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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Farm Service Agency | Natural Resources Conservation Service | Risk Management Agency

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Before You Break Out New Ground, Ensure Your Farm Meets Conservation Compliance

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the conversion of land from native vegetation to commodity crop production after December 23, 1985. As part of the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, if you’re proposing to produce agricultural commodities (crops that require annual tillage including one pass planting operations and sugar cane) on land that has been determined highly erodible and that has no crop history prior to December 23, 1985, that land must be farmed in accordance with a conservation plan or system that ensures no substantial increase in soil erosion.

Eligibility for many USDA programs requires compliance with a conservation plan or system on highly erodible land (HEL) used for the production of agricultural commodities. This includes Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan, disaster assistance, safety net, price support, and conservation programs; Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs; and Risk Management Agency (RMA) Federal crop insurance.

Before you clear or prepare areas not presently under production for crops that require annual tillage, you are required to file Form AD-1026 "Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification," with FSA indicating the area to be brought into production. The notification will be referred to NRCS to determine if the field is considered highly erodible land. If the field is considered HEL, you are required to implement a conservation plan or system that limits the erosion to the tolerable soil loss (T) for the predominant HEL soil on those fields.

In addition, prior to removing trees or conducting any other land manipulations that may affect wetlands, remember to update form AD-1026, to ensure you remain in compliance with the wetland conservation provisions.

Prior to purchasing or renting new cropland acres, it is recommended that you check with your local USDA Service Center to ensure your activities will be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions.

For additional information on highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation compliance, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#).

NRCS in Nevada Accepting Applications from Producers, Landowners for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is accepting applications from agricultural producers in Nevada for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which helps producers enroll wetlands, grasslands and farmlands into conservation easements.

While NRCS accepts ACEP applications year-round, Nevada producers and landowners should apply by January 20, 2023, to be considered for funding in the current cycle. Applications received after the sign-up date will automatically be considered during the next funding cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process.

ACEP enrollment options include:

- ACEP-Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE): Helps restore, protect and enhance wetlands on eligible land. Wetland reserve easements are either perpetual, 30-years, or maximum duration under state law, or 30-year contracts (for Indian Tribes).
- ACEP-Agricultural Land Easements (ALE): Protects farmlands and grasslands by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. Agricultural Land Easements are either perpetual or the maximum duration allowed under State law.

Find Nevada's sign-up periods for ACEP and other conservation programs at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program/nevada/agricultural>.

To learn more or apply, please [visit your local NRCS Nevada field office](#), or contact Erik Bray, easement coordinator, at erik.bray@USDA.gov or 775-857-8500.

USDA Previews Crop and Revenue Loss Assistance for Agricultural Producers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced plans for additional emergency relief and pandemic assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA is preparing to roll out the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\)](#) Phase Two as well as the new [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program \(PARP\)](#), which are two programs to help offset crop and revenue losses for producers. USDA is sharing early information to help producers gather documents and train front-line staff on the new approach.

ERP Phase Two will assist eligible agricultural producers who suffered eligible crop losses, measured through decreases in revenue, due to wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture and qualifying droughts occurring in calendar years 2020 and 2021.

PARP will assist eligible producers of agricultural commodities who experienced revenue decreases in calendar year 2020 compared to 2018 or 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. PARP will help address gaps in previous pandemic assistance, which was targeted at price loss or lack of market access, rather than overall revenue losses.

Emergency Relief Program Phase Two

ERP is authorized under the *Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act*, which includes \$10 billion in assistance to agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021.

Phase Two builds on ERP Phase One, which was [rolled out in May 2022](#) and has since paid more than \$7.1 billion to producers who incurred eligible crop losses that were covered by federal crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

ERP Phase Two includes producers who suffered eligible losses but may not have received program benefits in Phase One. To be eligible for Phase Two, producers must have suffered a loss in allowable gross revenue as defined in forthcoming program regulations in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event.

Eligible crops include both traditional insurable commodities and specialty crops that are produced in the United States as part of a farming operation and are intended to be commercially marketed. Like other emergency relief and pandemic assistance programs, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) continues to look for ways to simplify the process for both staff and producers while reducing the paperwork burden. The design of ERP Phase Two is part of that effort.

In general, ERP Phase Two payments are expected to be based on the difference in certain farm revenue between a typical year of revenue as will be specified in program regulations for the producer and the disaster year. ERP Phase Two assistance is targeted to the remaining needs of producers impacted by qualifying natural disaster events, while avoiding windfalls or duplicative payments. Details will be available when the rule is published later this year.

Deadline for Emergency Relief Program Phase One

Producers who are eligible for assistance through ERP Phase One have until Friday, Dec. 16, 2022, to contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#) to receive program benefits. Going forward, if any additional ERP Phase One prefilled applications are generated due to corrections or other circumstances, there will be a 30-day deadline from the date of notification for that particular application.

Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program

PARP is authorized and funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

To be eligible for PARP, an agricultural producer must have been in the business of farming during at least part of the 2020 calendar year and had a certain threshold decrease in allowable gross revenue for the 2020 calendar year, as compared to 2018 or 2019. Exact details on the calculations and eligibility will be available when the forthcoming rule is published.

