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USDA Announces Details for the Upcoming Census of Agriculture

America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to be represented in the nation's only comprehensive and impartial agriculture data for every state, county and territory. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will mail the 2022 Census of Agriculture to millions of agriculture producers across the 50 states and Puerto Rico this fall.

The 2022 Census of Agriculture will be mailed in phases, starting with an invitation to respond online in November followed by paper questionnaires in December. Farm operations of all sizes, urban and rural, which produced and sold, or normally would have sold, \$1,000 or more of agricultural product in 2022 are included in the ag census.

Collected in service to American agriculture since 1840 and now conducted every five years by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Census of Agriculture tells the story and shows the value of U.S. agriculture. It highlights land use and ownership, producer characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, among other topics. Between ag census years, NASS considers revisions to the questionnaire to document changes and emerging trends in the industry. Changes to the 2022 questionnaire include new questions about the use of precision agriculture, hemp production, hair sheep, and updates to internet access questions.

To learn more about the Census of Agriculture, visit nass.usda.gov/AgCensus or call 800-727-9540. On the website, producers and other data users can access frequently asked questions, past ag census data, [partner tools](#) to help spread the word about the upcoming ag census, special study information, and more. For highlights of these and the latest

information on the upcoming Census of Agriculture, follow USDA NASS on twitter [@usda_nass](https://twitter.com/usda_nass).

Deadline Approaching for NAP Sign-up for Fruit, Grass, Honey and Vegetable Crop Producers

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) helps you manage risk through coverage for crop losses due to natural disasters. The eligible or "noninsured" crops include agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance. (For more program details see the full article in the November newsletter.)

You must be enrolled in the program and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop in the crop year in which the loss incurred to receive program benefits following a qualifying natural disaster.

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap. December 31, 2022 is the deadline to apply for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for fruit, grass, honey and vegetable crops.

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.

USDA Offers Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers working with USDA's Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.

OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-

signed through OneSpan via the producer's personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you're interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

Visit farmers.gov/mydocs to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

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

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](#).

USDA Announces New Opportunities to Improve Nutrient Management

USDA welcomed the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which will deliver \$19.5 billion in new conservation funding to support climate-smart agriculture. This historic funding will bolster the new steps that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced to improve opportunities for nutrient management. NRCS will target funding, increasing program flexibilities, launch a new outreach campaign to promote nutrient management's economic benefits, in addition to expanding partnerships to develop nutrient management plans. This is part of USDA's broader effort to address future fertilizer availability and cost challenges for U.S. producers.



Through USDA's conservation programs, America's farmers and ranchers will have streamlined opportunities to improve their nutrient management planning, which provides conservation benefits while mitigating the impacts of supply chain disruptions and increased input costs.

Specifically, NRCS efforts include:

- **Streamlined Nutrient Management Initiative** – A streamlined initiative will incentivize nutrient management activities through key conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts, and the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- **Nutrient Management Economic Benefits Outreach Campaign** – A new outreach campaign will highlight the economic benefits of nutrient management planning for farmers. NRCS staff develop nutrient management plans to help producers use nutrient resources effectively and efficiently to adequately supply soils and plants with necessary nutrients while minimizing transport of nutrients to ground and surface waters. Producer information is available at farmers.gov/global-food-security.
- **Expanded Nutrient Management Support through Technical Service Providers Streamlining and Pilots** – New agreements with key partners who have existing capacity to support nutrient management planning and technical assistance will expand benefits and serve as a model to continue streamlining the certification process for Technical Service Providers (TSPs). NRCS is also developing new opportunities to support partner training frameworks, nutrient management outreach and education, and new incentive payments through TSP partners for nutrient management planning and implementation.

Alongside the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and American Rescue Plan, the Inflation Reduction Act provides once-in-a-generation investment in rural communities and their infrastructure needs, while also responding to the climate crisis. The bill invests \$40 billion into existing USDA programs promoting climate smart agriculture, rural energy efficiency and reliability, forest conservation, and more.

Approximately \$20 billion of this investment will support conservation programs that are oversubscribed, meaning that more producers will have access to conservation assistance that will support healthier land and water, improve the resilience of their operations, support their bottom line, and combat climate change. This includes:

- \$8.45 billion for EQIP
- \$4.95 billion for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- \$3.25 billion for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- \$1.4 billion for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

For more information and resources for nutrient management planning, visit farmers.gov/global-food-insecurity. Contact NRCS at your [local USDA Service Center](#) to get assistance with a nutrient management plan for your land.

December Interest Rates

Farm Operating- Direct 5.125%
Farm Operating - Microloan 5.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct 5.000%
Farm Ownership - Microloan 5.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing 3.000%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment 1.500%
Emergency Loan - Amount of Actual Loss 3.750%

Dates to Remember

December 31, 2022 - Deadline to apply for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for fruit, grass, honey and vegetable crops. Click here for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistanceprogram/noninsured-cropdisaster-assistance/index>

January 1, 2023 - Newly elected county committee members take office

January 30, 2023 - Deadline to apply for the 2022 Disaster Assistance for Livestock Forage Program (LFP)



USDA website: <https://www.usda.gov/>
Farmer.gov website: <https://www.farmers.gov/>

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