

In This Issue:

- [Message From the State Executive Director](#)
- [Cover Crop Notice from CT NRCS](#)
- [USDA to Mail Additional Pre-filled Applications to Producers Impacted by 2020, 2021 Disasters](#)
- [USDA Invests \\$14.5 Million in Taxpayer Education, Program Outreach Efforts for Farmers and Ranchers](#)
- [New Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers](#)
- [Applying for FSA Direct Loans](#)
- [Ask the Expert: Customer Farm Records Mapping Q&A with Gwen Uecker](#)
- [USDA Announces First Three Lenders for Heirs' Property Relending Program](#)
- [There is still time to respond to USDA's Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey](#)
- [USDA Opens People's Garden Initiative to Gardens Nationwide](#)

Message From the State Executive Director

While it has been a such a relief that Connecticut has received rain over the last couple of weeks, for many of our state's producers, the damage has already been done. This summer's drought has caused significant losses to crop yields and to bottom lines across the state and six of our eight counties have recently received Secretarial Disaster designations.

Windham and New London Counties Declared Primary Disaster Areas

Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack has designated Windham and New London counties as primary natural disaster areas due to the prolonged drought. Litchfield, Hartford, Tolland, and Middlesex are named as contiguous disaster counties.

A Secretarial disaster designation makes farm operators in primary counties and those counties contiguous to such primary counties eligible to be considered for certain assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. This assistance includes FSA emergency loans. Farmers in eligible counties have 8 months from the date of a Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loans. FSA considers

each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses on the farm and the security and repayment ability of the operator.

Drought-impacted producers in all eight counties should contact your local USDA Service Center (contact information below) to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.

Inflation Reduction Act signed into Law

On August 18, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law which represents the single largest investment in climate and clean energy solutions in American history. This is a historic, once-in-a-generation investment and opportunity for this country and for the rural and agricultural communities that USDA serves.

The Inflation Reduction Act will help producers stay on the farm, prevent producers from becoming ineligible for future assistance, and promote climate-smart agriculture by increasing access to conservation assistance. The law also provides \$3.1 billion for USDA to provide relief for distressed borrowers with at risk agricultural operations, \$2.2 billion in financial assistance for farmers who have experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs, and approximately \$20 billion to support USDA's conservation programs that yield climate-related benefits while building resilience in agricultural operations.

Agriculture has long been at the forefront of our fight against climate change. From climate-smart agriculture, to supporting healthy forests and conservation, to tax credits, to biofuels, infrastructure and beyond, the Inflation Reduction Act provides USDA with significant additional resources to continue to lead the charge.

Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh Visits Connecticut

On August 24th, I had the distinct pleasure of joining Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Dr. Jewel Bronaugh and Congresswoman Johanna Hayes (CT5) for a tour of Freund's Family Farm in East Canaan and then joined in a round-table discussion on USDA programs and the needs of CT's diverse agricultural community.

During this roundtable, Deputy Secretary Bronaugh shared the announcement of two new funding opportunities:

- The Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access (Increasing Land Access) Program which will make up to \$300 million in funding available for cooperative agreements and grants to organizations for projects that increase access to land, capital, and markets
- The From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals (NEXTGEN) Program which will make up to \$250 million in funding available to recruit and retain a resilient, diverse, and capable food and agricultural workforce.

Both of these programs fund and direct USDA to take action to help ensure underserved producers have the resources, tools, programs, and technical support they need to succeed.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on

more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

With fall rapidly approaching, and your list of end of season work growing, please remember that FSA is here to help. Please give us a call or schedule an appointment at your local county service center.

Stay safe,



Emily J. Cole, PhD
State Executive Director

Important Dates to Remember:

September 30 – Deadline to apply for NAP coverage for garlic, Value-loss and controlled environment crops (examples: Christmas trees, sod, aquaculture)

September 30 – Acreage Reporting Deadline for value loss/controlled environment crops for subsequent year (except nursery). Includes Mollusk, Christmas trees, floriculture and turf grass sod

September 30 – Deadline to submit all signatures for shares on ARC/PLC contracts, including contract successions, or contracts after reconstitutions.

Cover Crop Notice from CT NRCS

The dry weather this growing season has decreased both grass and corn silage yields significantly in most of the state. The variable and scattered rainfall gave even the optimists a hard time this year. There is much talk this late summer and fall about winter forage and harvesting fall-planted grains or cover crops. Some key things to consider, to help maximize forage yield and quality:

- If the field has not typically been used for forage (vegetable/tobacco/other non-forage crops), review the field history for chemical applications to ensure the herbicide label is approved for forage use and the chemical half-life will not kill the seedling. Other helpful tools may include [Penn State Agronomy Guide](#) (\$15/\$30) or [Cornell Guide for Integrated Field Crop Management](#) (\$33)
- Plant winter-hardy varieties as soon as you can get in the field. Same day or next day cover crop planting is not too soon.

