

## In This Issue:

- [Message from the State Executive Director](#)
- [FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [USDA Now Accepting Farm Loan Payments Online](#)
- [Agricultural Producers Have Until March 15 to Enroll in USDA's Key Commodity Safety Net Programs for the 2024 Crop Year](#)
- [Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage Beginning Feb. 28](#)
- [Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments for Wool, Mohair and Unshorn Pelts](#)
- [Reminder: Insurance Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Through the Emergency Relief Program](#)
- [The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys](#)

---

## Message from the State Executive Director



Hello Friends,

Spring is here! We have plenty of important information to share with you as we begin to change the clocks and spring forward. Please take a moment and look at some Farm Program and Farm Loan program updates that we have for the month of March.

It has been announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin signing up for the general Conservation Reserve Program ([CRP](#)) **starting March 4 and running through March 29, 2024.**

Our county office staff is working on a concerted effort to ensure your farm records are accurate and they cannot do that without your help. In the next several months, you may be receiving notification from our offices to verify farm records under your name. Please make it a routine to visit your local county office to review your farm records/s. Any time there are changes to your farm, including, but not limited to ownership, operatorship, shares, it is of the utmost importance that you notify your local County FSA Office. Farm records are the foundation of acreage reports, program payments. Further, our farm and eligibility records are also used by our sister agencies.

Please be aware that our sister agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is April 26. For more information, contact your local NRCS office, [New Mexico | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](#).

Just a reminder, farmers.gov is your one stop shop. Create an account to stay up to date with programs, manage your records, and so much more.

Thank you,

Jonas Moya  
State Executive Director

## **OFFICE CLOSURE**

- Memorial Day – May 27
- Juneteenth National Independence Day – June 19
- Independence Day – July 4
- Labor Day – September 2

**IMPORTANT DATES (Please check with your local office for other deadlines that may apply to your particular situation) [Service Center Locator](#)**

- **Emergency Relief Program (ERP)**
  - Ongoing: No Deadline
- **Acreage Certification Reporting**
  - May 15: Spring Barley, Onions, Pecans (trees), Potatoes (**Curry, Lea and Roosevelt Counties Only**), Spring Wheat
  - July 15: All other crops, Perennial Forage, Potatoes (All New Mexico Counties, **except** Curry, Lea, and Roosevelt)
  - July 31: Hemp
  - August: Beans

**NOTE:** Any crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Program (NAP), acreage certification is the earlier of the acreage reporting date or the onset of grazing or harvest. Please contact your local FSA Office.

- **Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Program (ARC/PLC)**
  - March 15: Deadline to complete enrollment.
- **Dairy Market Coverage (DMC) Program**
  - April 29: Deadline to enroll.

---

## **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 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.

---

## USDA Now Accepting Farm Loan Payments Online

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today that most farm loan borrowers will soon be able to make payments to their direct loans online through the Pay My Loan feature on [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov) in early February. Pay My Loan is part of a broader effort by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) to streamline its processes, especially for producers who may have limited time during the planting or harvest seasons to visit a local FSA office; modernize and improve customer service; provide additional customer self-service tools; and expand credit access to assist more producers.

On average, local USDA Service Centers process more than 225,000 farm loan payments each year. Pay My Loan gives most borrowers an online repayment option and relieves them from needing to call, mail, or visit a Service Center to pay their loan installment. Farm loan payments can now be made at the borrower's convenience, on their schedule and outside of FSA office hours.

Pay My Loan also provides time savings for FSA's farm loan employees by minimizing manual payment processing activities. This new service for producers means that farm loan employees will have more time to focus on reviewing and processing new loans or servicing requests.

The Pay My Loan feature can be accessed at [farmers.gov/loans](http://farmers.gov/loans). To use the payment feature, producers must establish a USDA customer account and a [USDA Level 2 eAuthentication \("eAuth"\) account or a Login.gov account](#). This initial release only allows individuals with loans to make online payments. For now, borrowers with jointly payable checks will need to continue to make loan payments through their local office.