How Producers Can Prepare

ERP Phase Two and PARP will use revenue information that is readily available from most tax records. FSA encourages producers to have their tax documents from the past few years and supporting materials ready, as explained further below. Producers will need similar documentation to what was needed for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) Phase Two, where a producer could use 2018 or 2019 as the benchmark year relative to the disaster year.

In the coming weeks, USDA will provide additional information on how to apply for assistance through ERP Phase Two and PARP. In the meantime, producers are encouraged to begin gathering supporting documentation including:

- Schedule F (Form 1040); and
- *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 for ERP and for calendar years 2018, 2019 and 2020 for PARP.

Producers should also have, or be prepared to have, the following forms on file for both ERP and PARP program participation:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet* (as applicable to the program participant);
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity;
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable); and
- Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

In addition to the forms listed above, underserved producers are encouraged to register their status with FSA, using Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, as certain existing permanent and ad-hoc disaster programs provide increased benefits or reduced fees and premiums.

Through proactive communications and outreach, USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as program eligibility, application and implementation details unfold.

USDA Expands Farmers.gov to Include Farm Records

Producers with farmers.gov accounts can now access farm records and maps online, the latest self-service feature added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website.

You can quickly and easily access your land information in real time by desktop computer, tablet or phone. Capabilities include:

- View, print and export detailed farm records such as cropland, base acres, yields, CRP acres, land ownership details, and much more;
- View, print and export farm/tract maps that can be provided to lenders, chemical or fertilizer providers, and FSA for reporting acreage and crop insurance agents; and
- Export common land unit (field) boundaries as ESRI shapefiles.

The ability to access these records on demand without a visit to the service center saves you time and money.

[Farmers.gov](#) now includes the most popular functionalities from FSAFarm+, the FSA portal for producers, while providing enhanced functionality and an improved user experience. A new enhancement expands the scope of accessibility to include farmers and ranchers who are members of an entity, as well as people with a power of attorney form (FSA-211) on file with FSA.

Managing USDA Business Online

Using farmers.gov, producers, entities and those acting on their behalf can also:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign conservation documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices, plans and contracts.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View farm loan and interest information (producers only).

Future plans include adding the ability to import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture planting boundaries.

To access your information, you'll need a [USDA eAuth account](#) to login to farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit [farmers.gov](#) and sign into the site's authenticated portal via the [Sign In/Sign Up link](#) at the top right of the website. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.

In addition to the self-service features available by logging into farmers.gov, the website also has ample information on USDA programs, including pandemic assistance, farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs and crop insurance. Recently, USDA updated the navigation and organization of the site as well as added some new webpages, including "[Get Involved](#)," "[Common Forms](#)," and "[Translations](#)." [Learn more about these changes](#).

USDA Surveying Sheep and Goat Operations

Starting in late December, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will measure sheep and goat inventories, along with wool and mohair production through a nationwide survey.

"Interest in sheep and goat data continues to grow with increased diversification in agriculture and consumer demands," said Gary R. Keough, director of the NASS Pacific Regional Office. "The Sheep and Goat Survey gives producers the opportunity to report the latest information on conditions and trends in the industry."

Nevada operators surveyed will be asked to provide information about their sheep and goat inventories, counts of lambs and kids born during 2022, and production and prices received for wool and mohair. In Nevada, NASS will contact about 190 operations to request their responses to the survey.

"Accurate data on sheep and goat inventory and production is a significant decision-making tool for USDA and the industry to be more responsive to domestic and international markets and consumer needs. The information can also help create public appreciation for the many benefits of U.S. sheep and goats and their needed products," added Keough.

To make it as easy as possible for producers to participate in the survey, NASS offers the option of responding online, by telephone or by mail. The results of this survey will be available in aggregate form only, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified, as required by federal law.

NASS will publish the survey results January 31, 2023 in the *Sheep and Goats* report. This and all NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications. For more information, call the NASS Pacific Regional Field Office at (916) 738-6600.



USDA Surveying Cattle Operations

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will survey about 200 cattle operations in Nevada to provide an up-to-date measure of U.S. cattle inventories.

"This information helps producers make timely, informed business decisions and plan for herd expansion or reduction. It also helps packers and government leaders evaluate expected slaughter volume for future months and determine potential supplies for export," said Director Gary Keough. "Obtaining the current count of cattle will serve as an important decision-making tool for the entire agriculture industry."

During the first two weeks of January, Nevada producers will have the opportunity to report their beef and dairy cattle inventories, calf crop, death loss and cattle on feed information. To make it as convenient as possible for producers to participate in the survey, NASS offers the option of responding via the Internet, telephone, or mail.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes only state- and national-level data in aggregate, ensuring that no individual producer or operation can be identified.

The *January Cattle* report will be released on January 31, 2023. This and all NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov/publications. For more information, call the NASS Pacific Regional Field Office at (916) 738-6600.

Census Press Releases:

12/19/22: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/2022/12-19-2022.php>

11/22/22: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/2022/11-22-2022.php>

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has several loan programs to help you start or continue an agriculture production. Farm ownership and operating loans are available.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the

group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

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 noninsurable 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 County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap or fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

FSA Offers Loan Servicing Options

There are options for Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about your options.

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