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Deadline July 26 to Apply for Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance

The Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) was created to assist certified organic dairy producers facing a unique set of challenges in recent years, including higher costs attributed to the pandemic and drought conditions across the country.



USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is providing financial assistance for a producer's projected marketing costs in 2023 based on 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.

Organic dairy producers should apply by July 26, 2023 at their local USDA Service Center.

[Learn more.](#)

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

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

The program website, 22007apply.gov, is now open. The website includes an English- and Spanish-language application that applicants can download or submit via an e-filing portal, information on how to obtain technical assistance in-person or virtually, and additional resources and details about the program.

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

To apply, borrowers have the option to apply via the e-filing portal at 22007apply.gov or submit paper-based forms via mail or in-person delivery to the program's local offices. The application process will be open from July 7 to October 31, 2023. Under the planned timeline, applications will be reviewed in November and December, with payments reaching recipients soon thereafter. Importantly, applicants should know that the application process is not on a first come, first served, basis. All applications received or postmarked before the October 31 deadline will be considered.

To support producers throughout the application process, USDA is ensuring that organizations with extensive experience conducting outreach to farm organizations are able to support individuals who may be eligible for the program. These groups include [AgrAbility](#), [Farmer Veteran Coalition](#), [Farmers' Legal Action Group](#), [Federation of Southern Cooperatives](#), [Intertribal Agriculture Council](#), [Land Loss Prevention Program](#), [National Young Farmers Coalition](#), and [Rural Coalition](#).

Vendors operating four regional hubs are also providing technical assistance and working closely with these and other community-based organizations to conduct outreach using digital and grassroots strategies, to ensure potential applicants are informed about the program and have the opportunity to apply. These hubs are operating a network of brick-and-mortar program offices and will conduct extensive outreach about the program. Windsor Group serves farmers in the eastern regions of the U.S. and Analytic Acquisitions serves the western regions. A national administrator, Midtown Group, is responsible for program oversight and integrity, and will lead a national call-center, operate the application website - 22007apply.gov, which is now open – and review and process applications and payments. All vendors have experience in professional services, supporting government contracts, and complex program operations.

On March 1, 2023, USDA shared initial [details on how the Section 22007 program will work](#), including that the Inflation Reduction Act specifies the Secretary of Agriculture is responsible for providing this assistance through qualified nongovernmental entities, under standards set by USDA. USDA entered into agreements with vendors and cooperators in May.

In addition to the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) opening today, the Inflation Reduction Act also created several other programs that are helping USDA rebuild trust, address systemic issues and improve service to people who may have been underserved by USDA in the past. Information about USDA's equity agenda and progress is available at www.usda.gov/equity.

In standing up this program, USDA has become aware of some lawyers and groups spreading misleading information about the discrimination assistance process, pressuring people to sign retainer agreements, and asking people to fill out forms with private and sensitive information. As of today, the official application process has begun and filling out an application is **free**.

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

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, promoting competition and 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 www.usda.gov.

USDA Encourages You to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadline



The Farm Service Agency encourages you to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by

visiting the RMA website.

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Beginning, underserved, veterans and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA’s online Agent Locator. You can use the USDA Cost Estimator to predict insurance premium costs.

USDA Previews Emergency Relief Assistance for Agricultural Producers Who Incurred Losses Due to 2022



FSA plans to roll out \$3.7 billion in Emergency Relief Program (ERP) and Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) assistance to crop and livestock producers who sustained losses due to a qualifying natural disaster event in calendar year 2022. USDA is sharing early information to allow producers time to gather documents in advance of program delivery. Through distribution of

remaining funds, USDA is also concluding the 2021 ELRP program by sending payments in the amount of 20% of the initial ELRP payment to all existing recipients.

On December 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328) that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters occurring in calendar year 2022.

Additionally, the Act specifically targets up to about \$500 million to livestock producers for losses incurred due to drought or wildfire in calendar year 2022.

ERP 2022 for Crop Producers

FSA intends to deploy the lessons learned from the development and implementation of ERP and ELRP for previous years' losses to ensure expedited assistance for 2022 losses.

Based on positive feedback from producers, stakeholder groups and FSA county office staff, USDA intends to provide an ERP track for producers who had coverage through Risk Management Agency's federal crop insurance or FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Through a streamlined application process, USDA intends to be in a position to send pre-filled applications directly to eligible producers in early summer.

For producers who have not been able to avail themselves of risk management coverage or whose losses were not covered, USDA intends to offer a program track to access ERP assistance with assistance provided to producers who suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2022 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event.

Instead of implementing these program tracks as two separate phases on different timelines, FSA intends to make both tracks available to producers at the same time, noting that the first track will follow a streamlined process with less paperwork burden, based on existing, available risk management data. The second ERP track would require that producers provide FSA with certain information related to revenue.

ELRP 2022 for Livestock Producers and Close Out of ELRP for 2021

For impacted ranchers, USDA intends to leverage FSA's Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) data to deliver ELRP assistance for increases in supplemental feed costs in 2022.

