



**Farm Service Agency**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

---

## South Carolina FSA Newsletter for Farmers and Ranchers - August 2025

---

### In This Issue:

- [A Note from State Executive Director Cody Simpson](#)
- [Gear Up for the 2025 Hurricane Season](#)
- [Trump Administration Announces Expedited Congressionally Mandated Disaster Assistance for Farmers](#)
- [Specialty Crop Growers can Apply for 2025 On-Farm Food Safety Certification Expenses](#)
- [Highly Erodible Land \(HEL\) and Wetland Conservation Compliance](#)
- [Update Your Records](#)
- [FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [Applying for Beginning Farmer Loans](#)
- [Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA](#)

---

## A Note from State Executive Director Cody Simpson



**Dear Fellow South Carolina Farmer,**

Your Farm Service Agency (FSA) Team has been hard at work for you and your family. I am happy to report that we have now visited farms and agribusiness operations in all 46 counties. I have greatly enjoyed learning about your farming operations and listening to the ongoing issues facing our industry, but, more importantly, meeting your family. Our agricultural community in South Carolina is strong, and with each farm visit, I am even more determined to continue advocating for our way of life.

Earlier this month, USDA celebrated National Farmers Market Week by hosting [The Great American Farmers Market 2025](#) on the National Mall August 3-9, 2025. I am told that South Carolina producers were well-represented. Appreciation was shown to the vital role farmers' markets play in our nation's food supply. Providing fresh, locally grown produce through our farmers markets supports local economies and strengthens our communities. We were able to also celebrate by visiting countless farmers' markets and roadside stands throughout our state. As a reminder, the 2025 hurricane season is in full swing. As we have recently seen, tropical storms continue to be a threat along our state's coast. USDA encourages agricultural producers to prepare for the 2025 season and get familiar with [USDA preparedness and recovery resources](#).

Outreach is one of my top priorities. We have been especially focused on our youth, veterans, and new and beginning farmers. We must be prepared for the next generation of producers and industry leaders. I encourage you to visit and share [USDA's new and beginning farmers page](#) for updated information on tools and resources to assist you and support you in growing your operation. This may also include assistance through FSA farm loans, which often offer very competitive [loan interest rates](#). Our [loan assistance tool](#) will assist you in determining the farm loan that is right for your operation. As always, we have a dedicated member in every USDA Service Center willing and able to serve you. Lastly, FSA remains committed to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins' mission to provide the much-needed supplemental disaster assistance programs to our producers. In July, Secretary Rollins announced that agricultural producers who suffered eligible crop losses due to natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 can now apply for \$16 billion in assistance through the [Supplemental Disaster Relief Program \(SDRP\)](#).

This has been one of the most efficient and transparent processes in our beloved agency's history. Our family farmers are truly benefitting from our new and improved advancements of prefilled applications and online resources. In South Carolina, we have now issued nearly \$41 million for SDRP, with over 2,000 approved producer applications. Stage Two signup for SDRP for eligible shallow or uncovered losses is projected to start this fall.

While undoubtedly there will be challenges ahead, we will continue to pull together for our communities. As one farmer put it, "We're just farming for the next generation." I appreciate your service to the citizens of South Carolina and our great nation. I look forward to visiting you and your family on your farm soon.

Yours truly,

**W.R. Cody Simpson, III**  
**FSA State Executive Director**

---

## Gear Up for the 2025 Hurricane Season



Hurricane season is here, beginning June 1 and running 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.

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA), [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS), and [Risk Management Agency](#) (RMA) offer a suite of disaster assistance programs to help you recover from the impacts of natural disasters.

**Get Prepared**

---

# Trump Administration Announces Expedited Congressionally Mandated Disaster Assistance for Farmers



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced today that agricultural producers who suffered eligible crop losses due to natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 can now apply for \$16 billion in assistance through the [Supplemental Disaster Relief Program \(SDRP\)](#).

