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USDA Expands Eligibility, Enhances Benefits for Key Disaster Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made updates to several conservation, livestock and crop disaster assistance programs to give more farmers, ranchers, and tribes the opportunity to apply for and access programs that support recovery following natural disasters. Specifically, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) expanded eligibility and enhanced available benefits for a suite of its programs. These updates will provide critical assistance to producers who need to rebuild and recover after suffering catastrophic losses of production and infrastructure due to natural disasters.

FSA has updated the following programs: The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP), the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

Conservation Disaster Assistance Updates

FSA updated ECP to:

- Allow producers who lease Federally owned or managed lands, including tribal trust land, as well as State land the opportunity to participate.

- Provide advance payments, up to 25% of the cost, for all ECP practices before the restoration is carried out, an option that was previously only available for fence repair or replacement. The cost-share payment must be spent within 60 days.

Additionally, Congress also authorized the Federal government to pay 100% of the ECP and EFRP cost for damage associated with the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire in New Mexico. This fire burned over 340,000 acres from April 2022 to June 2022 and was the largest wildfire in recorded history in New Mexico. ECP and EFRP cost-share assistance is typically capped at 75%. This policy change for 100% cost-share applies only to those locations impacted by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire.

ECP and EFRP provide financial and technical assistance to restore conservation practices like fencing, damaged farmland or forests.

Livestock Disaster Assistance Updates

FSA also expanded eligible livestock under ELAP, LFP and LIP. Specifically, horses maintained on eligible grazing land are eligible for ELAP, LFP and LIP. Many family farms and ranches use their forage to raise horses to augment their other agriculture endeavors. FSA recognizes that animals maintained in a commercial agriculture operation, add value to the operation and could be available for marketing from the farm. FSA regulations have been updated to include these animals as eligible livestock

Horses and other animals that are used or intended to be used for racing and wagering remain ineligible.

Ostriches are also now eligible for LFP and ELAP. FSA is making this change because ostriches satisfy more than 50% of their net energy requirement through the consumption of growing forage grasses and legumes and are therefore considered "grazing animals".

This change for ostriches is effective for the 2022 program year for both LFP and ELAP. ELAP requires a notice of loss to be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss is first apparent. Because this deadline may have passed for 2022, FSA is extending the deadline for filing notices of loss through March 31, 2023.

LIP and ELAP reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that died as a result of a qualifying natural disaster event or for loss of grazing acres, feed and forage. LFP provides benefits for grazing losses due to drought and eligible wildfires on federally managed lands.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance

NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. Basic NAP coverage is equivalent to the catastrophic level risk protection plan of insurance coverage, which is based on the amount of loss that exceeds 50% of expected production at 55% of the average market price for the crop.

Previously, to be eligible for NAP coverage, a producer had to submit an application (Form CCC-471) for NAP coverage on or before the application closing date. For 2022, if a producer has a *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification* (Form CCC-860) on file with FSA, it will serve as an application for basic coverage for all eligible crops having a 2022 application closing date and all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage will be waived for these producers.

FSA will notify all eligible producers who already have the CCC-860 certification form on file of their eligibility for NAP basic coverage for 2022. To potentially receive NAP

assistance, producers who suffered losses due to natural disasters in 2022 should file an acreage report as well as a notice of loss with the FSA at their local Service Center.

Producers who are interested in obtaining NAP coverage for 2023 and subsequent years should also contact their local FSA county office for information on eligibility, coverage options and applying for coverage.

Reporting Losses

Producers impacted by a natural disaster should report losses and damages and file an application with their [FSA county office](#). Timelines for reporting losses and applying for payments differ by program.

For LIP and ELAP, producers will need to file a Notice of Loss for livestock and grazing or feed losses within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days. For LFP, producers must provide a completed application for payment and required supporting documentation to their FSA office within 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the grazing loss occurred.

For NAP, producers should contact their local FSA office for guidelines on submitting a notice of loss and filing an acreage certification.

More Information

The updates to these programs build on other Biden-Harris administration efforts to improve disaster assistance programs, including additional flexibility in obtaining Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) basic coverage for socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource and veteran farmers and ranchers.

Previous enhancement to the ELAP provide program benefits to producers of fish raised for food and other aquaculture species as well as cover above normal expenses for transporting livestock to forage and grazing acres and transport feed to livestock impacted by qualifying drought. And earlier updates to the LIP payment rates better reflect the true market value of non-adult beef, beefalo, bison and dairy animals.

Yesterday, FSA announced it would begin accepting applications for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase Two and the new Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) on Jan. 23, 2023, through June 2, 2023. ERP Phase Two is designed to fill gaps in the delivery of program benefits not covered in ERP Phase One and improves equity in program delivery to underserved producers. PARP will help address gaps in previous pandemic assistance, which was targeted at price loss or lack of market access, rather than overall revenue losses. Learn more in the [Jan. 9, 2023 news release](#).

