
Thank a Farmer for Food, Fiber, Fuel, and Our Future

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By Jim Barber, New York State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency; Blake Glover, New York State Conservationist for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Alexander Sereno, Northeast Regional Office Director for USDA's Risk Management Agency

March 22 is National Ag Day, a time for us to thank farmers for feeding, sheltering and powering our nation. We also want to celebrate and recognize the pivotal role of producers in mitigating climate change through voluntary conservation efforts.

Climate change is happening, evidenced by persistent drought, frequent tornadoes and storms, and larger and more powerful wildfires. Our agricultural communities are on the frontlines. Now is the time for us to act, and New York producers are doing their part.

We're focused on providing producers tools to help mitigate climate change. As part of this, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken proactive steps to improve programs.

We bolstered the [Conservation Reserve Program](#), providing an incentive for climate-smart practices and investing in partnerships to better quantify the benefits of this program.

With our [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#), we launched a new cover crop initiative as well as new conservation incentive contract option, all with a goal to make available additional funds to help producers conserve natural resources.

And finally, we're enhancing [Federal crop insurance](#) to support conservation. In 2021 and 2022, we provided producers with a premium benefit for acres planted to cover crops.

You might be wondering, why so much emphasis on cover crops? Cover crops help soil sequester more carbon, a key tool for mitigating climate change; they prevent runoff, leading to cleaner water; and they boost production through improved soil health. But cover crops are just one tool, and producers in New York are also using Conservation Crop Rotation, Nutrient Management, and Prescribed Grazing practices, to name a few.

Our staff work one-on-one with producers to conserve natural resources, grow and improve their operations, and manage risk. This year's National Ag Day theme is "Growing a Climate for Tomorrow." We know from firsthand experience – farmers are doing this. On National Ag Day, and every day, we encourage you to thank a farmer or rancher for food, fiber, and fuel – and our future.

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