



Wisconsin Farm Service Agency - October 2023

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Dates to Remember

October 9, 2023: USDA Offices Closed for Columbus Day

November 1, 2023: Deadline to apply for the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#).

November 3, 2023: [Application deadline for EQIP and RCPP for fiscal year 2024 funding](#)

November 10, 2023: USDA Offices Closed for Veterans Day

November 15, 2023: Fall Acreage Reporting Deadline for fall mint and fall-seeded small grains

December 7-8, 2023: [NEW Wisconsin Water and Soil Health Conference](#)

USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs for Organic Certification

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that organic producers and handlers can apply for USDA funds to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic

certification through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP). Applications for eligible certification expenses paid between Oct. 1, 2022, and Sept. 30, 2023, are due Nov. 1, 2023.

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Producers can be reimbursed for expenses including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

For 2023, OCCSP will reimburse 75 percent of a certified operation's allowable certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 for each of the following categories or "scopes:"

- crops
- wild crops
- livestock
- processing/handling
- State organic program fees.

Organic farmers and ranchers may apply through an FSA county office or a participating state agency.

More Information To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit the [OCCSP webpage](#), visit usda.gov/organic, or contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

Wisconsin NRCS Announces EQIP and RCPP Sign Up for 2024 Funding

Farmers and forest landowners will want to plan ahead and sign up early for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation funding. Tyrone Larson, [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) State Conservationist in Wisconsin, announced farmers and landowners interested in [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) or [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) producer contracts need to apply by November 3, 2023 for funding in fiscal year 2024.

[Read More](#)

Loss Adjusters Needed

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is currently accepting resumes from individuals interested in providing contracted crop adjusting services throughout Wisconsin for the 2023-24 crop year.

Loss Adjusters perform crop loss and related program services as assigned by FSA. Duties associated with these services include:

- visiting farms to inspect damaged or destroyed crops
- appraising potential crop production
- determining and verifying the cause and time of loss
- determining farm-stored production
- visiting FSA offices and/or farms to perform inspections, reviews or other loss services.

As part of the contract process, Loss Adjusters must pass a required fingerprint background check.

Starting pay for new adjusters is \$15.75/hour. A pay raise to \$21.20/hour is contingent on satisfactory completion of a full certification on at least one crop. Mileage and per diem will be paid by FSA; however, contracted adjusters are expected to provide their own mode of transportation.

Persons interested in becoming a Loss Adjuster should submit a Letter of Interest and/or resume detailing their experience with agriculture, crop insurance, specialty crops and the duties listed above. Please email information to kara.klein@usda.gov or mail to the Wisconsin Farm Service Agency State Office, 8030 Excelsior Drive, Madison, WI 53717-2906. Selections for interviews will be based on work experience, agriculture background, availability and the need for loss adjusters in the area. Paid training will be provided after selection.

Resumes will be accepted on an ongoing basis; however, resumes received by October 13, 2023, will be given priority.

For more information, please contact Kara Klein at 608-662-4422 extension 114.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Current FSA Loan Interest Rates

Current loan rates as of October 1, 2023.

Farm Loan Interest Rates:

Farm Operating - Direct	5.250%
Farm Operating - Microloan	5.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.250%
Farm Ownership - Microloan	5.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	3.250%
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500%

Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	3.750%
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Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):

3-year FSFL	4.625%
5-year FSFL	4.375%
7-year FSFL	4.375%
10-year FSFL	4.125%
12-year FSFL	4.125%

Please visit the [Farm Loan Program](#) webpage for more information.

Dairy Margin Coverage Program Provides Critical Support for Dairy Operations

The August milk margin triggered the eighth consecutive payment for dairy producers who obtained [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) for the 2023 program year. August's income over feed margin is \$6.46 per hundredweight (cwt.) with projected DMC payments totaling \$120 million. To date, including the projected August payments, dairy producers have received more than \$1.2 billion in much needed economic support for 2023 and margin forecasts indicate the likelihood of more to come before the end of the calendar year.

