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| US Department of Agriculture |
| **Georgia State USDA Newsletter**  -  May 2023 |
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| [**Farm Service Agency**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffsa.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6B%2BRjmhBr%2B5YI8p1FSr1haoL2kuv3%2BCJG%2BYILkYeBxU%3D&reserved=0)**|**[**Natural Resources Conservation Service**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nrcs.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Fe%2FIl4dmnEZXMkpDZaSEqcDSg4T7GeaoNuM4oNk5y50%3D&reserved=0)**|**[**Risk Management Agency**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Frma.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KOC35g4FrL2amKcATzrQs4Nx3UNjSGGG%2BD72ktR1%2FaI%3D&reserved=0) |
| In This Issue:  * [USDA Welcomes Community Gardens to its People’s Garden Initiative](#link_4) * [USDA Offers Assistance to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)](#link_1) * [USDA Offers Livestock Disaster Program Flexibilities; Responds to Needs Expressed by Producers Hard-Hit by Natural Disasters](#link_3) * [USDA’s Organic Certification Cost Share Program Assists Organic Producers recover costs associated with organic certification.](#link_2) * [USDA Announces Grassland Conservation Reserve Program Signup for 2023](#link_5) * [Myth-Busting FSA’s New Revenue-Based Disaster and Pandemic Assistance Programs](#link_6) * [USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports](#link_10) * [USDA Updates Farm Loan Programs to Increase Equity](#link_11) * [Application Period Now Open for Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#link_12) * [USDA-NRCS in Georgia Announces Sign-up for Farmers Transitioning to Organic Production](#link_7) * [USDA Unveils Efforts to Improve Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#link_8) * [USDA Opens Full-Time, Entry-Level Soil Conservationist Positions in Georgia as Part of Broader Effort to Implement the Inflation Reduction Act](#link_9)  |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Welcomes Community Gardens to its People’s Garden Initiative  |  | | --- | | Peoples Garden- JoinThe U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) welcomes school gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural, suburban and urban areas to be recognized as a “People’s Garden.” 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.  To be part of the initiatives, gardens should be registered 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. New gardens will join the People’s Garden at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. and 17 other flagship gardens established in 2022.  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.  To learn more about People’s Garden or to register one, visit the People’s Garden webpage at [usda.gov/Peoples-Garden](https://www.usda.gov/peoples-garden?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).  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. |  |  | | --- | |  |  FSA ARTICLES  |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Offers Assistance to Help Organic Dairy Producers Cover Increased Costs with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)  |  | | --- | | dairy pasture flickrThe U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), announces assistance for dairy producers with the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP).  ODMAP is established to help mitigate market volatility, higher input and transportation costs, and unstable feed supply and prices that have created unique hardships in the organic dairy industry. Specifically, under the ODMAP, USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) is making $104 million available to organic dairy operations to assist with projected marketing costs in 2023, calculated using their marketing costs in 2022.  FSA will begin accepting applications for ODMAP on May 24, 2023. Eligible producers include certified organic dairy operations that produce milk from cows, goats and sheep.  **How ODMAP Works**  FSA is providing financial assistance for a producer’s projected marketing costs in 2023 based on their 2022 costs. ODMAP provides a one-time cost-share payment based on marketing costs on pounds of organic milk marketed in the 2022 calendar year.  ODMAP provides financial assistance that will immediately support certified organic dairy operations during 2023 keeping organic dairy operations sustainable until markets return to more normal conditions.  **How to Apply**  FSA is accepting applications from May 24 to July 27, 2023. To apply, producers should contact FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). To complete the ODMAP application, producers must certify to pounds of 2022 milk production, how documentation of their organic certification, and submit a completed application form.  Organic dairy operations are required to provide their USDA certification of organic status confirming operation as an organic dairy in 2023 and 2022 along with the certification of 2022 milk production in hundredweight.  ODMAP complements other assistance available to dairy producers, including Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and Supplemental DMC, with more than $300 million in benefits paid for the 2023 program year to date.  Learn more on the [FSA Dairy Programs webpage](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Ffarm-bill%2Ffarm-safety-net%2Fdairy-programs%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=a6FOpHIWJVvxcW1AXwg5u2kmyAoR9OY3YzXTb4TgXiM%3D&reserved=0).  **More Information**  To learn more about USDA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nrcs.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=PtDtsREsLCIJ9YzyDN9p3J9vXc12egORuWdDu%2Budmdg%3D&reserved=0). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and other programs by [logging into their farmers.gov account](https://www.farmers.gov/account?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). If you don’t have an account, [sign up today](https://www.farmers.gov/account?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).  USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). |  |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Offers Livestock Disaster Program Flexibilities; Responds to Needs Expressed by Producers Hard-Hit by Natural Disasters  |  | | --- | | Flat Bed Truck for FSFLUSDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) has provided additional flexibilities and further enhanced disaster recovery assistance provided by the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Fdisaster-assistance-program%2Femergency-assist-for-livestock-honey-bees-fish%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=jJad8seVViLPXohb%2BBRVrbDt%2BcP1hzV5vp5Qx1VTfys%3D&reserved=0), [Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Fdisaster-assistance-program%2Flivestock-indemnity%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=04HPTXg4T3J6GKgzaQFbVsK3efjNAhzeSV%2FbUPxDBTw%3D&reserved=0) and [Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Fdisaster-assistance-program%2Flivestock-forage%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=0JKaNelYJNrmS9sz9FMKA55%2FqAcz%2BIchQ1dTqFdeP48%3D&reserved=0) in response to needs expressed by livestock producers across the U.S. who have experienced significant feed, forage and animal losses from natural disasters. These livestock disaster program policy enhancements include an extended June 2, 2023, deadline to submit notices of loss and applications for payment for 2022 losses. The deadline extension and program flexibilities are available to eligible producers nationwide who incurred losses from a qualifying natural disaster event.  LIP and ELAP reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that died because of a qualifying natural disaster event or for loss of grazing acres, feed, and forage. LFP provides benefits for grazing losses due to a qualifying drought or wildfire. For fire, losses must occur on federally managed lands. ELAP provides benefits for grazing losses not covered under LFP.  **New Program Applications for 2022**  FSA is accepting 2022 LIP notices of loss and applications for payment through June 2, 2023, for all covered livestock that may have been eligible in 2022.  Producers who did not sign up for ELAP assistance for hauling livestock, forage and feedstuff hauling or other losses covered under ELAP in 2022 can also apply through June 2, 2023.  FSA will accept LFP applications for only newly eligible covered livestock through June 2, 2023.  All required supporting documentation must be received and on file in the county office by the established deadline.  **Revising 2022 Applications**  Producers who have a 2022 ELAP, LIP or LFP application on file with FSA as of the program deadline or were placed on an approved register, may revise their application with the newly updated eligible livestock no later than June 2, 2023.  **Filing a Notice of Loss for ELAP due to 2022 and 2023 Drought**  To support program access for counties that do not currently have a 365-day grazing season, FSA is waiving the 30-day timeframe for producers to submit a notice of loss for the 2023 ELAP program year due to qualifying drought in calendar years 2022 or 2023. Producers can now submit a notice of loss from the date the loss is apparent, as far back as Jan. 1, 2023, for 2022 eligible losses and 2023 eligible losses that occur before June 2, 2023.  For counties that have a 365-day grazing season, producers must have a qualifying drought in the 2023 calendar year to be eligible for 2023 livestock, water and feed hauling in 2023.  **More Information**  Livestock producers must provide evidence that livestock death was due to an eligible adverse weather event or loss condition. In addition, livestock producers should bring supporting evidence, including documentation of the number and kind of livestock that died, photographs or video records to document the loss, purchase records, veterinarian records, production records and other similar documents. Owners who sold injured livestock for a reduced price because the livestock were injured due to an adverse weather event, must provide verifiable evidence of the reduced sale of the livestock.  Producers can apply for ELAP, LFP and LIP benefits at their local FSA county office. For more information or to submit a notice of loss or an application for payment, please contact your [local FSA office](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) or visit [farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov/recover?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)/recover. |  |  | | --- | |  |  USDA’s Organic Certification Cost Share Program Assists Organic Producers recover costs associated with organic certification.  |  | | --- | | **:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organic certification, up to $750 per category, through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Foccsp%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=mkim928XHu7JIp4XXQ7SzV93Jbf1jkULaCzZXkG9TDI%3D&reserved=0) (OCCSP). USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers and handlers to apply for OCCSP by Oct. 31, 2023, for expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023.   