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Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. Department of Agriculture Leadership in Georgia Hosts USDA Workshop for Citrus Producers

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ATHENS, Ga., July 20, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Georgia State Executive Director, Arthur Tripp, recently hosted a workshop in Tifton for Georgia's citrus producers. During the roundtable discussion, Tripp, FSA staff and representatives from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provided producers with an in-depth overview of available federal farm resources including farm loans, risk protection, disaster assistance, and conservation programs.

"Citrus production is one of the fastest-growing agricultural industries in Georgia, and it's incredibly important for us build relationships with the producers in this emerging industry," said Tripp. "From disaster assistance to providing access to capital, we look forward to supporting these producers as they pursue their agricultural goals."

For citrus producers looking to maintain or establish organic operations, FSA's [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#) provides organic producers and handlers with financial assistance to reduce the cost of organic certification. OCCSP reimburses producers for 75% of certification costs for program year 2023, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope—crops, livestock, wild crops, handling, or processing. The deadline to submit an OCCSP application to FSA is Oct. 31, 2023 for the 2023 program year.

Tripp and his staff also discussed FSA's suite of disaster assistance programs, including the [Tree Assistance Program](#). The program provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters, including disease. To meet eligibility requirements, producers must report an excess of 15 percent crop mortality within 90 calendar days of the disaster event or the date when loss is apparent.

Additionally, FSA offers risk management protection through the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#). NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting. To determine if federal crop insurance is available for a particular crop, producers should contact an [approved insurance provider](#). If federal crop insurance coverage is not available, producers are encouraged to obtain NAP coverage.

FSA also offers loans to help producers get the financing they need to start, expand, or maintain their operation. For ownership and operating expenses, FSA offers a variety of [direct and guaranteed farm loans](#) to producers who are unable to secure commercial financing. Producers can use the [Loan Assistance Tool](#) on Farmers.gov to check their eligibility for FSA loans, discover loan types, learn about FSA Loan requirements, and walk through the easy-to-understand instructions when completing the forms.

Producers are encouraged to contact their [local USDA service center](#) and schedule a meeting to determine the programs and loans that best suit their operational goals. More program information can be found on farmers.gov, including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#) and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under 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.

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