



## New Mexico FSA State Newsletter - July 2024

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### Message from the State Executive Director

Hello Friends,

We have a few updates to share with you. We hope everyone had a great Independence Day and look forward to assisting the great producers in our state.

USDA has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers across New Mexico recover from recent wildfires and related heavy rain

and flooding. Producers impacted by these natural disasters should contact their local USDA Service Center to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.

USDA's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities effort is expanding markets for America's climate-smart commodities, leveraging the greenhouse gas benefits of climate-smart commodity production, and providing direct, meaningful benefits to production agriculture, including for small and underserved producers. Learn more about expanded markets, premiums and incentives for producing climate-smart commodities as well as cost share and technical assistance to implement climate-smart practices. [Find a project near you and get started today!](#)

The National Urban Agriculture Conference will be held in Detroit, MI, from Aug. 4-6, 2024. Through the conference, FSA and lead organizer NUag Initiative seek to build stronger connections between USDA programs and urban growers. The conference features bus tours of urban farms in Detroit; information on USDA resources; listening sessions and presentations; and information on beneficial tools, training, resources, and efforts to expand local and regional food systems. To learn more and sign up, see the website for [conference registration](#).

Conservation Reserve Program – Transitional Incentive Program (CRP-TIP) - The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize \$50 million for the voluntary transition of land enrolled under an expiring CRP-1 from an owner or operator to a veteran, beginning, or SDA farmer or rancher to return the land to production for sustainable grazing or crop production. Owners or operators who qualify under TIP may be eligible to receive annual rental payments for up to 2 additional years after the CRP-1 expiration date provided the transition is **not** to a family member. For further information regarding TIP, click [here](#), for the fact sheet. The deadline to sign up is **August 15**.

The ERP 2022 Program was authorized by Title I of the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328), and signed on December 29, 2022. Signup for Track 1 and Track 2 began on October 31, 2023. On July 15, USDA announced the deadline to submit applications for ERP 2022 Track 1 and Track 2 to FSA, which is **COB August 14**. This deadline includes applications that are postmarked by this date. The deadline to submit the required and optional eligibility forms for ERP 2022 Track 1 and Track 2 is **October 15**.

Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. Participating in NAP, producers must provide accurate and complete information by the applicable Production Reporting Date; provide organized & summarized production and retaining production evidence for 3 crop years FSA offers optional recordkeeping tool called, [Crop Production Ledger](#). Visit our NAP page to download the tool.

FSA is here to serve you. Visit [farmers.gov](#) service center locator to obtain your local FSA County Office information.

Thank you,

Jonas Moya  
State Executive Director

#### **OFFICE CLOSURE**

- Labor Day – September 2
- Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day – October 14
- Veteran's Day – November 11
- Thanksgiving Day – November 28
- Christmas Day – December 25

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

- **County Committee Nominations**
  - August 1: Nomination Period Ends
- **Emergency Relief Program (ERP)**
  - August 14, Signup Ends for Tracks 1 and 2
  - October 15, Final Date to submit Required & Optional Eligibility Forms
- **Acreage Certification Reporting**
  - July 31: Hemp

- August 15: Beans

For crops covered by NAP, the acreage reporting is the **earlier of** the acreage reporting date of 15 calendar days before harvest or the onsite of grazing.

- **Conservation Reserve Program - Transition Incentive Program (CRP-TIP)**
  - August 15, Signup Ends
- **2025 Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) Application Closing Dates**
  - August 30: Canola
  - September 1: Aquaculture, Floriculture, Garlic, Onions, Sod Grass
  - September 30: Barely, Canola, Oats, Rye, Triticale, Wheat
  - November 20: Apples, Apricots, Cherries, Caneberries, Grapes, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Pistachios, Plums
  - December 1: Grass, Honey, Lettuce
- **Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)**
  - October 31: Signup Ends

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## **USDA Offers Assistance and Resources for Recovery from and Prevention of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 in Dairy Herds**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the detection of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), also known as H5N1, in dairy cattle in 12 states including Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Mexico, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming. To protect the U.S. livestock industry from the threat posed by HPAI H5N1 USDA is taking a number of actions with our federal partners.

On April 24, APHIS announced a federal order that includes mandatory testing for interstate movement of dairy cattle and mandatory reporting of influenza A detections in livestock. In addition to the Federal Order mandates, USDA provides several voluntary testing and monitoring options, including the [HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program](#) announced on May 31, 2024. APHIS has released a list

of [requirements and recommendations](#) that apply to interstate moving of lactating dairy cattle, [testing guidance](#) for livestock, and answers to [frequently asked questions](#). Producers are encouraged to visit the APHIS HPAI Livestock Detection [website](#) for information about these programs and requirements, as well as the most comprehensive and timely updates about this rapidly evolving situation.