Additional Resources

On [farmers.gov](#), the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance](#) fact sheet, and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, contact the local [USDA Service Center](#).

Rolling Out Revenue Based Disaster and Pandemic Assistance Programs

Today, agricultural producers can begin to apply for two new important programs for revenue losses, from 2020 and 2021 natural disasters or the COVID-19 pandemic. Both programs equitably fill gaps in earlier assistance.



First, you may be eligible for assistance through the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\)](#) Phase Two if you experienced revenue losses from eligible natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. ERP Phase Two is for producers who didn't receive assistance from ERP Phase One.

You may also be eligible for the [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program \(PARP\)](#) if you experienced revenue losses in calendar year 2020. PARP is addressing gaps in previous pandemic assistance, which was targeted at price loss or lack of market access, rather than overall revenue losses.

Applications for both new programs are due June 2, 2023, and you can apply for both programs during your same appointment with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Historically, FSA programs have been designed to make direct payments to producers based on a single disaster event or for a single commodity loss. For many of you, this may be the first revenue-based program that you've applied for with FSA.

Why revenue-based programs?

ERP Phase Two and PARP take a much more holistic approach to disaster assistance, ensuring that producers not just make it through a single growing season but have the financial stability to invest in the long-term well-being of their operations and employees.

In general, ERP Phase Two payments are based on the difference in allowable gross revenue between a benchmark year, representing a typical year of revenue for the producer and the disaster year – designed to target the remaining needs of producers impacted by qualifying natural disasters and avoid duplicative payments. ERP Phase Two revenue loss is based on tax years.

For PARP, an agricultural producer must have been in the business of farming during at least part of the 2020 calendar year and had a decrease in revenue for the 2020 calendar year, as compared to a typical year. PARP revenue loss is based on calendar years.

How to Apply

In preparation for enrollment, producers should gather supporting documentation including:

- Schedule F (Form 1040); and
- *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 for ERP and for calendar years 2018, 2019 and 2020 for PARP.

Producers should also have, or be prepared to have, the following forms on file for both ERP and PARP program participation:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet* (as applicable to the program participant);
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity;
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable); and

- Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*.
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, as certain existing permanent and ad-hoc disaster programs provide increased benefits or reduced fees and premiums.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Yes, FSA is stepping outside of the box.

FSA is a big proponent of agricultural producers having a say in the design, implementation and delivery of the programs that directly impact their livelihoods. We also believe that some of the most creative and useful ideas for program and process improvements come from the FSA employees who administer this assistance through our network of more than 2,100 county offices. We want to thank producers across the country, along with the entire FSA workforce, for not just thinking outside of the box but also providing their input to make sure that we can improve and enhance our programs and our approach to assistance to better and more efficiently serve all producers who need our help.

Please visit your local USDA Service Center for more information on ERP Phase Two, PARP and our full portfolio of conservation, prices support, safety-net, credit and disaster assistance programs.

USDA Announces Signup for Crop and Revenue Loss Assistance for Agricultural Producers



Signup begins January 23 for additional emergency relief from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the [Emergency Relief Program](#) (ERP) Phase Two.

To be eligible for Phase Two, producers must have suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event. Eligible crops include both traditional insurable commodities and specialty crops that are produced in the United States as part of a farming operation and are intended to be commercially marketed. This also includes losses of eligible on-farm stored commodities. ERP Phase 2 applicants will use the following tax years when selecting allowable gross revenue:

- Benchmark years: 2018 and/or 2019; estimated for new producers with no 2018 or 2019 revenue or adjusted if the benchmark years are not representative of the disaster year due to a change in operation size.
- Disaster years: 2020 and/or 2021. The allowable gross revenue for the specific disaster year will be based on the tax year applicable to that revenue (2020, 2021 or 2022).

The ERP tool assists producers in calculating allowable gross revenue, as well as adjusted revenue for the benchmark years 2018 and 2019, and allowable gross revenue for representative tax years 2020-2022 which represent disaster years 2020 and 2021. Once producers complete the allowable gross revenue entries, they are able to print forms FSA-521 and FSA-521A through this tool.

The ERP Phase 2 and PARP application period is open from January 23 through June 2 2023.

For more information on payment calculations, payment limitations or how to determine allowable gross revenue, please reference the [ERP Phase 2 fact sheet](#).

USDA Announces Signup for Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program

The Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) will assist eligible producers of agricultural commodities who experienced revenue decreases in calendar year 2020 compared to 2018 or 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. PARP will help address gaps in previous pandemic assistance, which was targeted at price loss or lack of market access, rather than overall revenue losses.

