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State Executive Director's Message

Welcome to 2023! As we head into a new year, USDA Secretary Vilsack recently announced some major program improvements, progress, and investments to help our farmers, ranchers, and producers.



The Emergency Relief Program (ERP Phase 2) and 2020 Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) are two new programs that "wrap-up and fill remaining gaps in previous natural disaster and pandemic assistance." The application period for these programs is open from January 23, 2023, through June 2, 2023. For more details on eligibility please visit the news release posted on the Oregon FSA webpage at [Oregon News Releases \(usda.gov\)](#). Fact sheets are available at [ERP Phase Two Fact Sheet](#), [PARP Fact Sheet](#) or the [ERP Phase Two-PARP Comparison Fact Sheet](#). For more information contact your [local USDA service center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov](#).

Outreach remains a top priority. Engaging with our customers and potential customers is one of the most important things, we as a customer service agency can do. Outreach events in January included attending meetings for the Oregon Cattleman's Association, Country Natural Beef, Affiliated Tribes of the NW and an urban agriculture roundtable. January also marked our inaugural stakeholder monthly call. Each month stakeholders will have an opportunity to connect with the Oregon FSA State Office farm program and farm

loan teams to learn about new programs, get an update on what has been happening and ask questions. If you want to learn more about these monthly calls or get added to the attendee list, please don't hesitate to contact me!

Our urban ag initiative continues to remain a top priority as well. Oregon is working to support urban ag as it plays an important role in growing not only fresh, healthy food, often where grocery stores are scarce, but also providing jobs, responding to climate change, and beautifying neighborhoods. Urban ag includes the cultivating, processing and distributing agricultural products in urban and suburban areas. Community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and vertical production, tribal communities and small towns are all examples of urban agriculture. I look forward to connecting with all of our urban ag producers to lend FSA's assistance in any and all ways that we can!

Please always reach out to chat, inquire, ask questions and learn more! I look forward to continuing existing relationships and building new ones in 2023!

Gail Greenman
State Executive Director

Urban Ag Tips & Tools

This month's Urban Ag Tips and Tools is submitted by Stacey Givens (she/her), Multnomah County, who is the farmer, chef, and owner, of *The Side Yard Farm & Kitchen*, and is also an Oregon FSA Urban Ag County Committee member. "One tool that has been a game changer for our farm the last couple of seasons is a [quick cut greens harvester sold by Farmers Friends](#). What used to take us about 45 minutes to harvest a 50-foot bed of arugula now takes about 10 minutes. It's fast, efficient, and saves money on labor. I highly recommend it, especially for urban farmers." (Photo: Farm manager Hazel Batisky (she/her) using the tool.)



The Side Yard Farm & Kitchen is an urban farm, catering company, and venue space located in the NE Cully neighborhood of Portland, Oregon. "Side Yard feeds upwards of 15,000 people per year through restaurants, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes, donations, catering, and farm events. We are committed to continuing our work in building and fostering community resilience by providing a safe, inclusive space for all identities." For further information please visit [Side Yard Farm & Kitchen](#).

The USDA People's Garden: Do you have a community farm or garden that you would like to designate as a People's Garden? To learn more about People's Garden or to register one, visit the People's Garden webpage at the website, [The People's Garden | USDA](#). You can also view the video at [The USDA People's Garden Invites Community Gardens to Join Us! - YouTube](#). Sign-up for Urban Ag email Updates at [Farmers.gov/Urban Ag](#)

Interest Rates - January 2023

Farm Operating Loans – Direct, 5.125%
Farm Operating – Microloans, 5.125%
Farm Ownership Loans – Direct, 5.250%
Farm Ownership – Microloan, 5.250%
Farm Ownership-Direct, Joint Financing, 3.250%
Farm Ownership-Down Payment, 1.500%
Emergency Loans Actual Loss, 3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 3 Years, 4.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 5 Years, 3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 7 Years, 3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans - 10 Years, 3.625%

See [Oregon FSA's website/News Releases](#) for information on USDA's Secretarial natural disaster designations to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through [emergency loans](#).