- Planting dates in early- to mid-September can have strong yields (2-3 tons dry matter or 6-9 tons as-harvested). Yields will decrease after mid-September planting. Planting near November will likely only provide no- to limited-winter erosion protection and spring growth.
- Winter grains for forage have produced more yield when treated as a cash crop – emphasis on planting, feeding, and harvesting. Feeding is often described as fall applied, 30-60 lbs N/acre for 20-30% higher yields, but this increase is typically only seen if the seed is planted on time (by or before mid-September), otherwise save your time and your nitrogen. If you use manure, remember to account for the nitrogen in the manure.
- Check soil moisture to establish planting depth to help with germination and seedling survival. This season's lack of rain has led to dry subsoils. The recent rains have helped the surface layers and should help with germination and establishment.
- Soil moisture will be greatly affected by tillage. Strip-till or No-Till are showing much higher resistance to the dry weather with greater soil moisture availability when it is not raining and greater water uptake or soil infiltration when it does rain.
- Common winter grain forage crops in this area include:
 - **Winter Rye:** 55-110 lbs/ac (1-2 bushels/ac), ideal harvest window typically mid-May Tall plant height (40-60 inches)
 - **Triticale:** 55-110 lbs/ac (1-2 bushels/ac), Ideal harvest window typically 2nd half of May Winter Wheat x Winter Rye hybrid. Tall plant height (35-50 inches)
 - **Winter Wheat:** 60-120 lbs/ac (1-2 bushels/ac), ideal harvest window typically late May. Moderate plant height (25-35 inches)
 - **Annual Ryegrass:** 15 -30 lbs/ac (0.5 – 1+ bushel/ac) Ideal harvest window typically early May. Moderate plant height (25-35 inches). Good root mass (nutrient uptake or scavenging)
- All of the above selections are generally high-quality forages when harvested near the flag-leaf stage, or just as the seed head is emerging from the stem and the plant is transitioning from vegetative stage into reproductive or flowering stage. The grasses have a higher feed value (proteins/sugars/energy) when the plant is harvested in the vegetative stage.
- Drilled seed has a significantly higher germination rate than broadcast planted seed. Purposefully planting the seed gives the ability to set the seed depth to the soil moisture level and good seed soil contact.

Harvesting winter grains for forage will be most effective if patient and wait for the plant maturity to gain the greatest benefits (yield, forage quality, nutrient uptake, root mass in soil). This will likely delay silage corn planting into mid-May through 1st week of June. With the current selection of silage corn hybrids, many mid-90's to early 100's day corn can compete very well for yield with higher day-length corn varieties. And the additional forage from the harvested cover crop will often exceed any potential reduced corn yield from 90-100 day-length varieties, ending the year with a net gain (2-4+ ton Dry Matter/ac) in the bunker. Plus, a number of additional benefits, including additional roots in the ground for organic matter, nutrient cycling, and moisture management, and planting and harvesting out of the wet season for fewer ruts and compaction. Plan next year's silage corn according to a later planting date, while maintaining your normal corn harvest date – so you can plant your cover crops in good time next fall. This does take coordination with the grass harvest (early to

mid-May) and with manure spreading. The most successful conversions with farms using this system have been to stagger fields so some fields are available for spring manure, some are available for spring harvest, and some available for spring planting. For example, 1/3 of the wettest fields might be reserved for spring harvest to allow time to dry out and prevent rutting. The 1/3 dry fields may be good for spring manure. The remaining fields targeted for 'normal' cover crop termination and spring planting. Any new system will have cause/effects – but planning ahead now, and talking with other growers, can help prepare or reduce some of the effects when changing your normal routine.

Additional tools or information can be found on:

- Northeast Cover Crop Council Tools: <https://northeastcovercrops.com/decision-tool/>
- Cornell Cover Crop Tool: <http://climatesmartfarming.org/tools/csf-winter-cover-crop-planting-scheduler/>
- SARE Managing Cover Crops Profitably: <https://www.sare.org/resources/managing-cover-crops-profitably-3rd-edition/>
- University Extension websites
- Your local seed dealers
- Tom Kilcer (private crop consultant with emphasis on NY Dairy forage production) publishes monthly newsletters emphasizing forage production for current conditions. <https://advancedagsys.com/newsletters/>

Jim Hyde
USDA NRCS Agronomist

USDA to Mail Additional Pre-filled Applications to Producers Impacted by 2020, 2021 Disasters

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced another installment (phase) in assistance to commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2020 and 2021. More than 18,000 producers will soon receive new or updated pre-filled disaster applications to offset eligible crop losses. Approximately \$6.4 billion has already been distributed to 165,000 producers through USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Emergency Relief Program (ERP).

