



Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

South Carolina FSA Newsletter for Farmers and Ranchers - February 2026

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USDA to Open Continuous and General Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment for 2026



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the enrollment periods for agricultural producers and landowners to submit offers for the Continuous and General Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for Continuous CRP starting Feb. 12, 2026, through March 20, 2026. Enrollment for General CRP will run from March 9, 2026, through April 17, 2026. FSA will announce dates for Grassland CRP signup in the near future.

CRP is USDA's flagship conservation program, providing financial and technical support to agricultural producers and landowners who place unproductive or marginal

cropland under contract for 10-15 years and who agree to voluntarily convert the land to beneficial vegetative cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and support wildlife habitat. The *Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026*, extends FSA's authority to administer CRP through Sept. 30, 2026.

Continuous CRP (Signup 65)

FSA will batch [Continuous CRP](#) offers submitted by interested agricultural producers and landowners. Offers to re-enroll expiring CRP continuous acreage will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. New acreage offered in continuous CRP practices will be considered for acceptance on a first-come, first-serve basis if they support USDA conservation priorities including but not limited to practices that address water quality, such as filter strips and grass waterways, and practices that restore native ecosystems or target specific resource concerns.

The first Continuous CRP batching period ends on March 20, 2026. Offers submitted after this date will be considered for acceptance in subsequent batching periods if acreage remains available.

Continuous CRP participants voluntarily offer environmentally sensitive lands, typically smaller parcels than offered through General CRP including wetlands, riparian buffers, and varying wildlife habitats. In return, they receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative cover.

Continuous CRP enrollment options include:

- ***Clean Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) Initiative***: Prioritizes water quality practices on the land that, if enrolled, will help reduce sediment loadings, nutrient loadings, and harmful algal blooms. The vegetative covers also contribute to increased wildlife populations.
- ***CLEAR30 (a component of the CLEAR Initiative)***: Offers additional incentives for water quality practice adoption and can be accessed in 30-year contracts.
- ***Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI)***: Producers and landowners can enroll in CRP to establish long-term cover on highly erodible cropland that has a weighted erodibility index greater than or equal to 20.
- ***Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)***: Addresses high priority conservation objectives of states and Tribal governments on agricultural lands in specific geographic areas.
- ***State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Initiative (SAFE)***: Restores vital habitat in order to meet high-priority state wildlife conservation goals.

General CRP (Signup 66)

[General CRP](#) offers are submitted through a competitive bid process. After the enrollment period closes, General CRP offers are ranked and scored by FSA, using nationally established environmental benefits criteria. USDA will announce accepted offers once ranking and scoring for all offers is completed. In addition to annual rental

payments, approved General CRP participants may also be eligible for cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative cover.

Producers and landowners interested in participating in CRP should contact their [local FSA county office](#).

USDA Opens Enrollment for Dairy Margin Coverage for 2026



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the enrollment period for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program for the 2026 coverage year, an important safety net program that provides producers with price support to help offset milk and feed price differences. Dairy producers can enroll in DMC from January 12, 2026, to February 26, 2026.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed by President Donald J. Trump on July 4, 2025, reauthorized DMC for calendar years 2026 through 2031 and provided substantial program improvements, including establishing new production history and increasing Tier 1 coverage.

The OBBBA increased DMC's Tier 1 coverage level increased from five million pounds to six million pounds. All dairy operations that elect to enroll in DMC for 2026 will establish a new production history.

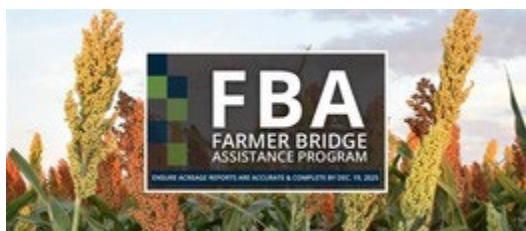
- Existing dairy operations that started marketing milk on or before January 1, 2023, will use the higher of milk marketings for the years of 2021, 2022, or 2023.
- New dairy operations starting after January 1, 2023, will use their first year of monthly milk marketings, even for a partial year.
- Milk marketing statements or production evidence are required to establish a production history.

