

# Alabama USDA April Newsletter

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Alabama USDA Newsletter - June 2023

Farm Service Agency | Natural Resources Conservation Service | Risk Management Agency



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## USDA Partners with FarmRaise to Offer Educational Tools and Resources to Promote Financial Access and Equity for Agricultural Producers

The U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) today unveiled a new, online Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Decision Tool and farm loan resources available to agricultural producers and cooperators who help producers access USDA disaster assistance, farm loans and other federal farm programs. The new LIP tool and the farm loan



informational video resources were developed in partnership with FarmRaise and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). These tools are now available at [www.farmraise.com/usda-fsa](http://www.farmraise.com/usda-fsa).

### Current FarmRaise Tools and Resources

[FarmRaise, Inc.](#) has created an online, [educational hub](#) -- called [Farm Service Agency 101](#) -- comprised of videos, and resources that enable cooperators and the agricultural producers they serve to learn about and access major FSA programs.

The newly launched LIP Decision Tool assists livestock producers who suffered losses from eligible adverse weather events and other causes of loss as well as cooperators who are helping disaster-impacted livestock producers navigate available federal disaster assistance programs. The optional decision tool gives producers guidance on what is needed to gather and submit required loss documentation, reducing the amount of time needed to complete applications and enabling FSA county office staff to deliver much-needed assistance faster. Using this tool, however, is not an application for benefits or a determination of eligibility.

Through use of the LIP tool, livestock producers can provide supporting documentation, inventory numbers, and loss numbers to FSA county offices. Doing so, in advance of the initial county office visit, will help FSA staff serve customers more effectively and efficiently. Producers will also need to complete an application for LIP assistance and, upon request, may be asked to provide additional supporting documentation.

[LIP](#) offers payments to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by qualifying adverse weather events. LIP also covers losses due to eligible diseases and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. This includes attacks by wolves and predatory birds.

In addition to the new LIP Decision Tool, the FarmRaise educational hub offers several, easily navigated farm loan programs how-to videos designed to introduce producers to FSA's many farm loan programs options and guide them through the application process.

More FSA program resources and tools will soon be added to the FarmRaise educational hub. Cooperators and agricultural producers are encouraged to visit the FarmRaise educational hub often to access all available resources.

#### **About the Partnership**

USDA cooperators are organizations on the frontlines of access and often are the first point of contact connecting farmers to USDA programs. The partnership between FarmRaise, Inc. and FSA, through a cooperative agreement, aims to improve producer participation and customer experience in USDA programs through education and technical assistance to young, beginning, and small-scale to mid-sized producers, producers with disabilities, and veterans.

By developing a digital educational hub that delivers free, user-friendly, producer and cooperator-tested resources USDA and FarmRaise, Inc. will help FSA expedite program delivery to agricultural producers. The hub offers how-to videos and visual aids that educate producers about FSA programs and prepares them for submitting applications for program participation.

#### **More Information**

For more information about FSA farm and farm loan programs, visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov) or contact your local USDA Service Center - [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator). To learn more about FarmRaise, visit [Farmraise.com](https://farmraise.com).

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## **Dairy Producers in Alabama Reminded to Enroll in 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage by April 29**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging dairy producers to enroll by April 29, 2024, for 2024 [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC), an important safety net program that helps offset milk and feed price differences. This year's DMC signup began Feb. 28, 2024, and payments, retroactive to January, began in March 2024. So far, DMC payments triggered in January and February of 2024 at margins of \$8.48 and \$9.44 respectively.



#### **2024 DMC Coverage and Premium Fees**

FSA revised DMC regulations to extend coverage for calendar year 2024, which is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2024, and to provide an adjustment to the production history for dairy operations with less than 5 million pounds of production. In previous years, smaller dairy operations could establish a supplemental production history and receive Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage.

For 2024, dairy producers can establish one adjusted base production history through DMC for each participating dairy operation to better reflect the operation's current production.

For 2024 DMC enrollment, dairy operations that established supplemental production history through Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage for coverage years 2021 through 2023, will combine the supplemental production history with established production history for one adjusted base production history.

For dairy operations enrolled in 2023 DMC under a multi-year lock-in contract, lock-in eligibility will be extended until Dec. 31, 2024. In addition, dairy operations enrolled in multi-year lock-in contracts are eligible for the discounted DMC premium rate during the 2024 coverage year. To confirm 2024 DMC lock-in coverage or opt out in favor of an annual contract for 2024, dairy operations having lock-in contracts must enroll during the 2024 DMC enrollment period.

DMC offers different levels of coverage, even an option that is free to producers, minus a \$100 administrative fee. The administrative fee is waived for dairy producers who are considered limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or a military veteran. To determine the appropriate level of DMC coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can use the [online dairy decision tool](#).

Congress passed a 2018 Farm Bill extension requiring these regulatory changes to the program. DMC is also authorized through calendar year 2024.