FSA will begin mailing pre-filled applications in late August to producers who have potentially eligible losses and:

- Received crop insurance indemnities for qualifying 2020 and 2021 disaster events after May 2, 2022.
- Received crop insurance indemnities associated with Nursery, Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO), Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX), Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) and Margin Protection (MP) policies.

- New primary policyholders not included in the initial insured producer Phase 1 mailing from May 25, 2022, because their claim records had not been filled.
- Certain 2020 prevent plant losses related to qualifying 2020 disaster events that had only been recorded in crop insurance records as related to 2019 adverse weather events and, as such, were not previously provided in applications sent earlier this year.
- New Substantial Beneficial Interest (SBI) records, including SBIs where tax identification numbers were corrected.

Producers are expected to receive assistance direct deposited into their bank account within three business days after they sign and return the pre-filled application to the FSA county office and the county office enters the application into the system.

Before applying any program payment factors or eligibility criteria, it is estimated that this next installment (phase) may generate about \$756 million in assistance.

Emergency Relief Payments to Date

This emergency relief under ERP complements ERP assistance recently provided to more than 165,000 producers who had received crop insurance indemnities and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) payments for qualifying losses. USDA has processed more than 255,000 applications for ERP, and to date, has made approximately \$6.4 billion in payments to commodity and specialty crop producers to help offset eligible losses from qualifying 2020 and 2021 natural disasters. Also, earlier this year, staff processed more than 100,000 payments through the Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) and paid eligible producers more than \$601.3 million for 2021 grazing losses within days of the program announcement.

Phase Two

The second phase of both ERP and ELRP will be aimed at filling gaps and provide assistance to producers who did not participate in or receive payments through the existing risk management programs that are being leveraged for phase one implementation. USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as program details are made available.

More Information

In addition, on Aug. 18, 2022, USDA published a technical correction to the [Notice of Funds Availability](#) for ERP and ELRP to clarify how income from the sale of farm equipment and the provision of production inputs and services to farmers, ranchers, foresters, and farm operations are to be considered in the calculation of average adjusted gross farm income. Producers whose average adjusted gross farm income is at least 75% of the producer's the average Adjusted Gross Income can gain access to a higher payment limitation.

ERP and the previously announced ELRP are authorized by the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, which President Biden signed into law in 2021. The law provided \$10 billion to help agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021.

For more information on ERP and ELRP eligibility, program provisions for historically underserved producers as well as Frequently Asked Questions, producers can visit [FSA's Emergency Relief webpage](#). A new [public-facing dashboard](#) on the ERP webpage has information on ERP payments that can be sorted by crop type – specialty or non-specialty– specific commodities and state. FSA will update the dashboard every Monday.

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on [farmers.gov](#), including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#) and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#). For FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#).

USDA Invests \$14.5 Million in Taxpayer Education, Program Outreach Efforts for Farmers and Ranchers

FSA is investing in two outreach and education efforts for farmers and ranchers, including those who are new to agriculture or who have been historically underserved by programs.

First, FSA is announcing \$10 million in the new Taxpayer Education and Asset Protection Initiative. Through this initiative, FSA has partnered with the University of Arkansas and the National Farm Income Tax Extension Committee to deliver tax education resources for farmers and ranchers, which includes engagement with agricultural educators, and tax professionals through partnerships with community groups and minority serving institutions across the country.

Second, FSA is investing \$4.5 million in outreach for the Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program (CRP TIP), which increases access to land for new farmers and ranchers. FSA will award cooperative agreements to 15 to 20 partner and stakeholder organizations to conduct outreach and technical assistance and promote awareness and understanding among agricultural communities, particularly those who are military veterans, new to farming, or historically underserved.

New Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers

A new multi-agency guide for USDA assistance for underserved farmers and ranchers is now available. If you are a farmer or rancher and are a minority, woman, veteran, beginning, or limited resource producer, you can use this booklet to learn about assistance and targeted opportunities available to you. This includes programs offered through the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency. The guide

is also available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese on farmers.gov/translations.

