

- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys](#)
- [Applying for NAP Payments](#)
- [Current FSA Loan Interest Rates](#)
- [USDA Invests \\$14.5 Million in Taxpayer Education, Program Outreach Efforts for Farmers and Ranchers](#)
- [NRCS Announces EQIP and RCPP Signup for 2023 Funding, Apply by November 4, 2022 Providing Conservation Practices to Protect Natural Resources](#)
- [FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [USDA Offers Assistance to Restore and Protect Privately-Owned Wetlands, Agricultural Lands and Grasslands](#)
- [Biden-Harris Administration Makes \\$500 Million Available to Increase Innovative American-Made Fertilizer Production](#)

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## Dates to Remember

**October 10, 2022:** USDA Service Centers closed in observance of Columbus Day

**October 31, 2022:** [Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program \(OTECP\)](#) Deadline to apply for Fiscal Year 2022.

**October 31, 2022:** [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#) Deadline to Apply

**November 11, 2022:** USDA Service Centers closed in observance of Veterans Day.

**November 15, 2022:** [Acreage Reporting](#) Deadline for fall mint and fall-seeded small grains (for 2023 crop year).

**November 20, 2022:** [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) closing date for Apples, Aronia, Asparagus, Blueberries, Caneberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Currants, Grapes, Hops, Pears, Plums and Strawberries.

**November 24, 2022:** USDA Service Centers closed in observance of Thanksgiving.

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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](http://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](https://youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be).

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## Applying for NAP Payments

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

In order to participate, you must obtain NAP coverage for the crop year by the applicable deadline using form CCC-471 "Application for Coverage" and pay the service fee. Application closing dates vary by crop. Producers are also required to submit an acceptable crop acreage report. Additionally, NAP participants must provide:

- The quantity of all harvested production of the crop in which the producer held an interest during the crop year
- The disposition of the harvested crop, such as whether it is marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended
- Acceptable crop production records (when requested by FSA)

Producers who fail to report acreage and production information for NAP-covered crops could see reduced or zero NAP assistance. These reports are used to calculate the approved yield.

If your NAP-covered crops are affected by a natural disaster, notify your FSA office by completing Part B of form CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment." This must be completed within 15 calendar days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date. For hand-harvested crops

and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

To receive benefits, you must also complete Parts D, E, F and G of the CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment" within 60 days of the last day of coverage for the crop year for any NAP covered crops. The CCC-576 requires acceptable appraisal information. Producers must provide evidence of production and note whether the crop was marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

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## Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

Current loan rates as of October 1, 2022.

### Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	3.875%
Farm Operating - Microloan	3.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.125%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	4.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	2.500%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%

### Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):

3-year FSFL	3.625%
5-year FSFL	3.375%
7-year FSFL	3.375%
10-year FSFL	3.125%
12-year FSFL	3.375%

Please visit the [Farm Loan Program](#) webpage for more information.

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## USDA Invests \$14.5 Million in Taxpayer Education, Program Outreach Efforts for Farmers and Ranchers

FSA is investing in two outreach and education efforts for farmers and ranchers, including those who are new to agriculture or who have been historically underserved by programs.

First, FSA is announcing \$10 million in the new Taxpayer Education and Asset Protection Initiative. Through this initiative, FSA has partnered with the University of Arkansas and the National Farm Income Tax Extension Committee to deliver tax education resources for farmers and ranchers, which includes engagement with agricultural educators, and tax professionals through partnerships with community groups and minority serving institutions across the country.

Second, FSA is investing \$4.5 million in outreach for the Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program (CRP TIP), which increases access to land for new farmers and ranchers. FSA will award cooperative agreements to 15 to 20 partner and stakeholder organizations to conduct outreach and technical assistance and promote awareness and understanding among agricultural communities, particularly those who are military veterans, new to farming, or historically underserved.

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## **NRCS Announces EQIP and RCPP Signup for 2023 Funding, Apply by November 4, 2022 Providing Conservation Practices to Protect Natural Resources**

Farmers and forest landowners will want to plan ahead and sign up early for USDA conservation funding. Jeff Vander Wilt, [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#) Acting State Conservationist in Wisconsin, announced farmers and forest landowners interested in [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) or [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) producer contracts need to apply by November 4, 2022, for funding in fiscal year 2023.

Although NRCS accepts applications year-round, please apply now for fiscal year 2023 funding consideration. Applications are being taken at all [USDA Service Centers](#) in Wisconsin. Applications received after November 4<sup>th</sup>, will automatically be deferred to the next funding cycle.

EQIP and RCPP are the primary programs available to farmers and landowners for farm and woodland conservation work, offering payments for more than 120 conservation practices. Last year, Wisconsin NRCS invested \$34 million in conservation practices through EQIP and RCPP practices.

All applications received by November 4, 2022, will be evaluated, prioritized and ranked for funding in 2023. Farmers may contact their local USDA Service Center to get started on producer eligibility and planning. Vander Wilt reminds farmers who are interested in practices that may require permits, such as manure storage or streambank restoration, to begin planning and seeking permits as soon as possible.

### **Sign up for several special initiatives focusing on conservation efforts.**

Special sign-up opportunities are also now open for Farmstead, Local Work Group, On-Farm Energy, Organic, Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry, and Source Water Protection, as well as several landscape-based initiatives. Special initiatives are also available for Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged and other historically underserved

producers at increased payment rates. All offer technical and financial assistance through EQIP.

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## **FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans**

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) can help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is \$600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

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## **USDA Offers Assistance to Restore and Protect Privately-Owned Wetlands, Agricultural Lands and Grasslands**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages people and groups wanting to restore and protect critical wetlands, agricultural lands and grasslands to consider enrolling their property into conservation easements. The Farm Bill has provided USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) with technical and financial assistance to help private landowners, tribes, land trusts, and other groups protect these valuable lands.

The [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP) focuses on restoring and protecting wetlands as well as conserving productive agricultural lands and grasslands. Landowners are compensated for enrolling their land in easements.

Applications for ACEP are taken on a continuous basis, and they are ranked and considered for funding once a year. The deadline for the Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) for fiscal year 2023 is **October 31, 2022**.

### **Wetland Reserve Easements**

Through ACEP-WRE, NRCS helps landowners and tribes restore and protect wetland ecosystems. Wetlands are one of nature's most productive ecosystems providing many ecological, societal, and economic benefits.

WREs are either permanent or for 30 years in length. Eligible lands include farmed or drained wetlands that can successfully be restored, croplands or grasslands that have been altered by flooding, and riparian areas that link protected wetland areas. As part of the easement, NRCS and the landowner work together to develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. Before applying, the applicant should be aware of the easement ramifications and process required before an easement is in place. Applicants are encouraged to read the newly developed, [Wetland Reserve Easements \(WRE\) through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\) - What to Expect](#) guide, to learn more.

### **Agricultural Land Easements**

Through ACEP-ALE, NRCS provides funds to conservation partners to purchase conservation easements on private working lands. This program helps keep working lands working, especially in areas experiencing development pressure.

Partners include state or local agencies, non-profit entities, and tribes. Landowners continue to own their property but voluntarily enter into a legal agreement with a cooperating entity to purchase an easement. The cooperating entity applies for matching funds from NRCS for the purchase of an easement from the landowner, permanently protecting its agricultural use and conservation values. Landowners do not apply directly to NRCS for funding under this program.

All ALE easements are permanent. Eligible lands include privately owned cropland, rangeland, grassland, pasture, and forests.

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

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today 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.](#)

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