Dairy operations also have the option to lock-in coverage levels for six years (2026-2031) with premium fees discounted by 25%.

DMC offers different levels of coverage, including an option that is free to producers, minus a \$100 administrative fee. To determine the appropriate level of DMC coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can use the [online dairy decision tool](#).

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

USDA Announces Commodity Payment Rates for Farmer Bridge Assistance Program



USDA announced the next phase in the Farmer Bridge Assistance Program (FBA), the eligible commodity per-acre payment rates. In 2026, \$12 billion will be paid to American farmers. Of that amount, \$11 billion consists of one-time FBA program payments.

Eligible Row Crop Commodities and Payment Rates:

Below are the payment rates for the FBA eligible commodities that triggered a payment.

Commodity, Per Acre Payment Rates

- Barley: \$20.51
- Canola: \$23.57
- Chickpeas (Large): \$26.46
- Chickpeas (Small): \$33.36
- Corn: \$44.36
- Cotton: \$117.35
- Flax: \$8.05
- Lentils: \$23.98
- Mustard: \$23.21
- Oats: \$81.75
- Peanuts: \$55.65
- Peas: \$19.60
- Rice: \$132.89
- Safflower: \$24.86
- Sesame: \$13.68
- Sorghum: \$48.11
- Soybeans: \$30.88
- Sunflower: \$17.32
- Wheat: \$39.35

Eligibility, Program Applications, and Crop Insurance Linkage

FBA payments are based on 2025 planted acres, Economic Research Service cost of production, and the World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimate Report. Double crop acres, including all initial and subsequently planted crops, are eligible. Prevent plant acres are not eligible.

All intended row crop uses are eligible for FBA except grazing, volunteer stands, experimental, green manure, crops left standing and abandoned or cover crops.

Crop insurance linkage is not required; however, USDA strongly urges producers to take advantage of the new risk management tools provided for in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) to best protect against future price risk and volatility. The OBBBA federal crop insurance improvements include expanding benefits for beginning farmers and ranchers, increasing coverage options, and making crop insurance more affordable.

Specialty Crop Assistance

Of the \$12 billion being provided by the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act, up to \$11 billion is being directed to eligible row crop producers and the remaining \$1 billion of the \$12 billion in assistance is reserved for specialty crops and sugar. Timelines for payments to producers of these crops are still under development and require additional understanding of market impacts and economic needs.

Producers, including specialty crop producers and stakeholder groups, can submit questions to farmerbridge@usda.gov.

More information on FBA is available online at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/fba> or you can contact your local USDA FSA county office.

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 Announces Expedited Congressionally Mandated Disaster Assistance for Farmers – SDRP Stage 1

Agricultural producers who suffered eligible crop losses due to natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 can 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 started in-person at FSA county offices on July 10 and prefilled applications were mailed to producers starting July 9.

SDRP Stage One

FSA launched 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 were 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* by April 30, 2026, 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 recently announced the SDRP Stage 2 sign-up period, which also runs through April 30, 2026. Learn more by visiting fsa.usda.gov/sdrp.

USDA Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Applications for Second Stage of Crop Disaster, Milk Loss and On-Farm Stored Commodity Loss Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is delivering more than \$16 billion in total Congressionally approved disaster relief. FSA is now accepting applications for assistance through the second stage of the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) from agricultural producers who suffered eligible non-indemnified, uncovered or quality crop losses due to qualifying natural disasters in 2023 and 2024.

Stage Two covers eligible crop, tree, bush and vine losses that were not covered under Stage One program provisions, including non-indemnified (shallow loss), uncovered and quality losses. Although the majority of payments from the first stage are already in the hands of producers helping them prepare for and invest in the next crop year, Stage One assistance, announced in July, remains available to producers who received an indemnity under crop insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for eligible crop losses due to qualifying 2023 and 2024 natural disaster events.

The deadline to apply for both Stage One and Stage Two assistance is April 30, 2026.