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. You can find out which of these loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

Important Dates

- **January 16, 2023:** Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday Federal Holiday, Offices Closed.
- [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) Election Period Extended to January 31, 2023.
- [Livestock Forage Program \(LFP\)](#) 2022 - Deadline January 30, 2023 - Please make sure to have any grazing leases reported and CCC-855's completed for 2022 LFP.
- [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#) application for payment due January 30, 2023.
- [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#) applications due March 31, 2023.
- [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Program \(PLC\)](#) enrollment for 2023 crop year ends March 15.
- **March 31, 2023:** [Farmers.gov/survey](#) due.
- **NAP** (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program): Report losses within 15 days of event. Notify FSA of event within 72 hours for hand-harvested crops.

[Click here to learn more about local deadlines and ongoing programs.](#)

Disaster Assistance Available for Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to you for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. *(Photo by Amy Kaser, Wasco County.)*



For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

For 2022 livestock losses, you must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent. You then must provide the following supporting documentation to your local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of grower's contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

The Oregon established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e., Adult Beef Cow = 2% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 250 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under "normal" conditions.

In addition to filing a notice of loss, you must also submit an application for payment by March 1, 2023.

For more information, contact your [local USDA service center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

What are Your 2023 Conservation Resolutions?

It's time to start thinking about what you want to work on in the new year. Setting resolutions can be hard, but we're here to help!

If you would like to make a #ConservationResolution for 2023, here are some options to consider:



- Incorporate cover crops into your operation.
- Extend your growing season by using a high tunnel.
- Improve your soil health by utilizing no-till practices.
- Provide recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat by restoring wetlands.
- Reduce input costs by focusing on nutrient management.
- Protect topsoil and groundwater quality by devoting environmentally sensitive agricultural land to conservation benefits instead of farming.

Resolutions can be daunting and hard to stick to, but here are some tips for how to make them successful.

- **Make a plan-** To get started on your #ConservationResolutions, we recommend you stop by your [local USDA service center](#), so we can discuss your vision for

your land. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can provide you with free technical assistance and or advice.

- **Don't do it alone**– USDA's conservation programs available through NRCS and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) give you the tools and resources to protect environmentally sensitive land and restore grasslands, wetlands, and forests, which leads to cleaner water and air, healthier soil, and enhanced wildlife habitat. We can also help with financial assistance to help you achieve your [#ConservationResolutions](#)
- **See what other landowners are doing** -Learn about the benefits of conservation practices directly from the farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners applying them with our series of 90-second videos. Explore the different types of conservation practices by watching our [Conservation at Work series](#). You can also read producer profiles on Fridays on the Farm at [farmers.gov](#).

In January, we'll be highlighting different [#ConservationResolutions](#) that can help protect our natural resources. Follow along to start yours!

Actively Engaged Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities

Many Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs require all program participants, either individuals or legal entities, to be "actively engaged in farming." This means participants provide a significant contribution to the farming operation, whether it is capital, land, equipment, active personal labor and/or management. For entities, each partner, stockholder or member with an ownership interest, must contribute active personal labor and/or management to the operation on a regular basis that is identifiable and documentable as well as separate and distinct from contributions of any other member. Members of joint operations must have a share of the profits or losses from the farming operation commensurate with the member's contributions to the operation and must make contributions to the farming operation that are at risk for a loss, with the level of risk being commensurate with the member's claimed share on the farming operation.



Joint operations comprised of non-family members or partners, stockholders or persons with an ownership in the farming operation must meet additional payment eligibility provisions. Joint operations comprised of family members are exempt from these additional requirements. For 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations can have one member that may use a significant contribution of active personal management exclusively to meet the requirements to be determined "actively engaged in farming." The person or member will be defined as the farm manager for the purposes of administering these management provisions.