To expedite the implementation of SDRP, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is delivering assistance in two stages. This first stage is open to producers with eligible crop losses that received assistance under crop insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program during 2023 and 2024. Stage One sign up will start in person at FSA county offices on July 10 and prefilled applications are being mailed to producers today, July 9. SDRP Stage Two signups for eligible shallow or uncovered losses will begin in early fall.

## SDRP Stage One

FSA is launching a streamlined, pre-filled application process for eligible crop, tree, and vine losses by leveraging existing Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) indemnified loss data. The pre-filled applications will be mailed on July 9, 2025.

## Eligibility

Eligible losses must be the result of natural disasters occurring in calendar years 2023 and/or 2024. These disasters include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions.

To qualify for drought related losses, the loss must have occurred in a county rated by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks, D3 (extreme drought), or greater intensity level during the applicable calendar year. Producers in Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, and Massachusetts will not be eligible for SDRP program payments. Instead, these states chose to cover eligible crop, tree, bush, and vine losses through separate block grants. These block grants are funded through the \$220M provided for this purpose to eligible states in the American Relief Act.

## How to Apply

To apply for SDRP, producers must submit the FSA-526, *Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) Stage One Application*, in addition to having other forms on file with FSA.

## SDRP Stage One Payment Calculation

Stage One payments are based on the SDRP adjusted NAP or Federal crop insurance coverage level the producer purchased for the crop. The net NAP or net federal crop insurance payments (NAP or crop insurance indemnities minus administrative fees and premiums) will be subtracted from the SDRP calculated payment amount.

For Stage One, the total SDRP payment to indemnified producers will not exceed 90% of the loss and an SDRP payment factor of 35% will be applied to all Stage One payments. If additional SDRP funds remain, FSA may issue a second payment.

### **Future Insurance Coverage Requirements**

All producers who receive SDRP payments are required to purchase [federal crop insurance](#) or [NAP coverage](#) for the next two available crop years at the 60% coverage level or higher. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two available crop years will be required to refund the SDRP payment, plus interest, to USDA.

### **SDRP Stage 2**

FSA will announce additional SDRP assistance for uncovered losses, including non-indemnified shallow losses and quality losses and how to apply later this fall.

Learn more by visiting [fsa.usda.gov/sdrp](https://fsa.usda.gov/sdrp).

This announcement follows Secretary Rollins' comprehensive [plan](#) to deliver the total amount of Congressionally appropriated \$30 billion in disaster assistance to farmers and ranchers this year. These programs will complement the forthcoming state block grants that USDA is working with 14 different states to develop.

To date, USDA has issued more than \$7.8 billion in [Emergency Commodity Assistance Program \(ECAP\)](#) payments to eligible producers. Additionally, USDA has provided over \$1 billion in emergency relief through the [Emergency Livestock Relief Program](#) to producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought or wildfires in calendar years 2023 and 2024. USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), [Loan Assistance Tool](#), and the [FarmRaise](#) online FSA education hub. Payment details will be updated here weekly. For more information, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

---

## **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.

---

## **Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation Compliance**

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and

rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to breaking sod, clearing land (tree removal), and of any drainage projects (tiling, ditching, etc.) to ensure compliance. Failure to update certification of compliance, with [form AD-1026](#), triggering applicable HEL and/or wetland determinations, for any of these situations, can result in the loss of FSA farm program payments, FSA farm loans, NRCS program payments, and premium subsidy to Federal Crop Insurance administered by RMA.

---

## Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. You should also report changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase. You should also report any changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC or other legal entity.

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their *Farm Operating Plan* on form CCC-902.

To update your records contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

---

## 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).

---

# Applying for Beginning Farmer Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

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

---

## Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

Producers are encouraged to call their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to ensure maximum use of their time and to make sure FSA staff is available to tend to their important business needs. Please call your local FSA office ahead to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that might be needed during your appointment. To find your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator).