



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Montana Newsletter - July 2024

[Farm Service Agency](#) | [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) | [Risk Management Agency](#)

## In This Issue:

- [Montana FSA Program Dates/Deadlines](#)
- [From the Desk of the SED: Maureen Wicks](#)
- [Farm Service Agency Seeking Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees](#)
- [FSA Outlines MAL and LDP Policy](#)
- [Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\) Losses](#)
- [USDA Awards \\$50 Million to Support Farmworkers and Agricultural Employers](#)
- [Disaster Assistance for 2024 Livestock Forage Losses in 11 Montana counties](#)
- [FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [Maintaining Good Credit History](#)
- [Start Planning Your Conservation Work Now!](#)
- [Survey Aims to Help USDA Understand Landowner Conservation Choices](#)
- [USDA Announces Improvements to Camelina Pilot Insurance Program](#)
- [USDA NASS Updates for Montana Producers](#)

---

## Montana FSA Program Dates/Deadlines

USDA in Montana reminds agricultural producers of important Farm Service Agency (FSA) program dates. Contact your local service center to apply and with any questions. Visit online at [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) and [fsa.usda.gov/mt](https://fsa.usda.gov/mt).

**July 15, 2024:** The Acreage Reporting Date for Spring Alfalfa Seed, all other spring seeded crops, Perennial Forage, Hemp, CRP acres and Grazing acreage is **15 days before the onset of harvest or grazing, or July 15, whichever is earlier.**

**July 4, 2024:** Office closure for Independence Day federal holiday.

**August 1, 2024:** Deadline to request a farm reconstitution or farm transfer for 2024.

**August 1, 2024:** Final Date to return nomination forms for the 2024 County Committee Election Cycle to the Count Offices or for nominations to be post marked.

**Sept. 2, 2024:** Office Closure for Labor Day federal holiday.

**Sept. 3, 2024:** NAP application closing date for fall and spring seeded Canola and all Value Loss Crops.

**September 30, 2024:** Acreage Reporting Date for Value-loss and controlled environment crops (except nursery).

**Sept. 30, 2024:** NAP application closing date for all annual & perennial grass & mixed forage, garlic, rye, speltz, triticale & wheat. Please note that the acreage reporting date for your NAP covered crops is the earlier of the established FSA acreage reporting date for the crop or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

**Oct. 14, 2024:** Office closure for Columbus Day federal holiday

**Oct. 31, 2024:** OCCSP signup is open now until October 31, 2023.

**\*Note for ELAP Notice of Loss-** If you are hauling feed/livestock/water due to a qualifying drought during the 2024 grazing period, a new NOL is required - even if you already submitted a NOL prior to the 2024 grazing period.

[Back to top](#)

---

## From the Desk of the SED: Maureen Wicks

his past month, the College of Agriculture at MSU hosted the Women in Agriculture round table where we were joined by the Under Secretary for the Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, Alexis Taylor. I was among the attendees and was eager to hear about the topics everyone brought to the table. What a wonderful thing where producers and educators can engage with the USDA to tackle some of the struggles we face here in Montana on a global scale.

[Back to top](#)

---

## Farm Service Agency Seeking Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees

Nominations are now being accepted for farmers and ranchers to serve on local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees. These committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2024.

Elections for committee members will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Customers can locate their LAA through a geographic information system locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) and determine if their LAA is up for election by contacting their local FSA office. Read the full news release here: [Farm Service Agency Seeking Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees \(usda.gov\)](#)

For more information about how to serve on your local County Committee, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) and/or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov)

[Back to top](#)

---

## FSA Outlines MAL and LDP Policy

Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey. MALs provide you with interim financing after harvest to help you meet cash flow needs without having to sell your commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar and extra-long staple cotton.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2024 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest. Requests for loans and LDPs shall be made on or before the final availability date for the respective commodities.

Commodity certificates are available to loan holders who have outstanding nonrecourse loans for wheat, upland cotton, rice, feed grains, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, large and small chickpeas), peanuts, wool, soybeans and designated minor oilseeds. These certificates can be purchased at the posted county price (or adjusted world price or national posted price) for the quantity of commodity under loan, and must be immediately exchanged for the collateral, satisfying the loan. MALs redeemed with commodity certificates are not subject to Adjusted Gross Income provisions.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, you must have form [CCC-633EZ, Page 1](#) on file at your local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested.

Marketing loan gains (MLGs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are no longer subject to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant rules.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions state that if your total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds \$900,000, then you're not eligible to receive an MLG or LDP. You must have a valid CCC-941 on file to earn a market gain of LDP. The AGI does not apply to MALs redeemed with commodity certificate exchange.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) and/or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov)

[Back to top](#)

---

## Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

NAP provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

To receive payment, you had to purchase NAP coverage for 2024 crops and file a notice of loss the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date. For hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap).

[Back to top](#)

---

## USDA Awards \$50 Million to Support Farmworkers and Agricultural Employers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is awarding \$50 million to 141 awardees in 40 states and Puerto Rico, through the Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP Program), reaching 177 unique agricultural operations and over 11,000 workers. The awards will help improve the resiliency of the U.S. food supply chain by addressing agriculture labor challenges and instability, strengthen protections for farmworkers, and expand legal pathways for labor migration. This program delivers on a commitment made as part of the [Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#) and furthers the Administration's commitment to a regional approach to migration in the hemisphere. Read the full news release here: [USDA Awards \\$50 Million to Support Farmworkers and Agricultural Employers](#)

[Back to top](#)

---

## Disaster Assistance for 2024 Livestock Forage Losses in 11 Montana counties

### 11 MT Counties Triggered; U.S. Drought Monitor Updated Weekly

Livestock producers in **11 Montana counties** are eligible to apply for **2024 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)** benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass, and forage sorghum. LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or leased land, or fire on federally managed land. County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought, or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire. The following **11 Montana counties** have triggered the 2024 LFP drought criteria: **Cascade, Glacier, Granite, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Meagher, Mineral, Pondera, Powell, Sanders and Teton**

Producers must complete a CCC-853 and provide required supporting documentation no later than January 30, 2025, for 2024 losses.

Producers in **Beaverhead, Broadwater, Cascade, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Glacier, Granite, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Meagher, Mineral, Missoula, Park, Pondera, Powell, Ravalli, Sanders and Teton** counties are eligible to apply for benefits under the **2024 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** for losses relating to feed transportation, livestock transportation and

water transportation costs. The deadline for filing a notice of loss under ELAP will be the same as the final date to submit an application for payment, which is 30 calendar days following the program year of which the loss occurred. Applications for payment and notices of loss must be completed no later than January 30, 2025, for 2024 losses.

For additional information about ELAP and LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the local USDA Service Center and/or visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov) and/or [fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://fsa.usda.gov/mt).

[Back to top](#)

---

## FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) can help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is \$600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about farm loans, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

[Back to top](#)

---

## Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans require applicants to have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, see if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information on your credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score:

- Make sure to pay bills on time
  - Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt
- Keep your credit card balances low
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#) or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

[Back to top](#)

---

## Start Planning Your Conservation Work Now!

Montana's short summer is the perfect time for NRCS to conduct the field inventories and planning needed to develop a conservation plan for farmers, ranchers, and private forestland managers looking to improve their natural resources. Because the timeframe without snow is unpredictable and because the NRCS application ranking period for funding opportunities usually happens in the fall, we encourage customers to visit their [local USDA Service Center](#) now.

The local NRCS staff can help producers figure out current problems, assess the condition of the land, and determine options for improvement all based on individual operational goals. A conservation plan is a customized collaboration between the planner and the customer. A final plan may include land use maps, soils information, inventory data, recommended practices, and other tools and resources to help landowners make management changes or install other conservation practices.

