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## A Note from State Executive Director Laurie Funderburk



### Greetings, South Carolina Producers!

I would like to begin this month's greeting by saying "Thank You" to all the farmers across South Carolina. [National Farmers Day](#) was celebrated on October 12, and South Carolina FSA appreciates the contributions that our farmers make each and every day to produce the food, fuel, and fiber on which we all depend.

In addition to delightfully cooler mornings, the month of October also brings important updates from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the Biden-Harris Administration is making \$500 million in grants available to increase American-made fertilizer production to spur competition and combat price hikes on U.S. farmers. The [Fertilizer Production Expansion Program](#) is part of a whole-of-government effort to promote competition, including in agricultural markets. The funds are being made available through the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Clemson University and South Carolina State University, in partnership, announced an historic USDA investment of \$70 million for the [Building Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities in South Carolina](#) project. This pilot project will utilize a coalition of 27 entities to provide incentives to farmers to implement climate-smart production practices. The project will also examine and verify the benefits resulting from implementing climate-smart practices and will support development of markets for the resulting climate-smart commodities. The commodities that are the focus of this grant project are peanuts, beef, forage, leafy greens, and forest products.

Lastly, please come out and visit the South Carolina FSA at the South Carolina State Fair! We will have an exhibit booth in the Ellison Building on October 19-20. We would love to see you and share important information about our programs.

Again, I am proud to be a part of an agency focused on serving our nation's farmers and ranchers, and I thank you for all you do.

**Laurie Slade Funderburk**  
State Executive Director

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## Virtual Workshops Highlight Improvements to Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering virtual workshops – on Nov. 15 and Dec. 13 – for agricultural producers and stakeholders to learn about the latest updates and improvements to the [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection](#) (WFRP) and the [Micro Farm](#) insurance options, two of the most comprehensive risk management options available. These insurance options are especially important to specialty crop, organic, urban, and direct market producers, and this is part of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) efforts to increase participation in these options and crop insurance overall.

RMA will host these workshops for agricultural producers via Microsoft Teams events:

- Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 8 p.m. PT ([click to join](#))
- Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 11 a.m. ET ([click to join](#))

RSVP is not required. Attendees will have a chance to submit written questions during the event.

[Learn more.](#)

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# Biden-Harris Administration Announces Historic Investment in Partnerships for 70 Climate-Smart Commodities and Rural Projects



Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today that the Biden-Harris Administration through the U.S. Department of Agriculture is investing up to \$2.8 billion in 70 selected projects under the first pool of the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities funding opportunity, with projects from the second funding pool to be announced later this year. Ultimately, USDA's anticipated investment will triple to more than \$3 billion in pilots that will create market opportunities for American commodities

produced using climate-smart production practices. These initial projects will expand markets for climate-smart commodities, leverage the greenhouse gas benefits of climate-smart commodity production and provide direct, meaningful benefits to production agriculture, including for small and underserved producers. Applicants submitted more than 450 project proposals in this first funding pool, and the strength of the projects identified led USDA to increase its investment in this opportunity from the initial \$1 billion Vilsack announced earlier this year.

Learn More: [Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities](#)

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## Biden-Harris Administration Makes \$500 Million Available to Increase Innovative American-Made Fertilizer Production

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the Biden-Harris Administration is making \$500 million in grants available to increase American-made fertilizer production to spur competition and combat price hikes on U.S. farmers caused by the war in Ukraine.

The Biden-Harris Administration's [Fertilizer Production Expansion Program](#) is part of a whole-of-government effort to promote competition in agricultural markets. The funds are being made available through the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Eligible entities are for-profit businesses and corporations, nonprofit entities, Tribes and Tribal organizations, producer-owned cooperatives and corporations, certified benefit corporations, and state or local governments. Private entities must be independently owned and operated to apply.

The Department will begin accepting applications in the coming days via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Notably, there will be two opportunities for submission.

[Learn more.](#)

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# USDA Opens People's Garden Initiative to Gardens Nationwide

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expanding its People's Garden Initiative to include eligible gardens nationwide. School gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural, suburban and urban areas can be recognized as a "People's Garden" if they register on the USDA website and meet criteria including benefitting the community, working collaboratively, incorporating conservation practices and educating the public. Affiliate People's Garden locations will be indicated on a map on the USDA website, featured in USDA communications, and provided with a People's Garden sign.

## About the Gardens

USDA originally launched the People's Garden Initiative in 2009. It's named for the "People's Department," former President Abraham Lincoln's nickname for USDA, which was established during his presidency in 1862.

People's Gardens grow fresh, healthy food and support resilient, local food systems; teach people how to garden using conservation practices; nurture habitat for pollinators and wildlife and create greenspace for neighbors.

## How to Register

To learn more about People's Garden or to register one, visit the People's Garden webpage at [usda.gov/Peoples-Garden](https://usda.gov/Peoples-Garden). The location and information on each garden will be displayed on a map. USDA will send a "People's Garden" sign to each garden and invite continued engagement through photos and information sharing. Gardens on federal property, such as USDA offices, are required to donate produce. We invite these gardens to report how much is being donated.

To be eligible, gardens:

- **Benefit the community** by providing food, green space, wildlife habitat, education space.
- **Are a collaborative effort.** This can include groups working together with USDA agencies, food banks, after school programs, Girl Scouts, Master Gardeners, conservation districts, etc.
- **Incorporate conservation management practices**, such as using native plant species, rain barrels, integrated pest management, xeriscaping.
- **Educate the public** about sustainable gardening practices and the importance of local, diverse, and resilient food systems providing healthy food for the community.

New gardens will join the People's Garden at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. and 17 other flagship gardens established earlier this year.

## More Information

The People's Garden Initiative is part of USDA's broader efforts to advance equity, support local and regional food systems and access to food, and encourage use of conservation and climate-smart practices.

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# USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers

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. Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating State agencies.

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

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# Applying for NAP Payments

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. 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, visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap).

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## Filing CCC-941 Adjusted Gross Income Certifications

If you have experienced delays in receiving Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Gains on

Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs), it may be because you have not filed form CCC-941, *Adjusted Gross Income Certification*.

If you don't have a valid CCC-941 on file for the applicable crop year you will not receive payments. All farm operator/tenants/owners who have not filed a CCC-941 and have pending payments should IMMEDIATELY file the form with their recording county FSA office. Farm operators and tenants are encouraged to ensure that their landowners have filed the form.

FSA can accept the CCC-941 for 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Unlike the past, you must have the CCC-941 certifying your AGI compliance before any payments can be issued.

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## Applying for Beginning Farmer Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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## Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be successful. FSA staff will provide guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial credit. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

If a farm loan borrower can't make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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