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## State Executive Director Comments

I spent the last week traveling across the state from Crookston to Wabasha and heard from many of you that you're looking for any precipitation where you can get it. FSA staff across the state are closely monitoring crop losses and the weekly drought monitor to make sure that emergency loans will be available where needed.

On a brighter note, it has been great to get to visit several Minnesota FSA offices. This time of year is usually an active time in our county offices with acreage reporting happening for many of Minnesota's most produced crops. If you have not done so, please get into your local [FSA Service Center](#) to



complete your crop acreage reporting, or work with our staff to file electronically. While the deadline for spring crops is July 15, it is helpful for our staff if you get in as early as possible.

The deadline for the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) Phase Two](#) and [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program \(PARP\)](#) has been extended to July 14, 2023, to give producers more time to apply for assistance. There are a number of great resources available for producers to utilize on [farmers.gov](#), in addition to recorded [webinars](#) hosted by cooperators [Renewing the Countryside](#) and [Farmers Legal Action Group \(FLAG\)](#). FLAG also put together a [Farmers' Guide to ERP Phase Two](#) which breaks down everything you need to know about the program. If you have questions about the programs or would like to apply, please contact your [local FSA county office](#).

I want to highlight the [Continuous Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#) sign up that is ongoing throughout the year. If producers meet the eligibility requirements, offers can be automatically accepted. There is additionally a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive with Continuous sign up. Different enrollment options include: State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), Highly Erodible Lands Initiative (HELI), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and the Farmable Wetlands Program. If you think you have environmentally sensitive land that may work for CRP, check with your local FSA Service Center to learn more.

Respectfully,

Whitney Place, State Executive Director

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## **USDA Announces Corrections to Emergency Relief Program Policy to More Accurately Reflect 2020 and 2021 Natural Disaster Impacts on Crops Intended for On-Farm Use**



### *Duplicative payment provisions for two key conservation programs also clarified*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) Phase Two](#) to provide a method for valuing losses and accessing program benefits to eligible producers of certain crops, including grapes grown and used by the same producer for wine production or forage that is grown, stored and fed to livestock, that do not generate revenue directly from the sale of the crop. These updates ensure that ERP benefits are more reflective of these producers' actual crop losses resulting from 2020 and 2021 natural disaster events. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin accepting ERP Phase Two applications from eligible wine grape and forage producers once this technical correction to ERP is published in the Federal Register and becomes effective, which it anticipates will be on Friday, June 16, 2023. The deadline to submit applications for ERP Phase Two is July 14.

### **Background**

In January 2023, FSA announced ERP Phase Two, designed to wrap-up and fill remaining gaps in previous natural disaster assistance for 2020 and 2021.

To be eligible for ERP Phase Two, producers must have suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event. Assistance is primarily for producers of crops that were not covered by Federal Crop Insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program since crops covered by Federal Crop Insurance and NAP were included in the assistance under ERP Phase One administered in 2022.

### **Determining Crop Value**

Producers of certain crops now have a method for including crop value in their allowable gross revenue for the purpose of determining ERP Phase 2 benefits.

The value of the eligible crop intended for on-farm use will be based on the producer's actual production of the crop and a price for the crop as determined by FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs based on the best available data for each crop such as published crop price data or the average price obtained by other producers in the area. Acceptable, published sources including but are not limited to Federal Crop Insurance Corporation established prices, FSA established National Crop Table prices and National Agricultural Statistic Service prices.

[Revenue and pricing guidelines](#) for expected revenue for wine grapes and on-farm forage is available online for producer reference and convenience when applying for ERP Phase Two.

Wine grape and forage producers who have already submitted their ERP Phase Two applications to FSA have the option of revising the application and updating their allowable gross revenue to include crop value if applicable.

Producers of crops grown for on-farm use other than wine grapes and forage may request consideration to use a crop's value in their allowable gross revenue. Submit requests to [RA.FSA.DCWA2.ppb@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:RA.FSA.DCWA2.ppb@wdc.usda.gov). FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs will review submitted requests.

## **Additional Technical Corrections – Conservation Programs**

In addition to emergency relief policy updates, FSA has also established policy corrections for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP). The policy correction clarifies that federal payments received for the same practice will be considered duplicative assistance for producers who receive ECP and EFRP program payments. The revised program provisions are related to program updates FSA announced in January that give more farmers, ranchers, and tribes the opportunity to apply for and access programs that support recovery following natural disasters (see [January 10, 2023 news release](#) for more information).

ECP and EFRP provide financial and technical assistance to restore conservation practices like fencing, damaged farmland or forests following natural disasters.

### **More Information**

FSA offers an online [ERP tool](#) to help producers determine what is considered allowable gross revenue.

