



**Farm Service Agency**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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## **News & Updates from the Iowa Farm Service Agency - March 19, 2025**

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### **USDA Expediting \$10 Billion in Direct Economic Assistance to Agricultural Producers**



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, on National Agriculture Day, announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing up to \$10 billion directly to agricultural producers through the Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) for the 2024 crop year. Administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), ECAP will help agricultural producers mitigate the impacts of increased input costs and falling commodity prices.

Authorized by the American Relief Act, 2025, these economic relief payments are based on planted and prevented planted crop acres for eligible commodities for the 2024 crop year. To streamline and simplify the delivery of ECAP, FSA will begin sending pre-filled applications to producers who submitted acreage reports to FSA for 2024 eligible ECAP commodities soon after the signup period opens on March 19, 2025. Producers do not have to wait for their pre-filled ECAP application to apply. They can visit [fsa.usda.gov/ecap](https://fsa.usda.gov/ecap) to apply using a login.gov account or contact their local FSA office to request an application once the signup period opens.

## Eligible Commodities and Payment Rates

The commodities below are eligible for these per-acre payment rates:

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| • Wheat - \$30.69                                    | <b>Eligible oilseeds:</b> |
| • Corn - \$42.91                                     | • Canola – \$31.83        |
| • Sorghum - \$42.52                                  | • Crambe – \$19.08        |
| • Barley - \$21.67                                   | • Flax - \$20.97          |
| • Oats - \$77.66                                     | • Mustard - \$11.36       |
| • Upland cotton & Extra-long staple cotton - \$84.74 | • Rapeseed - \$23.63      |
| • Long & medium grain rice - \$76.94                 | • Safflower - \$26.32     |
| • Peanuts - \$75.51                                  | • Sesame - \$16.83        |
| • Soybeans - \$29.76                                 | • Sunflower – \$27.23     |
| • Dry peas - \$16.02                                 |                           |
| • Lentils - \$19.30                                  |                           |
| • Small Chickpeas - \$31.45                          |                           |
| • Large Chickpeas - \$24.02                          |                           |

Eligible producers must report 2024 crop year planted and prevented planted acres to FSA on an FSA-578, *Report of Acreage* form. Producers who have not previously reported 2024 crop year acreage or filed a notice of loss for prevented planted crops must submit an acreage report by the Aug. 15, 2025, deadline. Eligible producers can visit [fsa.usda.gov/ecap](https://fsa.usda.gov/ecap) for eligibility and payment details.

### Applying for ECAP

Producers must submit ECAP applications to their local FSA county office by Aug. 15, 2025. Only one application is required for all ECAP eligible commodities nationwide. ECAP applications can be submitted to FSA in-person, electronically using [Box and One-Span](#), by fax or by applying online at [fsa.usda.gov/ecap](https://fsa.usda.gov/ecap) utilizing a secure login.gov account.

If not already on file for the 2024 crop year, producers must have the following forms on file with FSA:

- [Form AD-2047](#), *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- [Form CCC-901](#), *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- [Form CCC-902](#), *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC 943, *75 percent of Average Gross Income from Farming, Ranching, or Forestry Certification* (if applicable).
- [AD-1026](#), *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*.

- [SF-3881](#), *Direct Deposit*.

Except for the new CCC-943, most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, likely have these forms on file. However, those who are uncertain and want to confirm the status of their forms or need to submit the new Form-943, can contact their [local FSA county office](#).

If a producer does not receive a pre-filled ECAP application, and they planted or were prevented from planting ECAP eligible commodities in 2024, they should contact their [local FSA office](#).

### **ECAP Payments and Calculator**

ECAP payments will be issued as applications are approved. Initial ECAP payments will be factored by 85% to ensure that total program payments do not exceed available funding. If additional funds remain, FSA may issue a second payment.

ECAP assistance will be calculated using a flat payment rate for the eligible commodity multiplied by the eligible reported acres. Payments are based on acreage and not production. For acres reported as prevented plant, ECAP assistance will be calculated at 50%.

For ECAP payment estimates, producers are encouraged to visit [fsa.usda.gov/ecap](https://fsa.usda.gov/ecap) to use the ECAP online calculator.



### **ARC-PLC Deadline Quickly Approaching**

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting enrollments and elections for the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#) for 2025 through April 15. ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms. The American Relief Act, 2025 extended many Farm Bill-authorized programs for another year, including ARC and PLC.