To be eligible for an ELRP payment for 2022 losses, livestock producers will need to have suffered grazing losses from wildfire or in a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks or a D3 (extreme drought) or higher level of drought intensity during the 2022 calendar year and have applied and been approved for 2022 LFP. Additionally, otherwise eligible producers whose permitted grazing on federally managed lands was disallowed due to wildfire will also be eligible for ELRP payments if they applied and were approved for 2022 LFP.

In a continued effort to streamline and simplify the delivery of ELRP benefits, eligible producers will not be required to apply for payment.

Meanwhile, FSA also intends to provide additional assistance to ranchers for qualifying livestock losses from drought and wildfire in 2021. More information will be announced in the coming months.

How Producers Can Prepare

To participate in ERP and ELRP for 2022 losses, both crop and livestock producers should have or be prepared to have the following forms on file with FSA:

- Form AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet (as applicable to the program participant);
- Form CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan for an individual or legal entity;
- Form CCC-901, Member Information for Legal Entities (if applicable); and
- Form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm should contact FSA at their local USDA Service Center.

In addition to the forms listed above, underserved producers are encouraged to register their status with FSA, using Form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, as certain existing permanent and ad-hoc disaster programs provide increased benefits or reduced fees and premiums.

Producers with eligible crop losses who did not have federal crop insurance or NAP risk management coverage for 2022 and intend to apply for ERP assistance will need to pull together revenue information that is readily available from most tax records. FSA encourages producers to have their tax documents from the past few years and supporting materials ready including Schedule F (Form 1040) and Profit or Loss from Farming or similar tax documents. FSA will not require these forms to be submitted with the ERP application, but will require a certification, similar to Adjusted Gross Income certification that has been used for many years for Farm Bill programs. Applicants simply report and certify to the information required for the program.

Crop producers who have federal crop insurance coverage should ensure that information on file with their insurance agent is accurate and that any pending activities needed to file loss claims for 2022 losses are addressed as soon as possible. Producers who received ERP assistance last year or who will receive assistance for 2022 losses are required to purchase crop insurance or NAP for the next two crop years.

In the coming months, USDA intends to provide additional information on how to apply for assistance through ERP and ELRP for 2022 losses. Through proactive communications and outreach, USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as program eligibility, application and implementation details unfold.

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



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. The results for CRP General signup reflect the continued importance of CRP as a tool to help producers invest in the long-term health, sustainability, and profitability of their land and resources.

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 from 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 enrolled in General CRP will be confirmed later this year. Participating producers and landowners should also remember that submitting and accepting a CRP offer is the first step, and producers still need to develop a conservation plan before contracts become effective on October 1, 2023. Each year, during the window between offer acceptance and land enrollment, some producers 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 an annual 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.

Continuous CRP, in which 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). In CREP, which is available in certain geographies, partnerships with States, Tribes, and other entities are leveraged for participants to receive a variety of added incentives and flexibilities. Also available is the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative. CLEAR30, a signup opportunity under that initiative available nationwide, gives producers and landowners across the country the opportunity to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices.

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.

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.

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Intended Investment of Approximately \$300 Million in 50 Projects Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access for Underserved Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced its selection of 50 projects for potential award, totaling approximately \$300 million. These innovative projects will help improve access to land, capital, and markets for underserved farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. The Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access (Increasing Land Access) Program, which is funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, works to increase access to farm ownership opportunities, improve results for those with heirs' property or fractionated land, increase access to markets and capital that affect the ability to access land, and improve land ownership, land succession and agricultural business planning.

Examples of selectees for potential award include:

- **Community Development Corporation of Oregon** will work to provide long term and sustainable land access to disadvantaged refugee and immigrant beginning farmers in Oregon's east Multnomah and Clackamas counties. A few of the goals of the project are to purchase the currently rented farm, reduce the net cost of the land through a conservation or working lands easement, and provide an equitable and engaging process of education and training about cooperative land ownership, finance concepts, and related USDA programs.

- **The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin** will work to establish an equity capital fund to provide support for Tribal producers' land, equipment, and operational needs. Additionally, this project will work to provide targeted technical assistance to Tribal producers in developing comprehensive farm and food business plans, including conservation plans to support expanded production and access to the full suite of USDA and other support resources.
- **Workin' Rootz** will work to increase access to land and capacity-building at five urban farms/community market gardens in Detroit which include Workin' Roots Farm, Love n' Labor, Foster Patch Community Garden, Love Earth Herbal, and Urban Bush Sistahs. These farms will serve as resource hubs by sharing infrastructure (tiller, lawn tractor, wash and pack, cooler storage, etc.) with other urban farmers and gardeners in their prospective neighborhoods.
- **Maine Farmland Trust** will work with low-income farmers on access to low-interest capital for land purchase or business operations, farm upgrades and infrastructure investments that promote viability, technical assistance in the areas of real estate and business planning, and more.
- **Alabama A&M University, in collaboration with four other 1890 land grant universities (Southern University, Alcorn State University, Fort Valley State University, and Tennessee State University) and many other local organizations**, will provide delivery of technical assistance to underserved farm populations in chronically and economically depressed communities of Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi to ensure the success of existing farmers and ranchers and to rapidly increase the numbers of small farm operators in the targeted communities.

