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Dates to Remember

04/29/2024	Dairy Margin Coverage Application Deadline
05/13/2024	Deadline for Applying for an Emergency Loan Due to Flash Flooding and Excessive Rain from 07/01/2023 Onward.

Note from the State Executive Director

As I write this it is snowing steadily but all will change shortly and in three or four days it will be gone. Additionally, we are four days from a total eclipse passing over Vermont and on the verge of being inundated by tourists. A rare occurrence and it will be interesting to see how domestic livestock and wildlife react, if at all, to it going dark, for a few minutes.

We are on the cusp of starting field work, although it is very wet right now so that may be further off. The manure spreading ban in Vermont came to an end on April 1st. Though I imagine many fields are too saturated to go on.

Dairy farmers have until April 29th, to sign up for the DMC program this year. Payments will be backdated to January 1st.

We all wait with eager anticipation to see what this year will bring. As we move into the spring field rush, I wish all producers the very best season. Do not hesitate to check with your FSA county office for information on our programs.



Farmers.gov Local Dashboard Now Available for Producers in all 50 States



Farmers in all 50 states can now access county specific farming data and USDA resources all in one place via the new [farmers.gov local dashboard](https://farmers.gov/local-dashboard). Your farmers.gov local dashboard includes farming data and USDA resources including USDA news, commodity pricing, weather forecasts, historical climate data, past storm events, USDA service center locator and additional state resources for your state and county. The dashboard transforms complex data sets into easy-to-read charts and graphs to help you quickly find information that matters to you.

Making Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

To be effective for the current fiscal year, farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the fiscal year** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. A reconstitution is considered to be requested when all of the required signatures are on FSA-155 and all other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

- **Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate
- **Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding
- **DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract
- **Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

For questions on your farm reconstitution, contact your County USDA Service Center.

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.



Microloans can also help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

All Vermont Counties Eligible for Emergency Loans

All Vermont counties were declared a primary disaster county due to excessive rain and flash flooding that occurred from July 1st, 2023 and continuing. Under secretarial designation S5541, if you have operations in any primary or contiguous county, you are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans. **Applications under this disaster declaration are being accepted up until May 13, 2024.**

Emergency loans help you recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

You have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. You can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)



ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible losses include:

- **Livestock** - grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water and feed because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.
- **Honeybee** - loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.
- **Farm-Raised Fish** - death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

If you've suffered eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses during calendar year 2024, you must file a notice of loss and an application for payment by Jan. 30, 2025.

Keeping Livestock Inventory Records

Livestock inventory records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster, so remember to keep them updated.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can help you if you've suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP), you'll be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss 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. For the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP), you must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office no later than the annual program application deadline of January 30 following the program year in which the loss occurred and should maintain documentation and receipts.

You should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts.

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).