Producers should contact their local FSA office to make an appointment to apply for ERP Phase Two. Producers should also keep in mind that July 15 is a major deadline to complete acreage reports for most crops. FSA encourages producers to complete the ERP Phase Two application and acreage report during the same office visit. Applications for the Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program, a revenue-based program for losses resulting from the pandemic, can also be completed.

For more information, view the [ERP Phase Two Fact Sheet](#), [PARP Fact Sheet](#), the [ERP Phase Two-PARP Comparison Fact Sheet](#), [ERP Phase Two application video tutorial](#), [PARP application video tutorial](#), [myth-buster blog](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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## **USDA Reminds Minnesota Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports**

Agricultural producers in Minnesota who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after planting should make an appointment with their U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

### **How to File a Report**

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in Minnesota:

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- **July 17, 2023 - Spring seeded crops including Hemp and Wild Rice**
- August 15, 2023 - Beans other than dry edibles
- September 30, 2023 - Turfgrass Sod and Floriculture
- **November 15, 2023 - Apiculture and Fall-Seeded Small Grains**

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your local FSA office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

To file a crop acreage report, producers need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

### **Acreage Reporting Details**

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If crops are covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, acreage reports should be submitted by the applicable state, county, or crop-specific reporting deadline or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to because of a natural disaster.

Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

FSA offers continuous certification for perennial forage. This means after perennial forage is reported once and the producer elects continuous certification, the certification remains in

effect until a change is made. Check with FSA at the local USDA Service Center for more information on continuous certification.

### **New Option to View, Print and Label Maps on Farmers.gov**

Producers with an eAuth account linked to their USDA customer record can now access their FSA farm records, maps and common land units by logging into farmers.gov. A new feature will allow producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries. This will allow producers to view, print and label their own maps for acreage reporting purposes.

Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via form FSA-211 Power of Attorney, Business Partner Signature Authority, along with other signature types, or as a member of a business can now access information in the farmers.gov portal.

Producers can learn how to use the farmers.gov Farm Records Mapping functionality with this [fact sheet](#) and these [video tutorials](#).

### **More Information**

Producers can make an appointment to report acres by contacting their local USDA Service Center.

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## **FSA is Accepting CRP Continuous Enrollment Offers**



The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#).

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

For more information, including a list of acceptable practices, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp).

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## USDA Develops Simplified Direct Loan Application to Improve Customer Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed a simplified direct loan application to provide improved customer experience for producers applying for loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The simplified direct loan application enables producers to complete a more streamlined application, reduced from 29 to 13 pages. Producers will also have the option to complete an electronic fillable form or prepare a traditional, paper application for submission to their local FSA farm loan office. The paper and electronic versions of the form will be available starting March 1, 2023.

Approximately 26,000 producers submit a direct loan application to the FSA annually, but there is a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-based application process. Coupled with the Loan Assistance Tool released in October 2022, the simplified application will provide all loan applicants access to information regarding the application process and assist them with gathering the correct documents before they begin the process. This new application will help farmers and ranchers submit complete loan applications and reduce the number of incomplete, rejected, or withdrawn applications.

In October 2022, USDA launched the Loan Assistance Tool, an online step-by-step guide that provides materials to help an applicant prepare their farm loan application in one tool. Farmers can access the Loan Assistance Tool by visiting [farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool](https://farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool) and clicking the 'Get Started' button. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser. A version compatible with mobile devices is expected to be available by the summer. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

The simplified direct loan application and Loan Assistance Tool are the first of multiple farm loan process improvements that will be available to USDA customers on farmers.gov in the future. Other improvements that are anticipated to launch in 2023 include:

- An interactive online direct loan application that gives customers a paperless and electronic signature option, along with the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns.
- An online direct loan repayment feature that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local Service Center to pay a loan installment.

USDA provides access to credit to approximately 115,000 producers who cannot obtain sufficient commercial credit through direct and guaranteed farm loans. With the funds and direction Congress provided in Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act, USDA took action in October 2022 to [provide relief to qualifying distressed borrowers](#) while working on making transformational changes to loan servicing so that borrowers are provided the flexibility and opportunities needed to address the inherent risks and unpredictability associated with agricultural operations.

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Soon, all direct loan borrowers will receive a letter from USDA describing the circumstances under which additional payments will be made to distressed borrowers and how they can work with their FSA local office to discuss these options. Producers can explore all available options on all FSA loan options at [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov) or by contacting their [local USDA Service Center](#).

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## USDA Announces Updates for Honeybee Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced updates to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) specific to honeybee producers.

For honeybees, ELAP covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses (the physical structure) and honeybee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.