As part of USDA’s broader effort to support organic producers and in response to stakeholder feedback, this year FSA increased the cost share to the maximum amount allowed by statute.    **Cost Share for 2023**  The cost share provides financial assistance for organic certification, and producers and handlers are eligible to receive 75% of the costs, up to $750, for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and state organic program fees (California only).  Producers have until Oct. 31, 2023, to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.     **How to Apply**  To apply, organic producers and handlers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). As part of completing the OCCSP application, 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 department of agriculture. Additional details can be found on the [OCCSP](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Foccsp%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121090943%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=mkim928XHu7JIp4XXQ7SzV93Jbf1jkULaCzZXkG9TDI%3D&reserved=0) webpage.       **Opportunity for State Departments of Agriculture**  FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA will post a synopsis of the funding opportunity on grants.gov and will electronically mail the notice of funding opportunity to all eligible state departments of agriculture.  If a state department of agriculture chooses to participate in OCCSP, both the state department of agriculture and FSA County Offices in that state will accept OCCSP applications and make payments to eligible certified operations. However, the producer or handler may only receive OCCSP assistance from either FSA or the participating state department of agriculture. |  |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Announces Grassland Conservation Reserve Program Signup for 2023 USDA announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin signing up for the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) starting today and running through May 26, 2023. Among CRP enrollment opportunities, Grassland CRP is a unique working lands program, allowing producers and landowners to continue grazing and haying practices while conserving grasslands and promoting plant and animal biodiversity as well as healthier soil.  More than 3.1 million acres were accepted through the 2022 Grassland CRP signup from agricultural producers and private landowners. That signup—the highest ever for the program—reflects the continued success and value of investments in voluntary, producer-led, working lands conservation programs. The current total participation in Grassland CRP is 6.3 million acres, which is part of the 23 million acres enrolled in CRP opportunities overall.  Since 2021, USDA’s FSA, which administers all CRP programs, has made several improvements to Grassland CRP to broaden the program’s reach, including:   * Creating two [National Priority Zones](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2FAssets%2FUSDA-FSA-Public%2Fusdafiles%2FConservation%2FPDF%2Fnational_grassland_crp_priority_zones_su203.pdf%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dR0oRN1AFXc4eGdCaJXlzcZh3SYrPMkc0LFAuP7Z0Z8%3D&reserved=0)to put focus on environmentally sensitive land such as that prone to wind erosion. * Enhancing offers with 10 additional ranking points to producers and landowners who are historically underserved, including beginning farmers and military veterans. * Leveraging the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Fconservation-programs%2Fconservation-reserve-enhancement%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=9Dh6qpBgenrLHxY1uSw7dKdKf%2BGCS47oBbDanm3SFFY%3D&reserved=0)(CREP) to engage historically underserved communities within Tribal Nations in the Great Plains.   **How to Sign Up for Grassland CRP**  Landowners and producers interested in Grassland CRP, or any other CRP enrollment option, should contact their local [USDA Service Center](https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) to learn more or to apply for the program before the deadlines.  Producers with expiring CRP acres can enroll in the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter into a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.  **Other CRP Signups**  Under [Continuous CRP](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2FAssets%2FUSDA-FSA-Public%2Fusdafiles%2FFactSheets%2Fcrp-continuous-enrollment-period-factsheet.pdf%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=HSo6MqaBfX2swQpN6gs4LBKetPti7jQpQLiwnPRjatI%3D&reserved=0), producers and landowners can enroll throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Continuous CRP includes a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping producers and landowners establish trees and permanent grasses, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands.  FSA offers several additional enrollment opportunities within Continuous CRP, including the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Also available is the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR30) Initiative, which was originally piloted in twelve states but has since been expanded nationwide, giving producers and landowners across the country the opportunity to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices.   |  | | --- | |  |  Myth-Busting FSA’s New Revenue-Based Disaster and Pandemic Assistance Programs In January, we announced two new programs designed to assist producers who experienced revenue losses from 2020 and 2021 natural disasters or the COVID-19 pandemic. These programs are revenue-based and feel a little different from our regular programs, but the goal is to better support farmers.  Both the [Emergency Relief Program (ERP)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Femergency-relief%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=BgHGBAC7XjMIsQfwaO9GHjo80ZcixVsG4yXZo%2FZBI5Q%3D&reserved=0) Phase Two and the [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP)](https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/parp?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) offer a holistic approach to disaster assistance and provide economic support for producers who bear the financial brunt of circumstances beyond their control.  With the rollout of any new program, there is a learning curve for producers and employees alike. ERP Phase Two and PARP are no exception. To encourage producer participation in these valuable programs, I’m going to do my best to debunk some myths and misconceptions surrounding ERP Phase Two and PARP.  With a June 2, 2023, deadline to apply for both programs, it’s important that we clear up confusion about how to apply, what documents are required for participation, insurance requirements and related misinformation making its way across the countryside.  **Now, let’s do some myth-busting.**  **Myth #1 – You need to submit a completed tax return to FSA to apply for ERP Phase Two or PARP.**  While these programs are based on revenue losses, you do not need a tax return, completed or otherwise, to apply for assistance. In fact, we have an [ERP Phase 2 tool](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fview.officeapps.live.com%2Fop%2Fview.aspx%3Fsrc%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%252FAssets%252FUSDA-FSA-Public%252Fusdafiles%252Femergency-relief-program%252Fdocs%252Ferp_tool_version_3.1.xlsm%253Futm_medium%253Demail%2526utm_source%253Dgovdelivery%26utm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery%26wdOrigin%3DBROWSELINK&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nCqe%2FRbOdNLowRXC27oBbijGpSeKi%2FsEdZANUzXOv80%3D&reserved=0) and [PARP tool](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fview.officeapps.live.com%2Fop%2Fview.aspx%3Fsrc%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%252FAssets%252FUSDA-FSA-Public%252Fusdafiles%252Ffarmers%252Fdocs%252Fpandemic_rev_program_tool_version_1_2_final.xlsm%253Futm_medium%253Demail%2526utm_source%253Dgovdelivery%26utm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery%26wdOrigin%3DBROWSELINK&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kYjIGGMUDaS8f22bjm6E6JXxduXoyKk5nm9AniT51oc%3D&reserved=0) that walk you through the process step by step.  We understand that you may have questions for your certified public accountant or tax preparer, who was likely been hard to reach prior to the April 18 Internal Revenue Service tax deadline but we encourage you to download the program decision tools and get started. You’ll probably discover that you already have on hand much of the information you need.  The following supporting materials will help you:   * 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.   The only reason you might have to provide your tax returns to FSA is in the event of a spot check or a request from the FSA County Committee.  **Myth #2 – You cannot receive an ERP Phase Two payment if you received a payment under Phase One.**  It’s possible that you can still receive ERP Phase Two benefits if you received an ERP Phase One payment. There is also a possibility that your Phase Two payment may be offset.  **Myth #3 – ERP Phase Two was intended to be an additional payment to those who received payment under Phase One.**  ERP Phase Two was never designed or intended to be an additional payment. Instead, it was intended to assist those producers who did not receive relief in Phase One.   |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LmZhcm1lcnMuZ292L2Nyb3AtYWNyZWFnZS1yZXBvcnRzP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzA0MjEuNzU1NjI5OTEifQ.m762RHHU8FOQjktZk-oNTNC_L-r8ylD5UZqS-aYomsc/s/1911530333/br/161170551733-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) after spring planting should make an appointment with their local County Farm Service Agency (FSA) before the applicable deadline.  An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.  **How to File a Report**  The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Georgia counties:  July 15, 2023                                  All other crops, Perennial Forage  July 31, 2023                                  Hemp  August 15, 2023                             Tomatoes (planted 7/1-8/15),  September 15, 2023                       Sweet Corn (planted 7/15-8/25)  October 15, 2023                            Cabbage (planted 7/16-9/30)  November 15, 2023                        Onions (planted 9/20-10/20)  Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHA6Ly93d3cuZmFybWVycy5nb3Yvc2VydmljZS1sb2NhdG9yP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzA0MjEuNzU1NjI5OTEifQ.zJENSYE3OAUALzzTc8VMcP2AL3zYOfskO0mWeIZdakg/s/1911530333/br/161170551733-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) are open to limited visitors. Contact your local county FSA office to set up an in-person or phone appointment.  