



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USVI FSA & NRCS Updates August 12, 2025

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Farm Service Agency

Creating a Farmers.gov Account Makes Receiving USDA Assistance Easy, Efficient

Are you interested in working with USDA to start or grow your farm, ranch, or private forest operation, but don't know where to start?

Whether you're looking to access capital or disaster assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) or address natural resource concerns on your land with assistance

from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a great place to start is farmers.gov.

Farmers.gov is a one-stop shop for information about the assistance available from FSA and NRCS. The site also offers many easy-to-use tools for farmers, ranchers, and private forestland owners, whether you are reaching out for the first time or are a long-term customer with a years-long relationship with USDA.

With a farmers.gov account you can:

- Complete an AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*, prior to your first meeting with FSA and NRCS.
- View farm loan payments history from FSA.
- View cost share assistance received and anticipated from NRCS conservation programs.
- Request conservation assistance from NRCS as well as view and track your conservation plans, practices, and contracts.
- View, print, and export detailed farm records and farm/tract maps for the current year, which are particularly useful when fulfilling acreage reporting requirements.
- Print FSA-156 EZ, Abbreviated Farm Record and your Producer Farm Data Report for the current year.
- Pay FSA debt using the "Make an FSA Payment" feature
- Apply for a farm loan online, view information on your existing loans, and make USDA direct farm loan payments using the Pay My Loan feature.

[Learn how to create a farmers.gov account today!](#)

USDA Encourages Producers to Prepare for the 2025 Hurricane Season

Hurricane season is here and runs through Nov. 30. Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners have been significantly impacted by hurricanes in recent years. USDA encourages agricultural producers to prepare for the 2025 season and get familiar with recovery resources.

Get Prepared

- **Develop an Emergency Plan:** Make sure your employees and members of your household know your plan, including meeting points, emergency contact lists, and alternate evacuation routes in case of infrastructure damage.
- **Remove Debris and Secure Large Objects:** Most injuries to animals, people, or structures during a hurricane are caused by flying objects. To lessen the

risk, minimize the presence of equipment, supplies, and debris that may become airborne during high winds or encountered in floodwaters. Clean out culverts, ditches, and other drainage areas, especially before and during peak hurricane season to reduce water damage.

- **Document Inventory and Secure Important Records:** It is critical to document inventory of farm buildings, vehicles, equipment, and livestock before a disaster occurs. Take photos, videos, or make written lists with descriptions. Gathering documentation before and after a storm is important for insurance compensation and recovery assistance. You'll likely need thorough records of any damage and losses sustained on your farm as well as documentation of your cleanup and recovery efforts. Keep copies of these records in multiple places: a computer, off-site in a safe location, and on a cloud-based server.
- **Know Your Insurance Options:** Regularly review your insurance policies with your agent to be sure you have adequate coverage, including flood insurance, for your facilities, vehicles, farm buildings, equipment, crops and livestock. Note, there are limitations on how soon insurance coverage will take effect. Generally, insurance policies will not cover damage if the policy was not in place before a disaster.
- **Gather Supplies:** Have drinking water, canned food, a generator, batteries, a flashlight, and fuel available in case you lose power. Have cash on hand in cases of widespread outages, when credit and debit cards may not work.
- **Access Real-time Emergency Information:** Download the [FEMA app](#) for free on the App Store and Google Play for safety tips on what to do before, during, and after disasters.

How USDA Can Help

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA), and [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS).

Risk Protection

If you have coverage under the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP), you should report crop damage to your local FSA office and file a [Notice of Loss \(CCC-576\)](#) within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

Disaster Assistance

FSA offers several disaster programs to help producers recover from crop, livestock and infrastructure losses, including low-interest emergency loans. A full list of programs is available on the [Hurricane webpage](#).

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to producers through its [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) to help with immediate needs and long-term support to help recover from natural disasters and conserve environmental resources. The program can assist with restoring livestock infrastructure, emergency animal mortality disposal, and immediate soil erosion protection.