Updates include:

- Starting in 2020, you have 15 days from when the loss is first apparent, instead of 30 days, to file a honeybee notice of loss, which provides consistency between ELAP and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which also has a 15-day notice of loss period for honey.
- ELAP will now run according to the calendar year. Since you are still required to apply for payment within 30 calendar days of the end of the program year, the new signup deadline for calendar year 2023 losses is January 30, 2024.
- If you were paid for the loss of a honeybee colony or hive in either or both of the previous two years, you will be required to provide additional documentation to substantiate how your current year inventory was acquired.
- If the honeybee colony loss was caused by Colony Collapse Disorder, you must provide a producer certification that the loss was a direct result of at least three of the five symptoms of Colony Collapse Disorder, which include:
  - the loss of live queen and/or drone bee populations inside the hives;
  - rapid decline of adult worker bee population outside the hives, leaving brood poorly or completely unattended;
  - absence of dead adult bees inside the hive and outside the entrance of the hive;
  - absence of robbing collapsed colonies; and

- at the time of collapse, varroa mite and Nosema populations are not at levels known to cause economic injury or population decline.

For more information contact your local USDA Service Center or visit

[farmers.gov/recover](https://farmers.gov/recover).

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## Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers using farm-stored grain as collateral for their marketing assistance loan should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

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## 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

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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).

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## Unauthorized Disposition of Grain Results in Financial Penalties

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and your name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.



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## Tree Assistance Program

If you're an orchardist or nursery tree grower who experienced losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2023, you must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.

TAP provides financial assistance to help you replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster, plus an adjustment for normal mortality. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which you can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 1,000 acres annually.

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# USDA Previews Emergency Relief Assistance for Agricultural Producers Who Incurred Losses Due to 2022 Natural Disaster Events

*Additional payments on the way for livestock producers impacted by drought and wildfire in 2021*

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced plans to roll out \$3.7 billion in [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\)](#) and Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) assistance to crop and livestock producers who sustained losses due to a qualifying natural disaster event in calendar year 2022. USDA is sharing early information to allow producers time to gather documents in advance of program delivery. Through distribution of remaining funds, USDA is also concluding the 2021 ELRP program by sending payments in the amount of 20% of the initial ELRP payment to all existing recipients.

## Background

On December 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the *Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328)* that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters occurring in calendar year 2022.

Additionally, the Act specifically targets up to about \$500 million to livestock producers for losses incurred due to drought or wildfire in calendar year 2022.

## ERP 2022 for Crop Producers

USDA, through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), intends to deploy the lessons learned from the development and implementation of ERP and ELRP for previous years' losses to ensure expedited assistance for 2022 losses.

Based on positive feedback from producers, stakeholder groups and FSA county office staff, USDA intends to provide an ERP track for producers who had coverage through Risk Management Agency's [federal crop insurance](#) or FSA's [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#). Through a streamlined application process, USDA intends to be in a position to send pre-filled applications directly to eligible producers in early summer.

For producers who have not been able to avail themselves of risk management coverage or whose losses were not covered, USDA intends to offer a program track to access ERP assistance with assistance provided to producers who suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2022 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event.

Instead of implementing these program tracks as two separate phases on different timelines, FSA intends to make both tracks available to producers at the same time, noting that the first

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track will follow a streamlined process with less paperwork burden, based on existing, available risk management data. The second ERP track would require that producers provide FSA with certain information related to revenue.

### **ELRP 2022 for Livestock Producers and Close Out of ELRP for 2021**

For impacted ranchers, USDA intends to leverage FSA's Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) data to deliver ELRP assistance for increases in supplemental feed costs in 2022.

To be eligible for an ELRP payment for 2022 losses, livestock producers will need to have suffered grazing losses from wildfire or in a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks or a D3 (extreme drought) or higher level of drought intensity during the 2022 calendar year and have applied and been approved for 2022 LFP. Additionally, otherwise eligible producers whose permitted grazing on federally managed lands was disallowed due to wildfire will also be eligible for ELRP payments if they applied and were approved for 2022 LFP.

In a continued effort to streamline and simplify the delivery of ELRP benefits, eligible producers will not be required to apply for payment.

Meanwhile, FSA also intends to provide additional assistance to ranchers for qualifying livestock losses from drought and wildfire in 2021. More information will be announced in the coming months.

### **How Producers Can Prepare**

To participate in ERP and ELRP for 2022 losses, both crop and livestock producers should have or be prepared to have the following forms on file with FSA:

- 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.

Producers with eligible crop losses who did not have federal crop insurance or NAP risk management coverage for 2022 and intend to apply for ERP assistance will need to pull together 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

including Schedule F (Form 1040) and *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents. FSA will not require these forms to be submitted with the ERP application, but will require a certification, similar to Adjusted Gross Income certification that has been used for many years for Farm Bill programs. Applicants simply report and certify to the information required for the program.