To file a crop acreage report, you will 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.   **Acreage Reporting Details**  The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:   * If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed. * If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.   Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed in Exhibit 3 (Zone Map) and Exhibit 4 (NAP Dates) in handbook 1-NAP (Rev. 2) or 15 calendar days before the onset of grazing or harvesting of the crop. Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA’s Risk Management Agency.  |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Updates Farm Loan Programs to Increase Equity The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating its farm loan programs to better support current borrowers, including historically underserved producers. These improvements are part of USDA’s commitment to increase equity in all programs, including farm loans that provide important access to capital for covering operating expenses and purchasing land and equipment.  The 2018 Farm Bill authorized FSA to provide equitable relief to certain direct loan borrowers, who are non-compliant with program requirements due to good faith reliance on a material action of, advice of, or non-action from an FSA official. Previously, borrowers may have been required to immediately repay the loan or convert it to a non-program loan with higher interest rates, less favorable terms, and limited loan servicing.  Now, FSA has additional flexibilities to assist borrowers in such situations. If the agency provided incorrect guidance to an existing direct loan borrower, the agency may provide equitable relief to that borrower. FSA may assist the borrower by allowing the borrower to keep their loans at current rates or other terms received in association with the loan which was determined to be noncompliant or the borrower may receive other equitable relief for the loan as the Agency determines to be appropriate.  USDA encourages producers to reach out to their local loan officials to ensure they fully understand the wide range of loan and servicing options available that can assist them in starting, expanding or maintaining their operation.  **Additional Updates**  Equitable relief is one of several changes authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill that USDA has made to the direct and guaranteed loan programs. Other changes that were previously implemented include:   * Modifying the existing three-year farming experience requirement for Direct Farm Ownership loans to include additional items as acceptable experience. * Allowing socially disadvantaged and beginning farmer applicants to receive a guarantee equal to 95%, rather than the otherwise applicable 90% guarantee. * Expanding the definition of and providing additional benefits to veteran farmers. * Allowing borrowers who received restructuring with a write down to maintain eligibility for an Emergency loan. * Expanding the scope of eligible issues and persons covered under the agricultural Certified Mediation Program.   Additional information on these changes is available in the March 8, 2022 [rule on the Federal Register](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.federalregister.gov%2Fpublic-inspection%2F2022-04858%2Ffarm-loan-programs-direct-and-guaranteed-loan-changes-certified-mediation-program-and-guaranteed%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=qUy9KAuj%2F65lYOtW2NhRye6kG9um%2BajGrMeyHn3ai%2BY%3D&reserved=0).   **More Background**  FSA has taken other recent steps to increase equity in its programs. Last summer, USDA announced it was providing $67 million in competitive loans through its new Heirs’ Property Relending Program to help agricultural producers and landowners resolve heirs’ land ownership and succession issues. FSA also invested $4.7 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers, which contributed to a fourfold increase in participation by historically underserved producers in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2), a key pandemic assistance program, since April 2021.  Additionally, in January 2021, Secretary Vilsack announced a [temporary suspension of past-due debt collection and foreclosures](https://www.farmers.gov/blog/update-no-accelerating-or-foreclosing-on-any-direct-loans?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) for distressed direct loan borrowers due to the economic hardship imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.  Producers can explore available loan options using the [Farm Loan Discovery Tool on farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov/loans/farm-loan-discovery-tool?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) ([also available in Spanish](https://www.farmers.gov/spanish/loans/farm-loan-discovery-tool?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)) or by contacting their local [USDA Service Center](http://www.farmers.gov/service-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Due to the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. Producers can [contact their local Service Center](http://www.farmers.gov/service-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) to set up an in-person or phone appointment to discuss loan options.     |  | | --- | |  |  NRCS ARTICLES  |  | | --- | |  |  Application Period Now Open for Regional Conservation Partnership Program The application period is now open for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). RCPP leverages a voluntary approach to conservation that expands the reach of conservation efforts and climate-smart agriculture through public-private partnerships. Applications are due by August 18, 2023. Read the [press release](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3Lm5yY3MudXNkYS5nb3YvbmV3cy9iaWRlbi1oYXJyaXMtYWRtaW5pc3RyYXRpb24tYW5ub3VuY2VzLWF2YWlsYWJpbGl0eS1vZi01MDAtbWlsbGlvbi1mb3ItaW1wcm92ZWQtcmVnaW9uYWw_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5IiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDIzMDUyMy43NzE2MTg5MSJ9.LLRryxLq0IIhImlN5nnxZLfV_eISB-QZep6CNr5CLGQ/s/1911530333/br/203565512867-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) for more information. USDA-NRCS in Georgia Announces Sign-up for Farmers Transitioning to Organic Production This Georgia NRCS is conducting a state sign-up that follows a [recent national announcement](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nrcs.usda.gov%2Fnews%2Fnrcs-announces-75-million-to-assist-producers-transitioning-to-organic-as-part-of-usdas%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=NYruTPaWwvbj59rm%2B%2BXU9CKRs%2B3rp6SlLusra90myLk%3D&reserved=0) detailing the USDA’s multi-agency approach to assist producers beginning or in the process of transitioning to achieve organic certification. Only those producers are eligible to apply for this sign-up. While NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs year-round, those interested should apply by June 15, 2023, to be eligible for this funding batch. Learn more about the Organic Transition Initiative in Georgia by [clicking here](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nrcs.usda.gov%2Fconservation-basics%2Fconservation-by-state%2Fgeorgia%2Fnews%2Fusda-nrcs-in-georgia-announces-sign-up-for-0%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd5b9683f5794446f83ee08db5c6043b5%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638205341121247199%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FYxhPMIACJU5HsaS663%2FbAo6lQ2NW1BEgXmLTqkDfEo%3D&reserved=0).   |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Unveils Efforts to Improve Agricultural Conservation Easement Program NRCS is streamlining its Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) to better help agricultural producers and private landowners conserve wetlands, productive farmlands and at-risk grasslands. NRCS is rolling out several improvements to this important program in response to feedback from producers, landowners and conservation partners. Specifically, NRCS is updating its processes around appraisals, land surveys, as well as certifying eligible entities who help NRCS and producers enroll land into easements.[**Read More**](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3Lm5yY3MudXNkYS5nb3YvbmV3cy91c2RhLXVudmVpbHMtZWZmb3J0cy10by1zdHJlYW1saW5lLWFncmljdWx0dXJhbC1jb25zZXJ2YXRpb24tZWFzZW1lbnQtcHJvZ3JhbT91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkiLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjMwNTA5Ljc2NDc1MTcxIn0.xMeU3_gBpSKFuTKnDvxsGvj4LsZH3F26rLoRVxpWKOQ/s/1047342200/br/182929410462-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)   |  | | --- | |  |  USDA Opens Full-Time, Entry-Level Soil Conservationist Positions in Georgia as Part of Broader Effort to Implement the Inflation Reduction Act USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is quickly ramping up hiring of new team members to help implement $19.5 billion from the [Inflation Reduction Act](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3Lm5yY3MudXNkYS5nb3YvYWJvdXQvcHJpb3JpdGllcy9pbmZsYXRpb24tcmVkdWN0aW9uLWFjdD91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkiLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjMwNTA4Ljc2Mzg0ODAxIn0.sJugWVydd30CAwSkn8LmQy70azw5lrZMk0hbF6lzWio/s/1047342200/br/179440312722-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (IRA) for conservation programs, which is part of President Biden’s Investing in America agenda. For example, NRCS opened job announcements this week for soil conservationists in Georgia and elsewhere across the country. This batch of job openings is part of a broader effort by NRCS to help producers develop conservation plans and implement conservation practices, including critical climate-smart practices. [Learn More](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3Lm5yY3MudXNkYS5nb3YvbmV3cy91c2RhLW9wZW5zLWZ1bGwtdGltZS1lbnRyeS1sZXZlbC1zb2lsLWNvbnNlcnZhdGlvbmlzdC1wb3NpdGlvbnMtYWNyb3NzLXVzLWFzLXBhcnQtb2YtYnJvYWRlcj91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkiLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjMwNTA4Ljc2Mzg0ODAxIn0.nzImityCjrTX1LJZlSPOytjPmgwDs1r6DYyn0JKPozU/s/1047342200/br/179440312722-l?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) |
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| |  | | --- | |  |   Georgia State USDA Office 355 Hancock Avenue Athens, GA 30601  Phone: 706-546-2266 Fax: 855-409-5735   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **State Executive Director Farm Service Agency**  Arthur L. Tripp, Jr.: 706-546-2266 [arthur.tripp@usda.gov](mailto:arthur.tripp@usda.gov) | **State Conservationist Natural Resources Conservation Service**  Terrance O. Rudolph: 706-546-2272 [terrance.rudolph@usda.gov](mailto:terrance.rudolph@usda.gov) | | **Regional Office Director Risk Management Agency**  Davina Lee: 229-242-7235 [davina.lee@usda.gov](mailto:davina.lee@usda.gov) |  | |  |  | |  |  |      |  | | --- | |  |   USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of 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). |