DMC is a voluntary risk management program administered by USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

Additional Dairy Assistance

DMC complements other assistance available to dairy producers, including the [Milk Loss Program](#) (MLP) and the [Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program](#) (ODMAP).

MLP covers milk that was dumped or removed, without compensation, from the commercial milk market due to qualifying weather events and the consequences of those weather events that inhibited delivery or storage of milk (e.g., power outages, impassable roads, infrastructure losses, etc.) during calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

USDA recently announced a second round of payments for dairy producers through ODMAP, providing an additional \$5 million to help dairy producers with marketing costs to mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. FSA has already paid out \$15 million in the first round of payments for eligible producers, bringing total ODMAP payments to \$20 million.

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.

USDA Launches Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program to Support Agricultural Employers and Farmworkers

The Biden-Harris Administration has announced that agricultural employers can begin to apply for a pilot program designed to improve the resiliency of the food and agricultural supply chain by addressing workforce challenges farmers and ranchers face. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in coordination with other federal agencies, is announcing up to \$65 million in grants available for the Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP Program).

The program will help address workforce needs in agriculture, promote a safe and healthy work environment for farmworkers, and aims to support expansion of lawful migration pathways for workers, including for workers from Northern Central America, through the Department of Labor's seasonal H-2A visa program. The program makes good on a commitment made and announced as part of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection and is funded by President Biden's American Rescue Plan.

The FLSP Program seeks to advance the following Administration priorities:

- Address current workforce needs in agriculture: Based on stakeholder input, USDA identified that agricultural employers have experienced increased challenges finding an adequate supply of workers, which threatens our domestic capacity to produce a safe and robust food supply. This pilot program will help address these challenges by expanding the potential pool of workers, and enhancing employers' competitiveness by improving the quality of the jobs they offer.
- Reduce irregular migration, including from Northern Central America through the expansion of regular pathways: While U.S. agricultural operations seek additional workers, the Biden-Harris Administration has committed to promote the expansion of regular migration pathways, as part of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection. The FLSP offers an opportunity to support this commitment, with economic benefits for foreign workers and their families, and professional and economic development opportunities for communities that send their workers to participate in the H-2A program.
- Improve working conditions for farmworkers: A stable and resilient food and agricultural sector relies on attracting and retaining skilled agricultural workers, and strong working conditions are critical to achieve that goal. Through this pilot program, USDA will support efforts to improve working conditions for agricultural workers, both U.S. and H-2A workers. The pilot will help ensure that workers know their rights and the resources available for them and will promote fair and transparent recruitment practices.

Additional Information:

Eligibility for this competitive grant program is limited to domestic agricultural employers who 1) anticipate meeting all Department of Labor (DOL) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

regulatory requirements for the H-2A program, including demonstrated effort to effectively recruit U.S.-based workers and hire all willing, able, and qualified U.S. workers; and 2) commit to, and indicate capacity to fulfill all Baseline Requirements, as well as any selected (supplemental) commitments that entail additive worker benefits and protections. Eligible employers include fixed-site employers, joint-employers, agricultural associations, and H-2A labor contractors.

The maximum award amount is \$2,000,000 and the minimum amount is \$25,000 per grant agreement (including any sub-awardees). Award amounts will be determined based on the projected number of full-time equivalent (FTE) agricultural employees, desired award level, as well as the competitive nature of the application. Consistent with the H-2A requirements, applicants must demonstrate insufficient availability of a U.S.-based workforce. The grant window for each recipient is 24 months, allowing producers to use the grant over the course of two agricultural production seasons. **Applications for the FLSP program must be received on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 28, 2023.** More information about the application process can be found here: www.ams.usda.gov/flsp.

USDA Offers New Crop Insurance Program for Producers Using Controlled Environments

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing a new crop insurance program designed for agricultural producers who use controlled environments in their operations. The new Controlled Environment program from USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is specifically for plants grown in fully enclosed controlled environments and provides coverage against plant diseases subject to destruction orders. Available beginning in the 2024 crop year, the Controlled Environment program provides a risk management resource for urban, specialty crop, and organic producers who often use controlled environments as a major part of their operations. The first sales closing date is Dec. 1, 2023.

[Learn more.](#)

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