Applying for FSA Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain, or strengthen their farm or ranch. Direct loans are processed, approved and serviced by FSA loan officers.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for direct farm ownership loans is \$600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is \$400,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your [local FSA office](#) for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

Ask the Expert: Customer Farm Records Mapping Q&A with Gwen Uecker

In this Ask the Expert, Gwen Uecker answers a few questions about USDA's farmers.gov customer portal. Gwen serves as the Team Lead for the Program Delivery Division (PDD), Common Processes Branch for the Deputy Administrator of Farm Program within Farm Service Agency (FSA). She helps lead PDD's effort to provide personalized customer information via farmers.gov.

A farmers.gov account provides self-service opportunities to FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) customers via a secure authenticated access process.

What is the value of Customer Farm Records Mapping and why should producers use farmers.gov?

Customer Farm Records Mapping (cFRM) provides you with self-help options and access to FSA data from home 24/7. For example, you do not have to wait for FSA to mail out maps for

acreage reporting or make a special trip to the office to pick up your maps. You can print farm tract maps directly from farmers.gov.

New features include the ability to import precision agriculture planting boundaries and create labels containing crop information that can be printed on-farm tract maps. The maps can then be provided to FSA at the local USDA Service Center for completing the annual crop acreage report. You can use the draw tools to determine acres in a drawn area. The drawn area can be printed on a map and provided to the Service Center, a third party such as a chemical applicator, or exported as a feature file for use in other geospatial applications.

In addition, you can “Switch Profile” to view cFRM data for individuals or entities you are authorized to act on behalf of. This means you can view and print maps for your entity’s farms. Producers can also view and print farm records details, including base and yield information (FSA-156EZ).

The FSA Farm Records Mapping page is accessed by clicking the blue “View Farm Records” button from the farmers.gov LAND tab.

To read the full blog visit [Ask the Expert: Customer Farm Records Mapping Q&A with Gwen Uecker | Farmers.gov](#).

USDA Announces First Three Lenders for Heirs’ Property Relending Program

Additional Lenders Invited to Apply to Program

USDA is announcing that Shared Capital Cooperative, Akiptan, Inc. and the Cherokee Nation Economic Development Trust Authority (CNEDTA), have been approved or conditionally approved as intermediary lenders through the Heirs’ Property Relending Program (HPRP). Once HPRP loans with these lenders close, these lenders will help agricultural producers and landowners resolve heirs’ land ownership and succession issues. Additionally, USDA encourages more intermediary lenders, including cooperatives, credit unions and nonprofit organizations to apply. More information is at farmers.gov/heirs/relending.

Heirs may apply directly to the intermediary lenders for loans to resolve land ownership and succession issues. Learn more: [Find out more here](#)



There is still time to respond to USDA's Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will continue collecting responses to the Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey over the coming weeks. Survey recipients may respond securely online at www.agcounts.usda.gov, by phone or mail. A representative for NASS may call producers to set up an interview to assist in the completion of the questionnaire.

In late May, NASS mailed the survey to just over 3,500 farmers and ranchers throughout the Northeast. A joint project between NASS and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), this new survey is aimed at better understanding conservation practice adoption and the role of technical and financial assistance. The data will be used to guide the implementation of NRCS programs in the future.

"Gathering information about farmers' and ranchers' motivation for and adoption of conservation practices allows USDA to understand the use and awareness of its programs," said King Whetstone, director of the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office "By continuing to collect survey responses, NASS can ensure we have the most accurate and representative data."

There are two versions of the survey this year – one requesting information on crop conservation practices and one for confined livestock conservation practices. Data from both versions of the survey will be available later this fall on NASS's website at nass.usda.gov.

All information reported by individuals will be kept confidential, as required by federal law. For assistance with the survey, producers can call the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office at (800) 498-1518.

USDA Opens People's Garden Initiative to Gardens Nationwide



Gardens nationwide invited to register

USDA is expanding its People's Garden Initiative to include eligible gardens nationwide. School gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural, suburban and urban areas can be recognized as a "People's Garden" if they register on the USDA website and meet criteria including benefitting the community, working collaboratively, incorporating conservation practices and educating the public. Affiliate People's Garden locations will be indicated on a map on the USDA website, featured in USDA communications, and provided with a People's Garden sign. [Find out more here!](#)

Connecticut State FSA Office

344 Merrow Road, Suite B
Tolland, CT 06084-3917

Phone: 860-871-4090
Fax: 855-934-2463

State Executive Director:

Emily J. Cole, PhD

State Office Staff:

Nathan Wilson, *District Director*
Jule Dybdahl, *Administrative Officer*
Sarah Fournier, *Program Specialist*
Rebecca Palmer, *Program Specialist*
Claire Vaterlaus-Staby, *Administrative Specialist*

State Committee Chair:

Vacant

State Committee Members:

Susan G. Pronovost
Other Members Vacant