The tentative selectees include national, regional, and local projects that cover 40 states and territories including Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. USDA will work with the selected applicants to finalize the scope and funding levels in the coming months.

See the full list of Increasing Land Access Program selected projects.

Environmental Assessment

These projects will likely result in the purchase of land, construction of farm infrastructure and other activities that could have potential impacts on environmental resources. USDA has developed a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the Increasing Land Access Program to evaluate the program's overarching environmental impacts as they relate to the National Environmental Policy Act.

The environmental assessment is available [online for public review](#). USDA is requesting comments on the program's potential impact on the environment. The feedback will be incorporated into the final assessment, as appropriate, prior to a decision.

USDA will consider comments received by Friday, July 14, 2023, at 5 p.m. EDT. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent possible. Comments may be submitted:

- Electronically at: Access@usda.gov
- By mail at: Attn: Michael Mannigan, Grants Management Specialist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, Outreach Office, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC, 20250-0506

For more information, contact Michael Mannigan at Land.Access@usda.gov. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice).

More Information

The Increasing Land Access Program was [originally announced in August 2022](#) as part of a broader investment to help ensure underserved producers have the resources, tools, programs and technical support they need to succeed and is being funded by the Inflation Reduction Act.

The Increasing Land Access Program is part of USDA's commitment to equity across the Department and steps it has taken under Secretary Vilsack's direction to improve equity and access, eliminate barriers to its programs for underserved individuals and communities, and build a workforce more representative of America. Earlier in the year, the [USDA Equity Commission](#), which is comprised of independent members from diverse backgrounds, released its interim recommendations to remove barriers to inclusion and access at USDA. The program is also an important component of the Department's and President Biden's vision to [Advance Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#).

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](#).

USDA Announces Historic Investment in Wildlife Conservation, Expands Partnership to Include Additional Programs

USDA is expanding its work on wildlife conservation by investing at least \$500 million over the next five years and by leveraging all available conservation programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), through its Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) effort. These commitments will ramp up the conservation assistance for farmers, ranchers, private forest owners and tribes with a focus on working lands in key geographies across the country as well as hiring for key conservation positions.

The funding will help deliver a series of cohesive Frameworks for Conservation Action, which establish a common vision across the partnership of public and private interests and goals for delivering conservation resources in a given ecosystem, combining cutting-edge science with local knowledge.

The new funding includes \$250 million from the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and \$250 million from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This announcement builds off more than a decade of growing Farm Bill investments in wildlife habitat, and serves as a roadmap to leveraging both Farm Bill funding and the historic investments from the Inflation Reduction Act to guide conservation efforts. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) will coordinate this work through WLFW, which focuses on voluntary, locally-led efforts that benefit wildlife and agricultural communities.

This funding will immediately benefit two of WLFW's newest priorities. In the western U.S., at least \$40 million of EQIP and ACEP funding will go toward USDA's ongoing efforts to help conserve migratory big game habitat, allowing a continuation of an existing partnership with the state of Wyoming and an expansion to the neighboring states of Idaho and Montana. In 25 central and eastern U.S. states, an additional \$14 million in new EQIP funding will be dedicated to conservation of bobwhite quail and associated species in the grasslands and savannas of the central and eastern U.S. Additionally, Inflation Reduction Act funding will also build outcomes for northern bobwhite recovery as over 3.5 million acres will help mitigate greenhouse gases.

About USDA's Working Lands for Wildlife

WLFW is USDA's premier approach for conserving American working lands to benefit people, wildlife and rural communities. While NRCS and FSA work every day at all levels to assist producers, states, tribes and other conservation partners with their conservation priorities, WLFW steps in to facilitate their work on cross-cutting, national priorities that can only be addressed through coordination at an ecosystem scale.

Established in 2010, WLFW has teamed up with leading scientists and conservation partners as well as more than 8,400 producers to conserve or restore nearly 12 million acres of working lands, with tremendous

benefits. WLFW has helped many sensitive species in their recovery, including the greater sage-grouse in the West, New England cottontail in the Northeast, golden-winged warbler in Appalachia and gopher tortoise in the Southeast. In large part because of the voluntary conservation efforts on private lands through WLFW, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has in some cases determined that species listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was no longer warranted thanks to recoveries made possible by these WLFW efforts.

To learn more about NRCS and FSA programs, landowners and operators can contact their local USDA Service Center.

Utah Farm Service Agency

125 South State Street
Room 3202
Salt Lake City, UT 84138

Phone: 801-524-4530
Fax: 844-715-5091

State Executive Director

Mark Gibbons
mark.gibbons@usda.gov

State Committee

Lance Munns, Chairperson
Merlin Esplin
Alisa Meyer

Farm Loan Chief

Korry Soper
korry.soper@usda.gov

Farm Program Specialist

Cary Son
cary.son@usda.gov

Farm Program Specialist

Heidi Brooks
heidi.brooks@usda.gov

Farm Program Specialist

Racheal Hansen
racheal.hansen@usda.gov

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