USDA's Farm Service Agency will accept PARP applications from January 23, 2023, through June 2, 2023.

Eligible and Ineligible Commodities

For PARP, eligible agricultural commodities include crops, aquaculture, livestock, livestock byproducts, or other animals or animal byproducts that are produced as part of a farming operation and are intended to be commercially marketed. This includes only commodities produced in the United States or those produced outside the United States by a producer located in the United States and marketed inside the United States.

The following commodities **are not eligible** for PARP:

- Wild free-roaming animals.
- Horses and other animals used or intended to be used for racing or wagering.
- Aquatic species that do not meet the definition of aquaculture.
- *Cannabis sativa L.* and any part of that plant that does not meet the definition of hemp.
- Timber.

Program Eligibility

PARP payments will be made on a whole-farm basis, not commodity-by-commodity. To be eligible for PARP, an agricultural producer must have been in the business of farming during at least part of the 2020 calendar year and must have experienced a 15 percent decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020, as compared to either:

- The 2018 or 2019 **calendar year**, *as elected by the producer*, if they received allowable gross revenue during the 2018 or 2019 **calendar years**, or
- The producer's expected 2020 calendar year allowable gross revenue, if the producer had no allowable gross revenue in 2018 or 2019.

PARP payments will be issued after the application period ends on June 2, 2023.

For more information on determining allowable gross revenue visit farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/parp or review the [PARP fact sheet](#).

More Information

To apply for PARP, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Issues Additional Pandemic Assistance Payments for Underserved Producers



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is currently making automatic Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) top-up payments to underserved farmers and ranchers. Payments will be based on the 2020 program certification on form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification.

Producers who have not previously certified to their status for the 2020 program year have until Feb. 10, 2023, to submit form CCC-860 to be eligible for the additional payments. Contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) for more information.

USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production



USDA is making available up to \$7.5 million for grants through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. [<link to release>](#)

USDA Announces Signup for 2023 Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds specialty crop producers of available assistance to help cover certain costs of complying with regulatory and market-driven food safety certification requirements. Applications for the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program for eligible 2022 costs are due by Jan. 31, 2023. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will accept applications for 2023 costs from Feb. 1, 2023, to Jan. 31, 2024.

FSA is making available up to \$200 million through the FSCSC program, which is part of USDA's broader effort to transform the food system to create a more level playing field for small-scale agricultural operations and a more balanced, equitable economy for everyone working in food and agriculture.

USDA first announced and opened this program for signup in 2022, delivering critical assistance for specialty crop operations, with an emphasis on equity in program delivery while building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions.

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 certification in

calendar years 2022 and 2023 for certifications issued on or after June 21, 2022. For each year, FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's eligible costs of obtaining or renewing their certification, as well as a portion of their related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must:

- Be a specialty crop operation.
- Meet the definition of a small business or very small business.
- Have paid eligible expenses related to certification.

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

- 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.

FSA calculates FSCSC payments for each category of eligible costs. FSA set a higher payment rate for underserved farmers and ranchers, which includes socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran producers who have a CCC-860 on file with FSA.

FSA will issue payments at the time of application approval for 2022 and after the application period ends for 2023. The 2023 application period opens Feb. 1, 2023, and closes Jan. 31, 2024. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Applying for Assistance

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the application, [FSA-888](#). The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Producers can visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find their local FSA office. Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to assist.

Producers can visit farmers.gov/food-safety for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

USDA Reminds Producers of Continuous Certification Option for Perennial Forage

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds agricultural producers with perennial forage crops of an option to report their acreage once, without having to report that acreage in subsequent years, as long as there are no applicable changes on the farm. Interested producers can select the continuous certification option after USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) certifies their acreage report.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses, including perennial crops like mixed forage, birdsfoot trefoil, chicory/radicchio, kochia (prostrata), lespedeza, perennial peanuts and perennial grass varieties. To access many

USDA programs, producers must file an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage.

The perennial crop continuous certification process requires a producer to initially complete an acreage report certifying the perennial crop acreage. The producer may select the continuous certification option any time after the crop is certified. Once the continuous certification option is selected, the certified acreage will roll forward annually and does not require additional action on the producer's part in subsequent years unless the acreage report changes.

Once a producer selects continuous certification, then continuous certification is applicable to all fields on the farm for the specific crop, crop type and intended use. If continuous certification is selected by any producers sharing in the crop, then the continuous certification is applicable to fields in which the producer has a share for the specific crop, crop type and intended use.

Producers can opt out of continuous certification at any time. The continuous certification will terminate automatically if a change in the farming operation occurs.

How to File a Report

To file a crop acreage report, producers need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

More Information

Producers can contact their local FSA office to see if their crops are eligible for continuous certification or to make an appointment. Producers can make an appointment to report acres by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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