Additionally, FSA is taking applications for assistance from producers who had to dump or remove milk from the commercial market and who incurred losses of eligible farm stored commodities due to qualifying disaster events in 2023 and 2024.

SDRP Stage Two Program Details

SDRP Stage Two provides assistance for eligible crop, tree, bush and vine losses not covered under Stage One, including:

- **Non-Indemnified Losses (Including Shallow Losses)**
 - Insured losses through federal crop insurance that did not trigger a crop insurance indemnity.
 - Losses with NAP coverage that did not trigger a NAP payment.
- **Uncovered Losses (Uninsured Losses)**
 - Includes losses that were not insured through federal crop insurance or NAP.
- **Quality Losses**
 - Includes quality losses to commodities indicated by:
 - A decrease in value based on discounts due to the physical condition of the crop supported by applicable grading factors

- A decline in the nutritional value of forage crops supported by documented forage tests.
- Producers will certify to an SDRP quality loss percentage.

FSA is establishing block grants with Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, and Massachusetts that cover crop losses; therefore, producers with losses on land physically located in these states are not eligible for SDRP program payments.

For information on program eligibility and to download an application checklist, visit fsa.usda.gov/sdrp.

More information will be provided in early 2026 regarding a separate enrollment period for quality losses covered by SDRP Stage One as well as for insured producers in Puerto Rico who were not included in Stage One because data was not available when pre-filled applications were mailed.

For more information, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Launches New Online Portal for Reporting Foreign-Owned Agricultural Land Transactions

The USDA is launching a new online portal to streamline reporting of transactions involving U.S. agricultural land by foreign persons, which can include businesses and governments, under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 (AFIDA). The new online portal is part of a broader effort to strengthen enforcement and protect American farmland as USDA continues its implementation of the [National Farm Security Action Plan](#).

The new online portal is available at afida.landmark.usda.gov. Users can access the portal with Login.gov, a sign in service that provides secure online access to participate in certain government programs and reporting requirements.

The new digital portal will gather the same information found on the current form FSA-153 and those subject to filing may still file using the current FSA-153 hard copy form if desired. However, filers should not duplicate filings by using both submission options.

About the National Farm Security Action Plan

One of the key tenets of USDA's [National Farm Security Action Plan](#) (PDF, 1.2 MB) is strengthening processes around disclosure of foreign persons who have an interest in U.S. farmland. This historic plan, announced in July 2025, calls for aggressive implementation of reforms to the AFIDA process including improved verification and

monitoring of collected AFIDA data. In addition to the new portal, USDA published an [Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) for AFIDA in December 2025.

About AFIDA

The new portal is part of USDA's efforts to streamline its process for electronic submission and retention of AFIDA disclosures, as initially required by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023. Today USDA also shared its [annual AFIDA report](#) for 2024 with Congress, which is available online. The report lists foreign holdings of U.S. agricultural land as 46 million acres, as of December 31, 2024 and includes a section on land held and acquired by China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea in recent years. The data obtained from AFIDA disclosures are used in the preparation of an annual report to Congress, which is published [online](#).

The AFIDA regulations define the term "foreign person" and specifies the information that must be included in the report. AFIDA focuses on foreign persons who hold direct or indirect interest in the agricultural land, provided those foreign persons with an indirect interest have "significant interest or substantial control" in the direct interest holder.

Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to 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.

Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities, and to make improvements essential to an operation.

Applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.

Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. If applying for a direct loan to finance a construction project, the applicant must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.

Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant's farming operation or work schedule.

Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.

For more eligibility requirements and information about FSA Loan programs, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers

Free basic coverage available for new and underserved loan applicants

Producers who apply for Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loans will be offered the opportunity to enroll in the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP is available to producers who grow non-insurable crops and is especially important to fruit, vegetable, and other specialty crop growers. New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered "specialty" crops include vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. FSA allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

Producers can also protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage include American Indians or Alaskan Natives,

Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

FSA offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

NAP coverage is not limited to FSA borrowers, beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmers. Any producer who grows eligible NAP crops can purchase coverage. To learn more, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap or fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

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