


**Farm Service Agency**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## New York FSA Updates - November 13, 2024

***Want to work for FSA?*** [Click here to see our current open positions!](#)

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## Dates to Remember

November 15	<a href="#">Acreage Reporting Deadline</a> for Fall Seeded Small Grains
November 20	NAP Coverage Deadline for fruit trees, nut trees and perennial crops
November 28	All Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Day
November 29	Deadline to apply for <a href="#">Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) 2024</a>
December 2	FSA <a href="#">County Committee Election</a> Ballots Due
December 31	NAP Coverage Deadline for honey and maple sap
December 31	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Maple Taps
January 2	Acreage Reporting Deadline for Honeybee Colonies

# 2024 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Now Open

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mailed ballots last week for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [county committee elections](#) to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the country. Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these committee members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots postmarked by Dec. 2, 2024, for those ballots to be counted.



Producers must participate or cooperate in a USDA program and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Additionally, producers who are not of legal voting age, but supervise and conduct farming operations for an entire farm, are eligible to vote in these elections.

For purposes of FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned or held in trust by the U.S. for the tribe, even if the individual does not personally produce a commodity on that land. Tribal agricultural landowners 18 years and older can contact their local FSA county office to register to vote.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. Each committee has from three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms, and at least one seat representing a LAA up for election each year. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster recovery, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as making decisions on county office employment and other agricultural issues. They help ensure inclusive representation on committees and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their jurisdiction.

**Ballots must be postmarked or delivered in person to the local FSA office by close of business Dec. 2, 2024, to be counted.** Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2025. Producers can identify LAAs up for election through a geographic information system locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) and may confirm their LAA by contacting their local FSA office. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from their local FSA county office.

## Urban County Committees

Urban county committees have been established in 27 cities to strengthen administration of FSA programs in urban areas. Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Committee members will provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs, serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

The 27 cities with urban county committees are listed at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) and [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban). Of these, ten urban county committees will hold an inaugural election this cycle.

Visit [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) for more information on county committee elections.

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## Fall Acreage Reporting Deadline is Friday



Agricultural producers in New York who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after planting should make an appointment with their U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center before the applicable 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 benefits.

### How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in New York:

**November 20, 2024** - Fall Seeded Small Grains

**December 31, 2024** - maple taps

**January 2, 2025** - honeybee colonies

**January 15, 2025** - apples, grapes and peaches

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your local FSA office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

To file a crop acreage report, producers need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.

- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

## **Acreage Reporting Details**

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If crops are covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, acreage reports should be submitted by the applicable state, county, or crop-specific reporting deadline or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to because of a natural disaster.

Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

FSA offers continuous certification for perennial forage. This means after perennial forage is reported once and the producer elects continuous certification, the certification remains in effect until a change is made. Check with FSA at the local USDA Service Center for more information on continuous certification.

## **New Option to View, Print and Label Maps on Farmers.gov**

Producers with an eAuth account linked to their USDA customer record can now access their FSA farm records, maps and common land units by logging into farmers.gov. A new feature will allow producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries. This will allow producers to view, print and label their own maps for acreage reporting purposes.

Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via form FSA-211 Power of Attorney, Business Partner Signature Authority, along with other signature types, or as a member of a business can now access information in

the farmers.gov portal.

Producers can learn how to use the farmers.gov Farm Records Mapping functionality with this [fact sheet](#) and these [video tutorials](#).

### More Information

Producers can make an appointment to report acres by contacting their local USDA Service Center.

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## USDA Reminds Producers of Fall Application Deadlines for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)



Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers of approaching application deadlines for purchasing risk coverage for some crops through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevented crop planting.

NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass and more.

### Upcoming application deadlines for NAP coverage in New York for the 2025 production season include:

**November 20** – Fruit trees, nut trees and perennial crops

**December 31** - Honey and maple sap

NAP basic coverage is available at 55% of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. NAP offers higher levels of coverage, ranging from 50% to 65% of expected production in 5% increments, at 100% of the average market price. Producers of organic crops and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100% of the average market price at coverage levels ranging between 50% and 65% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

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. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

If a producer has a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (form CCC-860) on file with FSA, it may serve as an application for basic coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived. These producers may also receive a 50% premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected on form CCC-471, prior to the application closing date for each crop.

To learn more about NAP visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center.

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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.

For more information about farm loans, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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## USDA Makes Acreage Reporting Improvements to Allow Flexibility for



# Improvements to Allow Flexibility for Urban and Innovative Producers



Urban and innovative agriculture producers will be able to more easily participate in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs as a result of acreage reporting improvements. These improvements, implemented by USDA's Farm Service Agency, provide more flexibility for reporting acreage on a smaller scale and identifying innovative planting practices like multi-level planting or vertical farming practices.

An acreage report documents crops and where they are grown on a farm or ranch along with the intended use of the crop. 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 program benefits.

## Acreage Reporting Improvements

FSA's acreage reporting software previously allowed acreage to be reported down to .0001 acres, approximately a four-square foot area. Producers will now be able to report acreage-based crops at a minimum size of .000001 acre, approximately a 2.5-inch by 2.5-inch area.

Additional improvements will distinguish alternate growing methods such as crops grown within multiple levels of a building, or crops grown using multi-level or multi-layer growing structures such as panels or towers within a container system. This change allows the distinction of vertical farming practices. Urban and innovative producers will also have the option to report plant inventory along with their acreage-based report, allowing producers to better report the full scope of their operation. Producers can contact FSA at their local USDA Service Center for acreage reporting deadlines that are specific to their county.

## USDA Urban Service Centers

USDA is committed to working with farms of all sizes and in all locations, including those in urban areas. USDA works with agricultural producers through a network of more than 2,300 Service Centers nationwide. To better serve urban farmers, USDA is establishing 17 new [Urban Service Centers](#).

The Urban Service Centers are staffed by FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees and offer farm loan, conservation, disaster assistance and risk management programs.

To find exact locations and contact information for these Urban Service Centers or to learn how to prepare for a USDA Service Center appointment, producers can visit [farmers.gov/your-business/urban-growers/urban-service-centers](https://farmers.gov/your-business/urban-growers/urban-service-centers).

For questions, producers should call their FSA county office. Urban operations that

are not located near one of the Urban Service Centers can contact one of the more than 2,300 Service Centers across the country by visiting [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

Additional resources include:

- [USDA's urban agriculture website](#);
- [Urban producers webpage on farmers.gov](#);
- [Urban Agriculture at a Glance brochure](#); and
- [Innovative Production at a Glance brochure](#).

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## USDA Launches Online Debt Consolidation Tool to Increase Farmer and Rancher Financial Viability

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing the launch of the Debt Consolidation Tool, an innovative online tool available through [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) that allows agricultural producers to enter their farm operating debt and evaluate the potential savings that might be provided by obtaining a debt consolidation loan with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) or a local lender.



A debt consolidation loan is a new loan used to pay off other existing operating loans or lines of credit that might have unreasonable rates and terms. By combining multiple eligible debts into a single, larger loan, borrowers may obtain more favorable payment terms such as a lower interest rate or lower payments. Consolidating debt may also provide farmers and ranchers additional cash flow flexibilities.

The Debt Consolidation Tool is a significant addition to FSA's suite of improvements designed to modernize its Farm Loan Programs. The tool enhances customer service and increases opportunities for farmers and ranchers to achieve financial viability by helping them identify potential savings that could be reinvested in their farming and ranching operation, retirement accounts, or college savings accounts.

Producers can access the Debt Consolidation Tool by visiting [farmers.gov/debt-consolidation-tool](https://farmers.gov/debt-consolidation-tool). The tool is built to run on modern browsers including Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser. Producers do not need to create a farmers.gov account or access the authenticated customer portal to use the tool.

### Additional Farm Loan Programs Improvements

FSA recently announced significant changes to Farm Loan Programs through the [Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule](#). These policy changes, to take effect September 25, 2024, are designed to better assist borrowers to make



strategic investments in the enhancement or expansion of their agricultural operations.

FSA also has a significant initiative underway to streamline and automate the Farm Loan Program customer-facing business process. For the over 26,000 producers who submit a direct loan application annually, FSA has made several impactful improvements including:

- The [Loan Assistance Tool](#) that provides customers with an interactive online, step-by-step guide to identifying the direct loan products that may be a fit for their business needs and to understanding the application process.
- The [Online Loan Application](#), an interactive, guided application that is paperless and provides helpful features including an electronic signature option, the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns, complete a balance sheet, and build a farm operating plan.
- An [online direct loan repayment feature](#) that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local USDA Service Center to pay a loan installment.
- A [simplified direct loan paper application](#), reduced from 29 pages to 13 pages.
- A new [educational hub](#) with farm loan resources and videos.

USDA encourages producers to reach out to their local FSA farm loan staff to ensure they fully understand the wide range of loan and servicing options available to assist with starting, expanding, or maintaining their agricultural operation. To conduct business with FSA, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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## NYS Beginning Farmer Competitive Grant Program

New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) is [pleased to announce a new competitive grant program](#) to help beginning farmers build financially sustainable, independent, commercial agricultural businesses. The Request For Proposal (RFP) opened on October 25th and applications will be accepted through January 24, 2025. \$850,000 will be awarded in this Statewide program.

The Beginning Farmer competitive grant program is funded through the New York State. It is administered by the New York Farm Viability Institute in partnership with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYS AGM).

