



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Nebraska FSA and NRCS State Office Newsletter - August 2022

[Farm Service Agency](#) | [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) | [Risk Management Agency](#)

In This Issue:

- [A Message from the FSA State Executive Director](#)
- [FSA Offers Drought Assistance for Livestock Producers Through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#)
- [USDA to Mail Additional Pre-Filled Applications to Producers Impacted by 2020, 2021 Disasters](#)
- [FSA Accepting Applications to Help Producers with Certification Costs for Organic, Transitioning to Organic](#)
- [Ask the Expert: What Can You Do with a Farmers.gov Online Account?](#)
- [NAP Coverage Can Protect Against Disasters](#)
- [FSA Loan Servicing, Other Organization Resources Available During Financial Stress](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [FSA August Loan Interest Rates](#)
- [Report Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\) Activities to NRCS by Sept. 30 Deadline](#)
- [NRCS Climate Change Adaption Plan Continues to Make Conservation Part of the Climate Solution](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

A Message from the FSA State Executive Director

As we move closer to the end of a mostly hot and dry summer, many of our offices are focused on the delivery of drought-related assistance programs. Half of the state is in a level of drought on the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) that triggers FSA disaster program assistance, and another one-quarter of the state is in a “moderate” level of drought.

I note this negative scenario only as a way to highlight available FSA programs such as the [Livestock Forage Disaster Assistance Program](#), the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#), and [CRP Emergency Haying and Grazing](#). A brief summary of each is available on the front page of the Nebraska FSA website [by clicking](#)

[HERE](#). You'll be able to link to maps that show which counties have triggered for each program. For LFP and ELAP a county will trigger for these programs when it reaches the D2 level on the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for eight consecutive weeks during our grazing season. Our grazing season in Nebraska runs May 1 – Oct 15. It's a little different for CRP Emergency Haying and Grazing program. This also uses the Drought Monitor as a triggering tool, but CRP emergency haying and grazing triggers when a county hits D2 for one week. LFP and ELAP will also trigger when a county reaches a D3 level drought on the Drought Monitor.

If you are in need of drought-related assistance, contact your county FSA office for additional details. Please note county FSA staff may ask you to schedule an appointment for service as the volume of calls for drought assistance is high.

Our farm loan staff also is busy this time of year, completing summer visits that are an important part of the overall loan process. Nebraska has one of the largest loan portfolios in the nation, so these visits keep us hopping. We do enjoy stopping out to see our customers in person on their farms and ranches. Please try to have patience and flexibility with our staff if you have been contacted for this review.

By now folks will be starting to think about the fall harvest. If you are considering hauling grain from storage as part of that process, and that grain is under a Farm Service Agency Marketing Assistance Loan, please remember to contact your county office before you move it.

That's all for this month. Talk to you in September.

--John Berge

FSA Offers Drought Assistance for Livestock Producers Through Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)

If you've suffered above normal expenses for hauling feed or water to livestock or hauling livestock to forage/grazing acres due to the impacts of drought, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#).

For eligible producers in qualifying counties, ELAP provides financial assistance for:

- the transportation of water to livestock;
- the above normal cost of mileage for transporting feed to livestock,
- the above normal cost of transporting livestock to forage/grazing acres.*

**Hauling livestock one-way and no payment for "empty miles."*

Eligible livestock include cattle, buffalo, goats and sheep, among others, that are maintained for commercial use and located in a county where the qualifying drought conditions occur. A county must have had D2 severe drought intensity on the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for eight consecutive weeks during the normal grazing period, or D3 or D4 drought intensity at any time

during the normal grazing period. Producers must have risk in both eligible livestock and eligible grazing land in an eligible county to qualify for ELAP assistance.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

For ELAP water transportation assistance, a producer must be transporting water to eligible livestock on eligible grazing land where the producer had adequate livestock watering systems or facilities in place before the drought occurred and where they do not normally require the transportation of water. Payments are for costs associated with personal labor, equipment, hired labor, equipment, and/or contracted water transportation fees. Cost of the water itself is not covered. The ELAP payment formula uses a national average price per gallon.

ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING FEED

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who incur above normal expenses for transporting feed to livestock during drought. The payment formula excludes the first 25 miles and any mileage over 1,000 miles. The reimbursement rate is 60% of the costs above what would normally have been incurred during the same time period in a normal (non-drought) year.

ABOVE NORMAL COSTS OF TRANSPORTING LIVESTOCK TO FORAGE/GRAZING ACRES

ELAP provides financial assistance to livestock producers who are hauling livestock to a new location for feed resources due to insufficient feed and/or grazing in drought-impacted areas.

Producers must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office **within 30 calendar days** of when the loss is apparent; producers should contact their county FSA office as soon as the loss of water resources or feed resources are known. For ELAP eligibility, documentation of expenses is critical. Producers should maintain records and receipts associated with the costs of transporting water to eligible livestock, the costs of transporting feed to eligible livestock, and the costs of transporting eligible livestock to forage/grazing acres.

ELAP also offers assistance to producers impacted by wildfire. In addition, beekeepers also can benefit from ELAP provisions and should contact their county FSA office within 15 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent.

For more information regarding ELAP, contact your county USDA service center or visit fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

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

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has 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 nationwide 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

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](#).

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](#).

FSA Accepting Applications to Help Producers with Certification Costs for Organic, Transitioning to Organic

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can now apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program](#) (OTECP) and [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses. Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022.

OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).
- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per category of certification costs in 2022.

This cost share for certification is available for each of these categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and State organic program fees.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. Producers have until October 31, 2022 to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center. As part of completing the OCCSP applications, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses.

Additional details can be found on the [OTECP](#) and [OCCSP](#) webpages.

Ask the Expert: What Can You Do with a Farmers.gov Online Account?

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](#).

NAP Coverage Can Protect Against Disasters

Application Closing Dates Approaching for Some Crops for 2023 Coverage

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

In order to participate, you must obtain NAP coverage for the crop year by the applicable deadline using form CCC-471 "Application for Coverage" and pay the service fee.

Application closing dates vary by crop. The next NAP application closing date in Nebraska is September 30 for coverage for rye, triticale, and wheat in the 2023 production season.

Producers are also required to submit an acceptable crop acreage report. Additionally, NAP participants must provide:

- The quantity of all harvested production of the crop in which the producer held an interest during the crop year;
- The disposition of the harvested crop, such as whether it is marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended;
- Acceptable crop production records (when requested by FSA).

Producers who fail to report acreage and production information for NAP-covered crops could see reduced or zero NAP assistance. These reports are used to calculate the approved yield.

If your NAP-covered crops are affected by a natural disaster, notify your FSA office by completing Part B of form CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment." This must be completed within 15 calendar days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date. For hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

To receive benefits, you must also complete Parts D, E, F and G of the CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment" within 60 days of the last day of coverage for the crop year for any NAP covered crops. The CCC-576 requires acceptable appraisal information. Producers must provide evidence of production and note whether the crop was marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your county FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

FSA Loan Servicing, Other Organization Resources Available During Financial Stress

There are options for Farm Service Agency 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 the options available to you.

Farmers and ranchers also can access assistance through other entities in Nebraska that offer services during financially challenging times. The Rural Response Hotline provides referral and support services for farmers, ranchers and rural residents and their families. The number to call is (800) 464-0258 or visit the website at <https://farmhotline.com>.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture manages the Negotiations Program, which offers mediation services for agricultural borrowers, creditors and USDA program participants.

Through this program, participants also can access free one-on-one education on agricultural financial and legal matters. For information, call (402) 471-4876 or visit the website at <https://negotiations.nebraska.gov/>.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies, it's important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.

Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans.

Contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

FSA August Loan Interest Rates

OPERATING/OWNERSHIP

Farm Operating: 4%
Microloan Operating: 4%
Farm Ownership: 4.250%
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing: 2.5%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment: 1.5%
Emergency - Actual Loss: 3.750%

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN

3-year term: 3.125%
5-year term: 3.125%
7-year term: 3.125%
10-year term: 3%
12-year term: 3.125%

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

Commodity Loan: 4%

Report Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Activities to NRCS by Sept. 30 Deadline



Nebraska NRCS reminds producers that the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) 2022 contract enhancements, or activity records and supporting documentation, are due by Sept. 30, 2022, to be eligible to receive payment. Clients enrolled in the CSP program should make plans to schedule an appointment with their local NRCS office to certify activities completed in 2022.

The practices or conservation activities must be implemented by the scheduled year printed in the Conservation Plan Schedule of Operations to remain in compliance with contract obligations.

Please notify your local NRCS office immediately if you are enrolled in the CSP program and any of the following changes have taken place on your operation:

- Loss of control of all or part of the land under contract,
- Changes to your operation, including management system changes, land use changes or enrollment in another program,
- Changes to your banking information that will affect direct deposit of program payments,
- Changes to the desired distribution of payment shares,
- A need to adjust your schedule of operations,
- Changes to the membership of a business entity, and
- Name changes and changes in business structure.

Contact your local NRCS office to schedule a meeting to certify the completed 2022 CSP activities. Remember to bring completed documentation and supporting information to the appointment with you.

NRCS Climate Change Adaption Plan Continues to Make Conservation Part of the Climate Solution

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has a new Climate Change Adaptation Plan that works to ensure its programs and services meet the demands of the changing agricultural landscape. It evaluates seven current vulnerabilities to NRCS's mission, operation and infrastructure that may be affected by climate change and prioritizes key actions to address these vulnerabilities, such as:

- Increase climate literacy and staffing capacity to deliver assistance that is reflective of climate change.
- Enhance science, research, and data for understanding, organizing, measuring, and tracking climate related impacts and outcomes
- Integrate climate information into current business procedures, assessments, and opportunities
- Ensure current and future applied conservation investments are reflective of climate change needs.

- Assess and address disproportionate climate change impacts on vulnerable communities through intentional engagement, planning, and assistance
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration to address climate change
- Address risks to agency infrastructure

The full plan is available here -

https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1_FPAC_NRCS_ClimateAdaptationPlan_2022.pdf

Dates to Remember

Sept. 5, 2022 – USDA Service Centers closed for federal holiday

Sept. 30, 2022 – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) application closing deadline for coverage for rye, triticale, wheat in the 2023 production season

Sept. 30, 2022 – NRCS deadline for those with Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts to report activities

Oct. 10, 2022 – USDA Service Centers closed for federal holiday

Oct. 31, 2022 – FSA deadline for applications to the Organic Certification Cost Share Program and the Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program

****Please note any above NAP calendar reference may not be inclusive for all NAP-covered crops; NAP participants should contact their County FSA Office to confirm important program deadlines.*



Nebraska FSA and NRCS State Office Information

Farm Service Agency

7131 A Street
Lincoln, NE 68510
Phone: (402) 437-5581
Fax: (844) 930-0237

John Berge, FSA
State Executive Director
john.berge@usda.gov

FSA State Office Programs Chiefs
Cathy Anderson, *Production & Compliance*
Pat Lechner, *Price Support & Conservation*
Mark Wilke, *Farm Loans*

Natural Resources Conservation Service

100 Centennial Mall North, Suite 152
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: (402) 437-5300

Robert Lawson, NRCS
State Conservationist
robert.lawson@usda.gov

FSA State Committee
Roy Stoltenberg, *Cairo, Chair*
Bill Armbrust, *Elkhorn*
Aaron LaPointe, *Winnebago*

Tim Divis, *Executive Officer*
Patty Wilke, *Administrative Officer*

Becky Potmesil, *Alliance*
Paula Sue Steffen, *Humboldt*

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).