Additionally, NRCS offers help to communities through its [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\) Program](#) which provides assistance to landowners and project sponsors following a natural disaster. EWP is designed to help people and conserve natural resources by relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences.

Visit our [Hurricane webpage](#) for more information. Our [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance at a Glance](#) fact sheet, [Farm Loan Assistance Tool](#) can help you determine program or loan options. Additionally, the [FarmRaise](#) educational hub can also help with disaster recovery program decisions. To report losses or ask questions about available programs, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can also help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, contact your St. Croix County USDA Service Center at 340-773-9146 or visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

Selected Interest Rates for August 2025

Farm Operating - Direct	5.000%
Farm Operating - Microloan	5.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct	6.000%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	6.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	4.000%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	2.000%
Emergency Loan - Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%

Natural Resources Conservation Service

New Regional Office Location

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Utuado Field Office that services the municipalities of Adjuntas, Ciales, Jayuya and Utuado will be relocating to the NRCS Arecibo Field Office, located at [1562 Miramar Ave, Suite 202, Arecibo, PR 00612-2863](#).

The relocation will be finalized, and Utuado Field Office staff will be available to the public in Arecibo, by **September 1, 2025**. The Utuado Field Office will continue to provide limited in-house customer service until **August 15, 2025**. [Read more](#).

USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Veterans Webinar Series

Register for a free webinar series for military veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses on how to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prepare for a career in agriculture. This webinar series is designed to provide information about USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher programs and resources for the military community.

August 13 Topics

- Farmers First Initiative
- Disaster Relief
- Ag Taxes

August 14 Topics

- FSA County Committees (COC)
 - NRCS Local Working Groups (LWG) and State Technical Committees (STC)
 - Becoming Market-Ready
 - [Register Here](#)
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USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service Adopts Categorical Exclusions Under the National Environmental Policy Act

USDA is reducing red tape around the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-related reviews, which will improve conservation delivery to America's farmers and ranchers.

NEPA requires all federal agencies to consider the environmental impact of their proposed actions before deciding whether and how to proceed. NEPA's aims are to ensure that agencies consider the potential environmental effects of their proposed actions in their decision-making processes and encourage public engagement in that process.

To comply with NEPA, agencies determine the appropriate level of review for a proposed action. Where required, these levels of review may be documented in an environmental impact statement (EIS), an environmental assessment (EA), or categorical exclusion. A federal agency may establish categorical exclusions — categories of actions that the agency has determined normally do not significantly affect the quality of the human environment — in its agency NEPA procedures.

Notice with Revised Guidelines

The notice describes the categories of proposed actions for which NRCS intends to apply the categorical exclusions, the considerations that NRCS will use in determining the applicability of the categorical exclusions and the consultation between the agencies on the use of the categorical exclusions, including application of extraordinary circumstances. The notice is available at the [NRCS NEPA website](#) under the "NRCS NEPA Regulations, Guidance, and Related Documents."

The Conservation Plan – A Solid Foundation for NRCS Work

A key part of NRCS's 90-year history was the establishment of the [conservation planning process](#) by Hugh Hammond Bennett. Bennett was the agency's first chief and is considered the "father of soil conservation." He believed in considering each farm's unique conditions when developing a conservation plan.

A conservation plan is a document outlining the strategies and actions that should be taken to protect and manage natural resources on a specific area of land. It serves as a blueprint for achieving conservation goals. To develop a conservation plan, a conservation planner and the

customer (farmer, rancher or landowner) collaborate during the conservation planning process.

Bennett believed that agency employees must walk the land with the customer and see their natural resource challenges and opportunities firsthand. Bennett also understood that natural resource concerns could not be treated in isolation; soil, water, air, plants, animals, and humans are all part of an integrated system that is inter-dependent.

Learn more about how [conservation planning has evolved over the years](#).



USDA St. Croix Service Center

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