FSA has a significant initiative underway to streamline and automate the Farm Loan Program customer-facing business process. For the over 26,000 producers who submit a direct loan application annually, FSA has made various improvements including:

- The [Online Loan Application](#), an interactive, guided application that is paperless and provides helpful features including an electronic signature option, the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns, complete a balance sheet, and build a farm operating plan.
  - The [Loan Assistance Tool](#) that provides customers with an interactive online, step-by-step guide to identifying the direct loan products that may be a fit for their business needs and to understanding the application process.
  - A [simplified direct loan paper application](#), which reduced loan applications by more than half, from 29 pages to 13 pages.
- 

## **Agricultural Producers Have Until March 15 to Enroll in USDA's Key Commodity Safety Net Programs for the 2024 Crop Year**

Agricultural producers who have not yet enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2024 crop year have until March 15, 2024, to revise elections and sign contracts. Both safety net programs, delivered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provide vital income support to farmers who experience substantial declines in crop prices or revenues for the 2024 crop year. In New Mexico, producers have completed 1,762 contracts to date, representing 56% of the more than 3,171 expected contracts.

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual, which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2024 are optional, producers must enroll, with a signed contract, each year. If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm, the contract will continue for 2024 unless an election change is made.

If producers do not submit their election revision by the March 15, 2024, deadline, the election remains the same as their 2023 election for eligible commodities on the farm. Also, producers who do not complete enrollment and sign their contract by the deadline will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2024 year and will not receive a payment if one is triggered. Farm owners can only enroll in these programs if they have a share interest in the commodity.

Producers are eligible to enroll farms with base acres for the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

### **Crop Insurance Considerations**

Producers are reminded that enrolling in ARC or PLC programs can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products offered by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). Producers who elect and enroll in PLC also have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option

(SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider, but producers of covered commodities who elect ARC are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres.

Unlike SCO, RMA's Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by participating in ARC for the same crop, on the same acres. You may elect ECO regardless of your farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan, or STAX, on their planted cotton acres.

### **More Information**

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or 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.

---

## **Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage Beginning Feb. 28**

Starting Feb. 28, dairy producers will be able to enroll for 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC), an important safety net program offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides producers with price support to help offset milk and feed price differences. This year's DMC signup begins Feb. 28, 2024, and ends April 29, 2024. For those who sign up for 2024 DMC coverage, payments may begin as soon as March 4, 2024, for any payments that triggered in January 2024.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has revised the regulations for DMC to allow eligible dairy operations to make a one-time adjustment to established production history. This adjustment will be accomplished by combining previously established supplemental production history with DMC production history for those dairy operations that participated in Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage during a prior coverage year. DMC has also been authorized through calendar year 2024. Congress passed a 2018 Farm Bill extension requiring these regulatory changes to the program.

DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. In 2023, Dairy Margin Coverage payments triggered in 11 months including two months, June and July, where the margin fell below the catastrophic level of \$4.00 per hundredweight, a first for Dairy Margin Coverage or its predecessor Margin Protection Program.

**2024 DMC Coverage and Premium Fees** FSA has revised DMC regulations to extend coverage for calendar year 2024, which is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2024, and to provide an adjustment to the production history for dairy operations with less than 5 million pounds of production. In previous years, smaller dairy operations could establish a supplemental

production history and receive Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage. For 2024, dairy producers can establish one adjusted base production history through DMC for each participating dairy operation to better reflect the operation's current production.

For 2024 DMC enrollment, dairy operations that established supplemental production history through Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage for coverage years 2021 through 2023, will combine the supplemental production history with established production history for one adjusted base production history.

For dairy operations enrolled in 2023 DMC under a multi-year lock-in contract, lock-in eligibility will be extended until Dec. 31, 2024. In addition, dairy operations enrolled in multi-year lock-in contracts are eligible for the discounted DMC premium rate during the 2024 coverage year. To confirm 2024 DMC lock-in coverage or opt out in favor of an annual contract for 2024, dairy operations having lock-in contracts must enroll during the 2024 DMC enrollment period.

DMC offers different levels of coverage, even an option that is free to producers, minus a \$100 administrative fee. The administrative fee is waived for dairy producers who are considered limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or a military veteran. To determine the appropriate level of DMC coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can use the [online dairy decision tool](#).

**DMC Payments** DMC payments are calculated using updated feed and premium hay costs, making the program more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses. These updated feed calculations use 100% premium alfalfa hay.

**More Information** USDA also offers other risk management tools for dairy producers, including the [Dairy Revenue Protection \(DRP\)](#) plan that protects against a decline in milk revenue (yield and price) and the [Livestock Gross Margin \(LGM\)](#) plan, which provides protection against the loss of the market value of milk minus the feed costs. Both DRP and LGM livestock insurance policies are offered through the Risk Management Agency. Producers should contact their local [crop insurance agent](#) for more information.

