \$500 million in grants available to increase American-made fertilizer production to spur competition and combat price hikes on U.S. farmers caused by the war in Ukraine.



The Biden-Harris Administration's [Fertilizer Production Expansion Program](#) is part of a whole-of-government effort to promote competition in agricultural markets. The funds are being made available through the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Eligible entities are for-profit businesses and corporations, nonprofit entities, Tribes and Tribal organizations, producer-owned cooperatives and corporations, certified benefit corporations, and state or local governments. Private entities must be independently owned and operated to apply.

The Department will begin accepting applications in the coming days via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Notably, there will be two opportunities for submission. [Learn more.](#)

## Join us for Oregon USDA's Beginning Farmer Ranchers: In the Know virtual events

Are you new to farming or ranching, thinking about becoming a producer or serve this audience in your work? You're invited to Oregon **USDA's Beginning Farmer Ranchers: In the Know** virtual events 2023.



Oregon's Beginning Farmer Rancher (BFR) Team and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) small farm and organic specialists are offering opportunities to learn more about USDA programs and how they can benefit those new to farming or ranching.

"We had such a positive reception to the initial *BFR In the Know* events in 2022 we decided to continue for 2023, looking for ways to be more responsive to our beginning farmers and ranchers by changing the times of the sessions," said Kathy Ferge, Oregon USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Coordinator. "We want our producers and those entities that serve new producers to know we are truly here to help you be successful in connecting with USDA programming."

Join us online for this informational virtual event series on the third Tuesday of October, January, April, and July.

- **Tuesday, October 18, from noon to 2 p.m.**
- Tuesday, January 17, from 4 to 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 18, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

- Tuesday, July 18, from noon to 2 p.m.

The upcoming October session will focus on the USDA Risk Management Micro Farm Program and NRCS Programming for 2023. Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development (RD) will also provide updates. Participants will then have the opportunity to join agency representatives in breakout sessions for agency-specific questions.

Zoom link: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1608664258>

Meeting ID: 160 866 4258/Dial in: +1 669 254 5252 US (San Jose)

To learn more about the USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Program visit [Beginning Farmers and Ranchers | Farmers.gov](#).

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## USDA Seeking Public Comment on a New Provision to Provide Assistance to Agricultural Producers Who Have Experienced Discrimination

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comment on how it should implement Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a provision that aims to provide assistance to the nation's farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs. Section 22007 provides a transformative opportunity for USDA to help farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners impacted by discrimination in USDA farm lending programs. IRA Section 22007 directs USDA to provide financial assistance to producers who have experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs and has appropriated \$2.2 billion for this purpose.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comment on how it should implement Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a provision that aims to provide assistance to the nation's farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs.

IRA Section 22007 directs USDA to provide financial assistance to producers who have experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs and has appropriated \$2.2 billion for this purpose. Please visit the [October 13 USDA Press Release](#) to find out more information and to participate.

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## USDA Updates Farm Loan Programs to Increase Equity

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating its farm loan programs to better support current borrowers, including historically underserved producers. These improvements are part of USDA's commitment to increase equity in all programs, including farm loans that provide important access to capital for covering operating expenses and purchasing land and equipment.



The 2018 Farm Bill authorized FSA to provide equitable relief to certain direct loan borrowers, who are non-compliant with program requirements due to good faith reliance on a material action of, advice of, or non-action from an FSA official. Previously, borrowers may have been required to immediately repay the loan or convert it to a non-program loan with higher interest rates, less favorable terms, and limited loan servicing.

Now, FSA has additional flexibilities to assist borrowers in such situations. If the agency provided incorrect guidance to an existing direct loan borrower, the agency may provide equitable relief to that borrower. FSA may assist the borrower by allowing the borrower to keep their loans at current rates or other terms received in association with the loan which was determined to be noncompliant, or the borrower may receive other equitable relief for the loan as the Agency determines to be appropriate.

USDA encourages producers to reach out to their local loan officials to ensure they fully understand the wide range of loan and servicing options available that can assist them in starting, expanding or maintaining their operation.