Crop producers who have federal crop insurance coverage should ensure that information on file with their insurance agent is accurate and that any pending activities needed to file loss claims for 2022 losses are addressed as soon as possible. Producers who received ERP assistance last year or who will receive assistance for 2022 losses are required to purchase crop insurance or NAP for the next two crop years.

### **More Information**

In the coming months, USDA intends to provide additional information on how to apply for assistance through ERP and ELRP for 2022 losses. Through proactive communications and outreach, USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as program eligibility, application and implementation details unfold.

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## **USDA Offers Assistance to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)**



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), announces assistance for dairy producers with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP). ODMAP is established to help mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs, and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. Specifically, under the ODMAP, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is making \$104 million available to organic dairy

operations to assist with projected marketing costs in 2023, calculated using their marketing costs in 2022.

FSA began accepting applications for ODMAP on May 24, 2023. Eligible producers include certified organic dairy operations that produce milk from cows, goats and sheep.

### **How ODMAP Works**

FSA is providing financial assistance for a producer's projected marketing costs in 2023 based on their 2022 costs. ODMAP provides a one-time cost-share payment based on marketing costs on pounds of organic milk marketed in the 2022 calendar year.

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ODMAP provides financial assistance that will immediately support certified organic dairy operations during 2023 keeping organic dairy operations sustainable until markets return to more normal conditions.

### **How to Apply**

FSA is accepting applications from May 24 to July 24, 2023. To apply, producers should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#). To complete the ODMAP application, producers must certify to pounds of 2022 milk production, how documentation of their organic certification, and submit a completed application form.

Organic dairy operations are required to provide their USDA certification of organic status confirming operation as an organic dairy in 2023 and 2022 along with the certification of 2022 milk production in hundredweight.

ODMAP complements other assistance available to dairy producers, including Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and Supplemental DMC, with more than \$300 million in benefits paid for the 2023 program year to date. Learn more on the [FSA Dairy Programs webpage](#).

### **More Information**

To learn more about USDA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and other programs by [logging into their farmers.gov account](#). If you don't have an account, [sign up today](#).

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## **USDA Accepts More Than 1 Million Acres in Offers Through Conservation Reserve Program General Signup**

*CRP helps producers invest in the long-term health, sustainability, and profitability of their land and resources.*

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on June 12, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting more than 1 million acres in this year's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup. This is one of several signups that USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is holding for the program, and these results reflect the recognition the agricultural community give to CRP as a resource for climate-smart agriculture that helps promote plant and animal biodiversity as well as healthier soil. The signup's results include 15,876 acres in Minnesota.

While offers for new land in this General CRP signup totaled about 295,000 acres nationwide, producers submitted re-enrollment offers for 891,000 expiring acres, reflecting the successes of participating in CRP longer term. The total number of CRP acres will continue to climb in the coming weeks once FSA accepts acres on the Grassland CRP signup, which closed May 26. Additionally, so far this year, FSA has received 761,000 offered acres for the Continuous CRP signup, for which FSA accepts applications year-round.

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The number of accepted acres that are actually enrolled in General CRP will be decided later this year. Participating producers and landowners should also remember that submitting and accepting a CRP offer is the start of the process, and producers still need to develop a conservation plan before enrolling their land on October 1, 2023. Each year, during the window between offer acceptance and land enrollment, some producers change their mind and ultimately decide not to enroll some accepted acres without penalty.

## **General CRP Signup**

The General CRP Signup 60 ran from February 27 through April 7, 2023.

Through CRP, producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve soil health and water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat on agricultural land. In addition to the other well-documented benefits, lands enrolled in CRP are playing a key role in climate change mitigation efforts across the country.

In 2021, FSA introduced improvements to the program, which included a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This incentive provides a 3, 5, or 10 percent incentive payment based on the predominant vegetation type for the practices enrolled – from grasses to trees to wetland restoration.

## **Other CRP Signups**

[Grassland CRP](#) is a *working lands program* that helps producers and landowners protect grassland from conversion while enabling haying and grazing activities to continue. Lands enrolled support haying and grazing operations and promotes plant and animal biodiversity. Lands are also protected from being converted to uses other than grassland. This year's signup for Grassland CRP ran from April 17 through May 26.

Under [Continuous CRP](#), producers and landowners can enroll throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Continuous CRP includes the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Also available is the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative. CLEAR30, a signup opportunity under that initiative, was originally piloted in twelve states but has since been expanded nationwide, giving producers and landowners across the country the opportunity to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices.

## **More Information**

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and view other farm records data and customer information by [logging into their farmers.gov account](#). If you don't have an account, [sign up today](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under 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 safe, 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 [usda.gov](https://usda.gov)

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**To find contact information for your local USDA Farm Service  
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Lisa Brunner, Committee Member  
Tim Velde, Committee Member

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