## **Assistance for Milk Loss**

### *Confirmed H5N1 Positive Test Results Required for Recovery Assistance*

Producers who incur milk losses in their dairy herds due to HPAI H5N1 can now apply for financial assistance through the USDA's updated Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) expanded ELAP policy through the rule-making process to assist with financial losses resulting from reduced milk production when cattle are removed from commercial milking in dairy herds having a confirmed positive H5N1 test. Positive tests must be confirmed through the USDA's APHIS' National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).

To apply, **producers need to submit** the following to FSA:

- Proof of herd infection through a confirmed positive H5N1 test (based on USDA's APHIS [H5N1 case definition](#)) on individual animal or bulk tank samples confirmed by APHIS' NVSL;
- A notice of loss indicating the date when the loss is apparent, which is the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test; and
- An application for payment certifying the number of eligible adult dairy cows removed from production, the month the cows were removed from production, and the producer's share in the milk production.

The final date to file a notice of loss and application for payment for eligible losses is 30 days after the end of the prior calendar year, which is **January 30**.

**Note:** *To determine livestock and producer eligibility for ELAP H5N1 assistance, to submit an application or if you've not previously conducted business with FSA, contact your local FSA county office for details. [Find your local office](#). Other online resources include [frequently asked questions](#) and a [fact sheet](#).*

## Loans for Biosecurity Implementation

FSA also provides direct and guaranteed loans for farmers and ranchers that can assist with implementation of biosecurity measures for their operations. Loans can assist with:

- Installing physical barriers to facilitate quarantine, to prevent livestock interaction with wildlife, and to prevent unauthorized access by visitors
- Purchase of disinfectant, footbaths, and disposable footwear and clothing;
- Veterinary costs related to vaccination and general animal health;
- Testing of feed and water sources for toxins and other disease;
- Costs associated with responsible manure disposal and management;
- Costs associated with cleaning and disinfecting livestock transportation equipment; and
- Other biosecurity measures recommended by USDA or other applicable agencies.

To learn more about loans, producers can use the:

- [Loan Assistance Tool](#) – helps producers better navigate the farm loan process. The online Loan Assistance Tool provides producers needing agricultural financing with an interactive, step-by-step guide.
- [Farm Loans Overview Factsheet](#) – provides an overview of all FSA direct and guaranteed loans, and eligibility requirements.
- [Farm Loans Homepage](#) – gives in-depth farm loan information, including fact sheets, for those who don't want to use the online Loan Assistance Tool.

To learn more about ELAP or farm loans, producers should contact the FSA at the [local USDA Service Center](#).

To learn more about APHIS requirements and resources, visit APHIS' [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) Detections in Livestock webpage](#).

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## **Dr. Julie Gauthier, Executive Director of Veterinary Services' Field Operations and Policy Liaison, USDA-APHIS, Answers Questions About H5N1 in Dairy Herds**

Dr. Julie Gauthier, Executive Director of Veterinary Services' Field Operations and Policy Liaison, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), offers her expertise regarding H5N1 in the United States, its current effects in our dairy industry, and the process and importance of testing your cows to help protect them, your operation, and the dairy industry as a whole. [Read our farmers.gov Ask the Expert blog for the full interview with Dr. Gauthier and learn more about available assistance through USDA Farm Service Agency's Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\).](#)

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## **FSA's Customer Kiosks now available nationwide**

The new customer kiosks from USDA's Farm Service Agency are now available at every county office nationwide. These kiosks help to streamline your visit to your local county office and easily access a variety of features such as signing FSA documents, utilizing the Loan Assistance Tool, browsing USDA programs, accessing the internet, accessing necessary personal information, and signing up for a Login.gov account, which provides access to farmers.gov level two features and other USDA and U.S. Government web resources. Future kiosk functionality enhancements include a customer check-in application, self-service option for FSA program applications and documents, financial inquiries and more.

Learn more about how FSA is modernizing our customer experience by visiting our [blog](#).

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## **Farm Service Agency Seeking Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees**

Nominations are now being accepted for farmers and ranchers to serve on local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees. These committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2024.

Elections for committee members will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Customers can locate their LAA through a geographic information system locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) and determine if their LAA is up for election by contacting their local FSA office.

Agricultural producers may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee if they:

- Participate or cooperate in a USDA program.
- Reside in the LAA that is up for election this year.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority, women, urban and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms.

Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster recovery, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as making decisions on county office employment and other agricultural issues.

### **Urban and Suburban County Committees**

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to form urban county committees and make other advancements related to urban agriculture, including the establishment of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. FSA established county committees specifically focused on urban agriculture that work to encourage and promote urban, indoor and other emerging agricultural production practices.

Additionally, the county committees may address food access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost and food waste reduction.

Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Urban county committee members provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs, serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

The 27 cities with urban county committees are listed at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) and [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban). Of these, ten urban county committees will hold an inaugural election this cycle.

You should contact your local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in your county's election, including if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, you must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. This form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by the Aug. 1, 2024, deadline. Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters in November 2024.

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### **Reminders for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security**

Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations
- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

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## **USDA Expands Funding Opportunities for Specialty Crop Growers to Help Offset On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for 2024 and 2025**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expanding the [Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops \(FSCSC\) program](#) to now include medium-sized businesses in addition to small businesses. Eligible specialty crop growers can apply for assistance for expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification. The program has also been expanded to include assistance for 2024 and 2025 expenses.

Producers can apply for assistance on their calendar year 2024 expenses beginning July 1, 2024, through Jan. 31, 2025. For program year 2025, the application period will be Jan. 1, 2025, through Jan. 31, 2026.

### **Program Details**

FSCSC assists specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety. FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing its certification, as well as a portion of related expenses.

Eligible FSCSC applicants must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small or medium-size business and have paid eligible expenses related to certification.

- A small business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops sold by the applicant during the three-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$500,000.
- A medium size business has an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the three-year period preceding the program year of at least \$500,001 but no more than \$1,000,000.

Specialty crop operations can receive the following cost assistance:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
- Training.

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each eligible cost category. Details about payment rates and limitations are available at [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://farmers.gov/food-safety).

### **Applying for Assistance**

Interested applicants have until Jan. 31, 2025, to apply for assistance for 2024 eligible expenses. FSA will issue payments as applications are processed and approved. For program year 2025, the application period will be January 1, 2025, through January 31, 2026. FSA will issue 50% of the calculated payment for program year 2025 following application approval, with the remaining amount to be paid after the application deadline. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Specialty crop producers can apply by completing the [FSA-888-1, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program \(FSCSC\) for Program Years 2024 and 2025](#) application. The application, along with the [AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet](#) and [SF-3881, ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form](#), if not already on file with FSA, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Alternatively, producers with an eAuthentication account can apply for FSCSC [online](#). Producers interested in creating an eAuthentication account should visit [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a FSA employee ready to assist. Visit [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://farmers.gov/food-safety) for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

### **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](#). Producers without an account can [sign up today](#).

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## **USDA Now Accepting Applications for Available Funds to Help Cover Organic Certification Costs**

Through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will cover up to 75% of organic certification costs at a maximum of \$750 per certification category. FSA is now accepting applications, and organic producers and handlers should apply for OCCSP by the Oct. 31, 2024, deadline for eligible expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024. FSA will issue payments as applications are received and approved.

OCCSP was part of a [broader organic announcement](#) made by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on May 15, 2024, which also included the Organic Market Development Grant program and Organic Transition Initiative.

### **Eligible Applicants, Expenses and Categories**

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of organic agricultural commodities for expenses incurred obtaining or maintaining organic certification under USDA's [National Organic Program](#). Eligible OCCSP applicants include any certified organic producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Cost share assistance covers expenses including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, inspector travel expenses, user fees, sales assessments and postage. OCCSP pays a maximum of \$750 per certification category for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling, and state organic program fees (California only).

### **How to Apply**

To apply, producers and handlers should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#) and be prepared to provide documentation of organic certification and eligible expenses. OCCSP applications can also be submitted through participating state departments of agriculture. For more information, visit the [OCCSP](#) webpage.

## Opportunity for State Departments of Agriculture

FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA posted a [funding opportunity summary on grants.gov](#) and will electronically mail the Notice of Funding Opportunity to all eligible state departments of agriculture. Applications are due July 12, 2024.

If a state department of agriculture chooses to participate in OCCSP, both the state department of agriculture and FSA county offices in that state will accept OCCSP applications and make payments to eligible certified operations. Producers or handlers can receive OCCSP assistance from either FSA or the participating state department of agriculture but not both.

### More Information

USDA offers other assistance for organic producers, including the [Organic Transition Initiative \(OTI\)](#), which includes direct farmer assistance for organic production and processing and conservation. For more information on organic agriculture, visit [farmers.gov/organic](#).

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.

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