### **Additional Updates**

Equitable relief is one of several changes authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill that USDA has made to the direct and guaranteed loan programs. Other changes that were previously implemented include:

- Modifying the existing three-year farming experience requirement for Direct Farm Ownership loans to include additional items as acceptable experience.
- Allowing socially disadvantaged and beginning farmer applicants to receive a guarantee equal to 95%, rather than the otherwise applicable 90% guarantee.
- Expanding the definition of and providing additional benefits to veteran farmers.
- Allowing borrowers who received restructuring with a write down to maintain eligibility for an Emergency loan.
- Expanding the scope of eligible issues and persons covered under the agricultural Certified Mediation Program.

Additional information on these changes is available in the March 8, 2022, [rule on the Federal Register](#).

### **More Background**

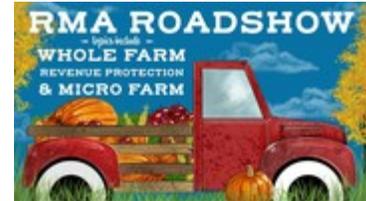
FSA has taken other recent steps to increase equity in its programs. Last summer, USDA announced it was providing \$67 million in competitive loans through its new Heirs' Property Relending Program to help agricultural producers and landowners resolve heirs' land ownership and succession issues. FSA also invested \$4.7 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers, which contributed to a fourfold increase in participation by historically underserved producers in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2), a key pandemic assistance program, since April 2021.

Additionally, in January 2021, Secretary Vilsack announced a [temporary suspension of past-due debt collection and foreclosures](#) for distressed direct loan borrowers due to the economic hardship imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Producers can explore available loan options using the [Farm Loan Discover Tool on farmers.gov](#) ([also available in Spanish](#)) or by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](#). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Due to the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. Producers can [contact their local Service Center](#) to set up an in-person or phone appointment to discuss loan options.

## RMA Announces Virtual Workshops Highlight Improvements to Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will continue offering virtual workshops Nov. 15, and Dec. 13 – for agricultural producers and stakeholders to learn about the latest updates and improvements to the [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection](#) (WFRP) and the [Micro Farm](#) insurance options, two of the most comprehensive risk management options available.



These insurance options are especially important to specialty crop, organic, urban, and direct market producers, and this is part of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) efforts to increase participation in these options and crop insurance overall.

RMA will host these workshops for agricultural producers via Microsoft Teams events:

- Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 8 p.m. PT ([click to join](#))
- Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 11 a.m. ET ([click to join](#))

RSVP is not required. Attendees will have a chance to submit written questions during the event. [Learn more.](#)

**The 2023 USDA in Oregon will be arriving soon!  
Stop by your local [USDA Service Center](#)  
to pick up your copy!**



## Oregon FSA State Office

7620 SW Mohawk St.  
Tualatin, Oregon 97062  
Phone: 503-692-3688  
Fax: 855-824-6185

**State Executive Director**  
**GAIL GREENMAN, 503-404-1112**  
[gail.greenman@usda.gov](mailto:gail.greenman@usda.gov)

**Administrative Officer**  
**MARTIN NGUYEN, 503-404-1127**  
[martin.nguyen@usda.gov](mailto:martin.nguyen@usda.gov)

**Farm Programs Chief**  
**SARAH HANLON,**  
**503-404-1116**  
[sarah.hanlon@usda.gov](mailto:sarah.hanlon@usda.gov)

**Farm Loan Programs Chief**  
**KATHEY BRUCKER, 503-404-1117**  
[kathey.brucker@usda.gov](mailto:kathey.brucker@usda.gov)

**Oregon FSA State Committee:**  
Katherine Minthorn, STC Chair  
Vern Frederickson, STC Member  
Bryan Harper, STC Member  
Denver Pugh, STC Member  
Anna Sullivan, STC Member  
**Next STC Meeting:** Dec. 15, STO

How can we help you? Submit questions or requests for further information to [ASK.USDA.GOV](http://ASK.USDA.GOV) or 1-833-ONE-USDA.

Sign up for important text message alerts from your local county FSA office! To subscribe, text FSANOW (372-669).



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