NRCS provides funding and technical assistance to help farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners implement conservation practices that improve their environmental and economic resilience. Conservation work focused on local outcomes with the support of local partners and land managers achieves meaningful conservation across a landscape. These opportunities are open to ag operations of any scale.

To learn more about locally focused funding opportunities, and others that may be available, customers should visit their local USDA Service Center.

NRCS accepts conservation program applications year-round. Start planning now. Additional information, including full project proposals, is available on the Montana NRCS website at [www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov). Click on What's Available in My County.

[Back to top](#)

---

## Survey Aims to Help USDA Understand Landowner Conservation Choices

Data Will Guide the Future of NRCS Conservation Programs

If you are a grazing or forest landowner or manager, you may be asked this summer to participate in a survey designed to help the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) improve the financial and technical services it offers grazing and forest landowners.

A joint project between NRCS and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the [Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey \(CPAMS\)](#) is aimed at understanding why people choose to use or not use different conservation practices.

“By responding to this survey, you also help document the ongoing stewardship of America’s agricultural producers and forest land managers,” said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby.

NASS began surveying more than 40,000 grazing and forest operations in June 2024. Respondents are encouraged to participate online but may also respond through the mail or by sending a fax. You can learn more about CPAMS by watching [this short video](#).

[Learn More about CPAMS](#)

[Back to top](#)

---

## USDA Announces Improvements to Camelina Pilot Insurance Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced improvements to the camelina pilot crop insurance program for the 2025 and succeeding crop years. USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) is expanding coverage options by allowing enterprise units and increasing maximum coverage levels. In addition, RMA is aligning planting dates with winter wheat for the Southern Plains.

“The Risk Management Agency is responding to producer needs by expanding enterprise unit coverage to camelina producers and offering higher levels of coverage to allow producers to better manage their risks,” said RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger.

The following expanded coverage options will take effect starting with the 2025 crop year:

- Expanding enterprise units to camelina
- Increasing the maximum allowable coverage level from 65% to 85%, in 5% increments
- Revising camelina planting dates in the Southern Plains region to match planting dates for winter wheat

Read the full news release here: [USDA Announces Improvements to Camelina Pilot Insurance Program | RMA](#)

[Back to top](#)

---

## USDA NASS Updates for Montana Producers

Montana Wheat and Barley Varieties survey were mailed in late May and data collection will continue into early July. This survey is funded and produced for Montana Wheat and Barley Committee.

NASS will also be visiting grain elevators and producers towards the end of the month collecting grain samples for the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee

Race, Ethnicity, Gender County Profiles will be released on June 28, 2024.

Thank you, producers, for taking the time to share your story. To find results of NASS surveys please visit [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Montana/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Montana/index.php)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Eric Sommer State Statistician, Montana at 1-800-392-3202.

[Back to top](#)

---



## Montana

USDA Farm Service Agency  
PO Box 670  
Bozeman, MT 59771

Phone: 406.587.6872  
Fax: 855.546.0264  
Web: [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt)

State Executive Director:  
MAUREEN WICKS

State Committee:  
RYAN LANKFORD  
CASEY BAILEY  
JAKE MERKEL  
TRACEY L. PETERSON  
LOLA RASK

**FSA Policy Reminders:** [2024 Annual Notification to FSA Customers](#)

---

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
10 East Babcock Street, Room 443  
Bozeman, MT 59715-4704  
Phone: 406-587-6811  
Fax: 855-510-7028  
Web: [nrcs.usda.gov/montana](http://nrcs.usda.gov/montana)



State Conservationist:  
TOM WATSON

---

USDA Risk Management Agency  
Billings Regional Office  
3490 Gabel Road, Suite 100  
Billings, MT 59102-7302  
Phone: 406-657-6447  
Fax: 406-657-6573  
Email: [rsomt@rma.usda.gov](mailto:rsomt@rma.usda.gov)  
Web: <https://www.rma.usda.gov/>

Regional Director:  
ERIC BASHORE

---

**Contact information for your local office, visit: [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.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).