Farmers who have not operated a farm for more than 10 years and who will materially and substantially participate in operating the farm within the State are eligible to submit proposals. It is expected that all applicants will have a serious interest in building a financially sustainable, independent, commercial agricultural enterprise. More detail about eligibility is provided in the RFP.

There are two funding opportunities; the proposal deadline, use of funds, and process for both opportunities are the same. The smaller Track 1 projects are anticipated to be simpler and, therefore, able to be completed in a shorter timeframe. A 5% match is required for all projects. Grants will be administered on a reimbursement basis as a project is completed.

	Minimum grant Award	Maximum grant Award	Total Funds Available	Project Duration
Track 1	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$300,000	18 months from contract
Track 2	\$50,000	\$250,000	\$550,000	24 months from contract

### Use of Funds

The use of grant funds is deliberately broad to allow a wide range of applicants to determine what will create the strongest financial benefit for their business.

Grants may be awarded for purposes including, but not limited to:

- the start-up, improvement, or expansion of a farm operation
- worker or apprenticeship training
- marketing activities
- the purchase of agricultural land and physical structures thereon
- the purchase of machinery, equipment, or livestock
- the construction or improvement of physical structures, including semi-permanent structures
- other business needs as justified by the applicant's proposal

This grant is a reimbursement-based award. No costs will be reimbursed until a project has achieved key milestones, or is successfully completed and all required documentation has been submitted. Grant recipients must be able to self-finance or secure financing to implement their project.

### Webinars

Click on a date below to register for the online webinar.

- 4:00 pm Monday, November 4, 2024 [Recording Available Here!](#)
- [9:00 am Thursday, November 14 2024.](#)

### Questions & Answers

Questions about the RFP may be submitted via email to [Aileen Randolph](#). Applicants are strongly encouraged to read all materials before emailing questions. Since this is a competitive program, it is not appropriate for NYFVI to engage in individual conversations with applicants. Answers to questions sent via email will be posted on a weekly basis on this [website](#).

### Online Application

The program will be managed entirely online. Applicants must first register in the online system. The link to the online application [is available here](#). Applications must be submitted by January 24, 2025.

# Myth Busters: The Facts About Animal Disease Traceability

In April 2024, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced the final rule that amends and strengthens our animal disease traceability regulations for certain cattle and bison. This rule will come into effect on Nov. 5, 2024.

Learn more about [seven common myths and misunderstandings](#) about the new regulations.

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## NYSERDA's Agriculture Programs

Below you will find a brief overview of these three programs:

- [Agriculture Energy Audit Program \(AEAP\)](#): This program offers NY state farmers **no-cost energy audits** to help identify energy efficiency opportunities on their farm.
- [REAP Technical Assistance Program \(RTAP\)](#): This program has been designed to **assist farmers at no-cost** to make applications to the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). If awarded, farmers can receive up to 50% of the total project cost.
- [Energy Best Practices for Agriculture](#): The best practices have been developed to help **educate producers** with energy-efficient technologies, how they function, the average cost, and the average payback in years.



Interested in learning more?

Scan the QR code above or click here: [Agriculture Energy Assistance - NYSERDA](#).

For questions, reach us at: 800-732-1399

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## Dairy Modernization Grant

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) and the Farm and Food Growth Fund (FFGF) are administrating the Dairy Modernization Grant program, which will provide grants for on-farm milk storage and transfer technologies

and infrastructure which will improve dairy supply chain efficiency and avoid raw milk dumping related to emergency events. Funds provided by this grant to farms and agricultural marketing cooperatives are intended be used for the services and expenses to expand on-farm milk storage capacity, improve efficiencies, invest in milk transfer systems, cooling technologies, or other purposes deemed necessary to further opportunities for dairy farmers to transport or store their products.

Grants are available to applicants throughout New York State.

Application period opens: November 1, 2024

Application deadline: February 14, 2025, 5:00 p.m. ET

No late submissions will be accepted. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Grants are available to applicants throughout New York State.

[Learn more here.](#)

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## Farm Service Agency New York State Office

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[Click to find your local USDA office.](#)

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### New York FSA State Committee

Norman Greig - Chairperson

Larry Eckhardt

Jill Gould

Julian Mangano

Michael McMahon

## Current Interest Rates

### Farm Storage Facility Loans:

3 yr - 3.750%  
5 yr - 3.750%  
7 yr - 3.750%  
10 yr - 3.875%  
12 yr - 4.000%

### Farm Loan Programs:

Farm Operating: 4.500%  
Farm Ownership: 5.125%  
Conservation Loans: 5.125%  
Direct Down Payment: 1.500%  
Joint Financing: 3.75%

**Commodity Loans: 5.125%**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).



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