Non-family joint operations may request to add up to two additional managers for their farming operation based on the size and/or complexity of the operation. If additional farm managers are requested and approved, all members who contribute management are required to complete form CCC-902MR, *Management Activity Record*. The farm manager should use the form to record management activities including capital, labor and agronomics, which includes crop selection, planting decisions, acquisition of inputs, crop management and marketing decisions. One form should be used for each month and the farm manager should enter the number of hours of time spent for each activity under the

date of the month the actions were completed. The farm manager must also document if each management activity was completed on the farm or remotely.

The records and supporting business documentation must be maintained and timely made available for review by the appropriate FSA reviewing authority, if requested.

If the farm manager fails to meet these requirements, their contribution of active personal management to the farming operation for payment eligibility purposes will be disregarded and their payment eligibility status will be re-determined for the applicable program year.

In some instances, additional persons or members of a non-family member joint operation who meet the definition of farm manager may also be allowed to use such a contribution of active personal management to meet the eligibility requirements. However, under no circumstances may the number of farm managers in a non-family joint operation exceed a total of three in any given crop and program year.

Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.



USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact your [local USDA service center](#) or visit farmers.gov.

NRCS Oregon Accepting Applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oregon is accepting applications from agricultural producers and forest landowners for the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP). The ACEP program helps producers enroll working lands and wetlands into conservation easements.



While NRCS accepts ACEP applications year-round, Oregon producers and landowners **should apply by February 2, 2023**, to be considered for ACEP funding in the current cycle. Applications received after the ranking date will automatically be considered during the next funding cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process.

ACEP enrollment options include:

- [ACEP-Wetland Reserve Easements \(WRE\)](#): Helps restore, protect and enhance wetlands on eligible land. Wetland reserve easements are either perpetual, 30-years, or maximum duration under state law, or 30-year contracts (for Indian Tribes).
- [ACEP-Agricultural Land Easements \(ALE\)](#): Protects farmlands and grasslands by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. Agricultural Land Easements are either perpetual or the maximum duration allowed under State law.

State Technical Committees, composed of conservation and agricultural-related agency and organization representatives, work with NRCS to identify resource priorities and how best to address them. NRCS then sets state-specific ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding that account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunities to apply.

Find more information about the program on [Oregon's ACEP website](#). To learn more or apply, please contact your [local NRCS field office](#) or Eric Moeggenberg, NRCS Oregon's easement specialist at eric.moeggenberg@usda.gov or 541-699-3185.

USDA Releases Nationwide Farmer, Rancher and Forest Manager Prospective Customer Survey

You can now take a nationwide survey to help the USDA improve and increase access to its programs and services for America's farmers, ranchers, and forest managers. The survey includes new and existing customers. USDA encourages all agricultural producers to take the survey, especially those who have not worked with USDA previously. The survey gathers feedback on programs and services available through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA).



The survey is available online at farmers.gov/survey, and you should complete it by March 31, 2023. Stakeholder organizations are also encouraged to share the survey link through their networks. The survey is available in 14 different languages including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hmong, Korean, Navajo, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.

In addition to the online survey, the FPAC Business Center, which is administering the survey, will also mail 11,000 printed surveys to various local state stakeholder organizations and farmers markets.

USDA in Oregon 2023 Calendars



The 2023 USDA in Oregon are here! Stop by your local [USDA Service Center](#) to pick up your copy! If you would like to submit a photo for possible use in our 2024 USDA in Oregon calendar, please submit by e-mail to susan.riffel@usda.gov.



Check out [How to Start a Farm: Beginning Farmers and Ranchers](#) web site and new posts on the [Farmers.gov Blog page](#)!



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Vern Frederickson, STC Member
Bryan Harper, STC Member
Denver Pugh, STC Member
Anna Sullivan, STC Member
Next STC Meeting: March 16

How can we help you? Submit questions or requests for further information to ASK.USDA.GOV or 1-833-ONE-USDA.

Sign up for important text message alerts from your local county FSA office! To subscribe, text FSANOW (372-669).



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