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual (ARC-IC), which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2025 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm it will continue for 2025 unless an election change is made.



If producers do not submit their election revision by the April 15 deadline, their election remains the same as their 2024 election for commodities on the farm from the prior year. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the cropland.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

USDA also reminds producers that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products including Supplemental Coverage Option, Enhanced Coverage Option and, for cotton producers, the Stacked Income Protection Plan (commonly referred to as STAX).

The Iowa Farm Service Agency and ISU Extension and Outreach have a recording available to help producers with their options for 2025 crops. Learn more by visiting: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/info/farmbill.html>.

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact your local USDA Service Center.



### **Seed and Vendor Finder Tool for CRP Participants and Native Seed Vendors**

USDA has worked with the [Conservation Biology Institute](#) (CBI) to design and build a free online easy-to-use [Seed and Vendor finder](#) tool to support the producers enrolling in the CRP program, along with other conservation efforts involving native plantings. CBI also partnered

with the [Institute for Applied Ecology \(IAE\)](#) to address the needs of the [Native Seed Network](#) and significantly expanded the native seed customer and vendor base.

**The seed and vendor finder can be found here: [Seed and Vendor Finder](#)**

Currently, CBI has seeded the tool with 214 vendors found through an online search from across the country with limited profiles, and 42 have voluntarily completed full profiles which includes their plant inventory. The tool is designed for easy uploading of their profile and inventory. It also provides an opportunity for vendors without a website to have an online presence and be found by customers looking for seeds. Also check out the plant finder tool where you can find suitable plants, including pollinator friendly plants for your area and soil type. Currently we have 20+ unique visitors to the tool every day and that number is growing!

**All vendors are encouraged to add their profile and inventory to the tool. You can do this easily by filling out this simple form located here: <https://crptool.org/contact/>. A member of the CBI team will send you an invite within 24 hours to create your full profile.**

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### **Specialty Crop Growers can Apply for 2025 On-Farm Food Safety Certification Expenses**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds specialty crop producers that the application period for the [Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops \(FSCSC\) program](#) for program year 2025 opened Jan. 1, 2025, and runs through Jan. 31, 2026. The program has been expanded to include medium-sized businesses in addition to small businesses. Eligible specialty crop growers can apply for assistance for expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification.

#### **Program Details**

FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing its on-farm food safety certification, as well as a portion of related expenses.

Eligible FSCSC applicants must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small or medium-size business and have paid eligible expenses related to certification.

- A small business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops sold by the applicant during the three-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$500,000.
- A medium size business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the three-year period preceding the program year of at least \$500,001 but no more than \$1,000,000.

Specialty crop operations can receive the following cost assistance:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
- Training.

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each eligible cost category. Details about payment rates and limitations are available at [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://farmers.gov/food-safety).

### **Applying for Assistance**

For program year 2025, the application period began Jan. 1, 2025, and runs through Jan. 31, 2026. FSA will issue 50% of the calculated payment for program year 2025 following application approval, with the remaining amount to be paid after the application deadline. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Specialty crop producers can apply by completing the [FSA-888-1, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program \(FSCSC\) for Program Years 2024 and 2025](#) application. The application, along with the [AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet](#) and [SF-3881, ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form](#), if not already on file with FSA, can be submitted to the FSA county office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Producers with an eAuthentication account can apply for FSCSC [online](#). Producers interested in creating an eAuthentication account should visit [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

Visit [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://farmers.gov/food-safety) for additional program details, eligibility information and application forms.

### **More Information**

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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### **Dairy Margin Coverage Enrollment Deadline is Coming Up Soon**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging dairy producers to enroll in Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC), an important safety net program that helps offset milk and feed price differences. This year's DMC signup began Jan. 29 and the deadline to enroll is March 31, 2025.

The American Relief Act, 2025 extended provisions of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) authorizing DMC for coverage year 2025.

DMC provides dairy operations with risk management coverage that pays producers when the difference (the margin) between the national price of milk and the average cost of feed falls below a certain level selected by the program participants.

DMC offers different levels of coverage minus a \$100 administrative fee. The administrative fee is waived for dairy producers who are considered limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or a military veteran.

DMC payments are calculated using updated feed and premium hay costs, making the program more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses. These updated feed calculations use 100% premium alfalfa hay.

For more information on DMC, visit the [DMC webpage](#) or contact [your local USDA Service Center](#).

