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From the Desk of Matt Russell, State Executive Director

As you start to get into the field, remember to keep getting into your local FSA office for important opportunities. It never hurts to stop into check on programs. When farmers are busy in the field, such as planting and harvesting, our office staff are often a little less busy. The next six weeks are a great time to drop by your local office. You can also make an appointment or give them a call.

This is the final week for the CRP General Sign up. That closes on Friday March 29. The Dairy Margin Coverage program continues to offer 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. That sign up ends on April 29.

Now is also a good time to check with Iowa FSA on financing needs. Our county office teams are ready to explain our credit programs to help you navigate an ever-changing environment for Iowa farmers and ranchers.

Livestock producers should continue to follow the Drought Monitor as much of our state remains in [D3 drought](#). Our Livestock Forage Program could trigger in those effected counties if they remain in D3 when the Iowa grazing season opens on April 15. As with all our programs, staying in good communication with your local FSA office is a great way to stay informed about what programs could help support your operation.

In many parts of the state, we are hiring new agricultural leaders to join the Iowa FSA family. Our local offices are happy to talk with you about open positions and positions that might be coming open at Iowa FSA. Look for an announcement in the coming weeks about our County

Executive Director Training program. This is the pathway to become a County Executive Director.

If you have any questions regarding Iowa FSA, whether it's about programs or working for this great agency, your county office is a great place to start. Our team is ready to serve.

We continue to implement all of the programs in the current Farm Bill. However, you might also be hearing talk about a forthcoming new Farm Bill. Secretary Vilsack was in Iowa on Monday celebrating just one of the many priorities of the Biden-Harris Administration. He was at Clear Lake High School honoring their [Healthy Meals Incentive](#) success and the [amazing investments they are making to feed their students fresh, healthy foods direct from local farms](#). He and his wife Christie also spoke to the Clear Lake High School FFA Chapter. Secretary Vilsack continues to travel the country talking about the investments being made to help family farmers earn more revenue on their farms.

Here is a recording from Brownfield Ag News of his press briefing in Clear Lake on Monday that provides a lot of information including thoughts on the next [Farm Bill and the news this week about highly pathogenic avian influenza showing up in dairy cattle](#).



Applying for Beginning Farmer Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

For more information contact, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.



Urban Producers, Public Invited to Attend April Meeting of Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

Meeting will take place April 10, 1-3 p.m. ET

We're inviting urban producers, innovative producers, and other stakeholders to virtually attend a public meeting of the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production on April 10 from 2-4 p.m. Eastern.

Meeting details can be viewed in the [Federal Register Notice](#). Written comments can be submitted via UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov by April 24 at 11:59 p.m. The Committee will deliberate and vote on proposed recommendations and address public comments during the meeting. USDA will share the agenda between 24 to 48 hours prior to the meeting on the [Committee's webpage](#).

The Committee is managed by the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and was established through the 2018 Farm Bill and is part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture.

[Learn more or register.](#)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Federal Advisory Committee
for Urban Agriculture and
Innovative Production



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USDA Authorizes Conservation Reserve Program Graze and Hay Donations to Wildfire-Impacted Livestock Producers in Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the release of emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres nationwide, including grazing on CRP acres in Iowa, to livestock producers affected by the recent wildfires in Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas. [Learn more on how you can help livestock producers impacted by recent wildfires.](#)



Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has several loan programs to help you start or continue an agriculture production. Farm ownership and operating loans are available.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage

Dairy producers are now able to enroll for 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC), an important safety net program offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides producers with price support to help offset milk and feed price differences. This year's DMC signup began on Feb. 28, 2024, and ends April 29, 2024. For those who sign up for 2024 DMC coverage, payments may begin as soon as March 4, 2024, for any payments that triggered in January 2024.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has revised the regulations for DMC to allow eligible dairy operations to make a one-time adjustment to established production history. This adjustment will be accomplished by combining previously established supplemental production history with DMC production history for those dairy operations that participated in Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage during a prior coverage year. DMC has also been authorized through calendar year 2024. Congress passed a 2018 Farm Bill extension requiring these regulatory changes to the program.

DMC is a voluntary risk management program 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. In 2023, Dairy Margin Coverage 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 Dairy Margin Coverage or its predecessor Margin Protection Program.

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



Join Our Team

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hiring*

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OF OUR
STORY**

Farm Service Agency

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