For more information on DMC, visit the [DMC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

---

## Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments for Wool, Mohair and Unshorn Pelts

Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) provide financing and marketing assistance for producers of many commodities, including graded and non-graded wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts. MALs and LDPs are available during shearing and provide interim financing to help you meet cash flow needs without having to sell commodities when market prices are low, enabling you to delay selling until more favorable marketing conditions emerge. LDPs are payments made to producers who, although eligible to obtain an MAL, agree to forgo the loan in return for a payment on the eligible commodity.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2024 MALs and LDPs for all eligible wool, mohair and unshorn pelts. These requests should be made on or before the final availability date of Jan. 31, 2025. USDA recently announced [2024 wool and mohair marketing assistance loan rates](#).

## Eligibility

To be eligible for a wool or mohair MAL or LDP, producers must produce and shear eligible mohair and wool in the U.S. during the applicable crop year and must:

- comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements;
- report all cropland acreage on applicable farms where the eligible commodity is produced;
- have and retain beneficial interest in the commodity until the MAL is repaid or the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) takes title to the commodity, and;
- meet Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations.

Unshorn pelts are eligible for LDPs only. In addition to the criteria above, producers of unshorn pelts must have sold the unshorn lamb for immediate slaughter or slaughter the lambs for personal use.

LDPs and marketing loan gains are not subject to payment limitation, including actively engaged in farming and cash rent tenant provisions.

In addition to producer eligibility, the loan commodity must have been produced and shorn from live animals by an eligible producer, be in storable condition, and meet specific CCC minimum grade and quality standards. Producers are responsible for any loss in quantity or quality of the wool or mohair pledged as loan collateral.

To retain beneficial interest, the producer must have control and title of the wool, mohair, or unshorn pelt. If beneficial interest in the commodity is lost, the commodity loses eligibility for an MAL or LDP and remains ineligible even if the producer later regains beneficial interest. The producer must be able to make all decisions affecting the commodity including movement, sale, and the request for an MAL or LDP.

Producers may repay an MAL any time during the loan period at the lesser of the loan rate plus accrued interest and other charges or an alternative loan repayment rate, the national posted price, which is announced weekly. Visit the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website for [posted loan and LDP rates](#).

## How to Apply

Producers can apply for an MAL by contacting their local FSA county office. To be considered for a LDP, **producers must first have the form CCC-633 EZ, Page 1, on file with FSA** prior to losing beneficial interest in the wool, mohair or unshorn pelt. **It is best to visit the county office and submit the CCC-633 Page 1 right before you shear.** This is completed one time per crop year and indicates your intention to receive LDP benefits.

To apply and learn more information, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## **Reminder: Insurance Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Through the Emergency Relief Program**

Producers who received an Emergency Relief Program (ERP) payment need to meet ERP insurance linkage requirements by purchasing crop insurance, or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage where crop insurance is not available.

Purchase coverage must be at the 60/100 coverage level or higher for insured crops or at the catastrophic coverage level or higher for NAP crops for the next two available crop years, which will be determined from the date you received an ERP payment and may vary depending on the timing and availability of coverage. The insurance coverage requirement applies to the physical location of the county where the crop was located and for which an ERP payment was issued.

Contact your crop insurance agent or local FSA county office as soon as possible to ask about coverage options. Producers who do not obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will be required to refund the ERP benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest. To determine which crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP, visit the RMA website.

For more information, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## **The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys**

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at [nass.usda.gov/Publications](http://nass.usda.gov/Publications) and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at [youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be](http://youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be).

---

## New Mexico Farm Service Agency

100 Sun Ave. NE Suite 200  
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Phone: 505-761-4900  
Fax: 877-450-0860

**State Executive Director:**

**Jonas Moya**  
[jonas.moya@usda.gov](mailto:jonas.moya@usda.gov)

**Executive Officer:**

**Brenda Archuleta**  
[brenda.archuleta@usda.gov](mailto:brenda.archuleta@usda.gov)

**Acting Farm Loan Chief:**

**Jessica Weigand**  
[jessica.weigand@usda.gov](mailto:jessica.weigand@usda.gov)

**Farm Program Chief:**

**Joilynn Gray**  
[joilynn.gray@usda.gov](mailto:joilynn.gray@usda.gov)

**District Directors:**

**Mark Bentley**  
[mark.bentley@usda.gov](mailto:mark.bentley@usda.gov)  
**Oscar Rivera**  
[oscar.rivera@usda.gov](mailto:oscar.rivera@usda.gov)  
**Rhonda Mitchell**  
[rhonda.mitchell@usda.gov](mailto:rhonda.mitchell@usda.gov)

---

To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/NM](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/NM)