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## USDA Farm Loan Program Changes Now in Effect

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) updates to the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Loan Programs are officially in effect. These changes, part of the [Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule](#), are designed to increase financial flexibility for agricultural producers, allowing them to grow their operations, boost profitability, and build long-term savings.

These program updates reflect USDA's ongoing commitment to supporting the financial success and resilience of farmers and ranchers nationwide, offering critical tools to help borrowers manage their finances more effectively.

What the new rules mean for you:

- **Low-interest installment set-aside program:** Financially distressed borrowers can now defer up to one annual loan payment at a reduced interest rate. This simplified option helps ease financial pressure while keeping farming operations running smoothly.
- **Flexible repayment terms:** New repayment options give borrowers the ability to increase their cash flow and build working capital reserves, allowing for long-term financial planning that includes saving for retirement, education, and other future needs.
- **Reduced collateral requirements:** FSA has lowered the amount of additional loan security needed for direct farm loans, making it easier for borrowers to leverage their existing equity without putting their personal residence at risk.

These new rules provide more financial freedom to borrowers. By giving farmers and ranchers better tools to manage their operations, we're helping them build long-term financial stability. It's all about making sure they can keep their land, grow their business, and invest in the future.

If you're an FSA borrower or considering applying for a loan, now is the time to take advantage of these new policies. We encourage you to reach out to your local FSA farm loan staff to ensure you fully understand the wide range of loan making and servicing options available to assist with starting, expanding, or maintaining your agricultural operation.

To conduct business with FSA, please contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

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## Conduct Business Online Through the Farmers.gov Portal

Looking for ways to do business with USDA that saves you time? Look no further than [farmers.gov](#).

When you create an [account](#) for the farmers.gov authenticated customer portal, you have access to self-service features through a secure login. Managing your business with [USDA's Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) and [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#) is faster than ever. From e-signing documents, viewing, printing, and exporting maps and receiving notifications of payment disbursements, a farmers.gov authenticated account makes doing business with USDA easy and secure.

### What can you do with your farmers.gov account?

- View FSA Farm Loan information including interest payments, loan advances, payment history and paid-in-full/restructured loans.
- Make USDA direct farm loan payments using [the Pay My Loan feature](#).

- Access the [Online Loan Application portal](#).
- View, print and export detailed FSA farm records and farm/tract maps.
- Import precision agriculture planting boundaries, create labels containing crop information, and print both on farm tract maps.
- View and print your FSA-156EZ with farm details
- View and print your Producer Farm Data Report
- View NRCS Disbursements and Farm Loans financial activity from the past 180 days.
- View your land, access NRCS data on your conservation plans, contracts, and planning land units through the Conservation Land Area page.
- View, upload, download and e-sign NRCS documents.
- Request NRCS conservation and financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View detailed information on all previous and ongoing NRCS contracts, including the amount of cost- share assistance received and anticipated; and even request contract modifications, report practice completion and request practice certification.
- “Switch Profiles” to act on behalf of your entity or another individual when you have active representative authority on file

If you'd like to see the features in action and learn more about how to use them, check out the 3-5 minute [farmers.gov account video tutorials](#).

### **How do you create a farmers.gov account?**

Visit [farmers.gov/account](#) to access information about farmers.gov accounts and sign in to the site's authenticated portal. You will need a Login.gov account linked to your USDA customer record to access your farmers.gov authenticated site. Customers who are new to USDA should visit [Get Started at Your USDA Service Center](#), then go to [farmers.gov/account](#) to create a farmers.gov account.

To create a farmers.gov account you will need:

- A USDA individual customer record — A customer record contains information you have given to USDA to do business with them, like your name, address, phone number, and any legal representative authority relationships. Contact your local USDA Service Center to make sure you have an individual USDA customer record on file and your information is up to date.
- A Login.gov account — Login.gov is a sign-in service that gives people secure online access to participating government programs. You can create a Login.gov account linked to your customer record by following the directions on [gov/account](#).
- Identity Verification — You can choose to verify your identity with Login.gov or in-person at a USDA Service Center.

In addition to the self-service features, [farmers.gov](#) also has information on USDA programs, farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs and crop insurance.





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



For Farmers, By Farmers



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### **Iowa State Office**

10500 Buena Vista Court  
Des Moines, IA 50322

Phone: 515-254-1540

**Karen Rawson, Acting State Executive Director**