#### **DMC Payments**

DMC payments are calculated using updated feed and premium hay costs, making the program more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses. These updated feed calculations use 100% premium alfalfa hay.

### More Information

DMC is a voluntary risk management program providing 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. In 2023, DMC payments triggered in 11 months including two months, June and July, where the margin fell below the catastrophic level of \$4.00 per hundredweight, a first for DMC or its predecessor Margin Protection Program.

USDA also offers other risk management tools for dairy producers, including the [Dairy Revenue Protection \(DRP\)](#) plan that protects against a decline in milk revenue (yield and price) and the [Livestock Gross Margin \(LGM\)](#) plan, which provides protection against the loss of the market value of milk minus the feed costs. Both DRP and LGM livestock insurance policies are offered through the Risk Management Agency. Producers should contact their local [crop insurance agent](#) for more information.

For more information on DMC, visit the [DMC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).



Register for a free webinar series for military veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses on how to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prepare for a career in agriculture. This webinar series is designed to provide information about USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher programs and resources for the military community.

#### Each week we will cover different topics, including:

- ★ Tuesday, April 23, 2024: USDA Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison overview, Boots to Business, and Veteran Business Outreach Center
- ★ Tuesday, April 30, 2024: Veterans Administration loans, Rural Development loans
- ★ Tuesday, May 7, 2024: Urban Agriculture, USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher programs
- ★ Tuesday, May 14, 2024: Natural Resources Conservation Service programs
- ★ Tuesday, May 21, 2024: Farm Service Agency loans and programs, Risk Management Agency programs

All sessions will be held 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Eastern.  
Register at: [https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_phaQXT\\_m592FmrkfwDKMXA](https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_phaQXT_m592FmrkfwDKMXA) or scan the QR code.

You only need to register once for all five webinars. It's highly recommended to attend all five webinars.



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## NRCS Delivering Climate Solutions through the Inflation Reduction Act



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now a

The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) of 2022 represents the single largest investment in climate and clean energy solutions in American history. It provides \$19.5 billion from fiscal years 2023 to 2027 for climate smart agriculture through several of the conservation programs that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) implements. Last February, NRCS announced it was making \$850 million of those funds available in fiscal year 2023 for its

oversubscribed conservation programs – the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

NRCS is well on its way to implementing IRA in fiscal year 2023, and we're planning for 2024 and beyond. In past years, producer demand for conservation assistance through these programs has outpaced available funding. We're excited that many producers can now benefit from this additional funding, and we're preparing for the additional help they will need to implement these climate change mitigation practices.

**Locally, we're getting funding out to individual producers, and we're improving and streamlining programs to make it easier to sign up.**

- So far in fiscal year (FY) 2023, NRCS is ahead of historical rates in obligating financial assistance for conservation programs and has obligated more than 19,500 contracts, compared to an average of just over 12,000 at this same time over the last 4 years.
- Since announcing the availability of FY 2023 IRA funds in February, we have had over 10,000 applications for IRA in EQIP and CSP—and that number is growing every day. We're currently receiving an average of 29 IRA applications per hour for CSP and EQIP combined.

Producers need to know that NRCS accepts applications for our conservation programs year-round. And, no matter when they apply, their application will automatically carry over for consideration in future funding cycles. We encourage producers to apply now so that they can take advantage of this opportunity for additional funding over the next few years. To receive consideration for the current funding cycle in FY23, producers should apply by their [state's program ranking dates](#).

We expect to announce funding recommendations for ACEP soon. The national ranking date for ACEP closed on March 17, 2023, and we received over \$174 million in request for the \$65 million of available funding. And, as part of the ongoing effort to streamline our conservation programs, ensure that they are more convenient to utilize, and to help strengthen IRA implementation, we announced [improvements to ACEP](#) on May 9.

**We're getting funding out to partners.**

We are also getting funding out to partners through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, a partner-driven program that leverages partner resources to advance innovative projects that address issues such as climate change. On May 19, we announced that applications were being accepted through August 18, 2023, for RCPP Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). Projects selected under this funding opportunity may be awarded through either Farm Bill 2018 or IRA funding, however applications for RCPP climate-related projects will receive priority consideration for IRA funding.

These and many other efforts are continuing in 2023 and beyond. NRCS will continue to keep partners and producers informed about new funding opportunities, recruitment efforts, partnerships available, and plans for IRA implementation in the years ahead.

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## Guide Available for Underserved Farmers, Ranchers

A multi-agency guide for USDA assistance for underserved farmers and ranchers is now available. If you are a farmer or rancher and are a minority, woman, veteran, beginning, or limited resource producer, you can use this booklet to learn about assistance and targeted opportunities available to you. This includes programs offered through the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency. [Download the guide here](#). The guide is also available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese on [farmers.gov/translations](https://farmers.gov/translations).

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**CONTACT US:**

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[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

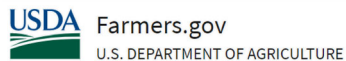
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