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## 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).

**Sept. 1, 2023:** Application closing date for **2024** NAP coverage for fall and spring seeded Canola and all Value Loss Crops.

**Sept. 11, 2023:** USDA Announces Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations Impacted by 2020, 2021 and 2022 Disaster Events. *Program Signup Begins Sept. 11, 2023.* Read the full news release here: [USDA Announces Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations Impacted by 2020, 2021 and 2022 Disaster Events](#)

**Sept. 30, 2023:** Application closing date for **2024** NAP coverage for all perennial forage, fall and spring seeded garlic, rye, speltz, triticale, wheat, and mixed forage crops. *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. 16, 2023:** Signup period ends for Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations Impacted by 2020, 2021 and 2022 Disaster Events. Read the full news release here: [USDA Announces Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations Impacted](#)

[by 2020, 2021 and 2022 Disaster Events](#)

**Oct. 31, 2023:** OCCSP signup is open now until October 31, 2023. You can read the [News Release](#) to learn more about OCCSP.

**Oct. 31, 2023:** Inflation Reduction Act Assistance for Producers Who Experienced Discrimination in USDA Farm Loan Programs application period closes. Applications are due October 31, 2023. To ensure timely processing, there will be no extensions to the deadline. [Read more here.](#)

**Nov. 1:** Last day of 2023 CRP Summer/Fall Non-Emergency Grazing Period (prior approval required)

**Early November:** 2023 County Committee Election Ballots to be Mailed to Voters

**Nov 15:** 2023 Acreage Reporting Deadline for Apiculture, Fall Wheat (Hard Red Winter), and all other Fall Seeded Small Grains. Please note that this is the final date that FSA can accept late-filed 2022 reports for these crops.

**Dec. 4:** Voted FSA County Committee Election Ballots to be returned to the FSA County Office or post-marked.

**Dec. 31:** 2023 NAP Application for Coverage Deadline for Honey

ELAP notice of loss must be filed within **30 days** of when loss is apparent for **livestock and farm-raised fish** losses.

ELAP notice of loss must be filed within **15 days** of when loss is apparent for **honeybee** losses.

**\*Note for ELAP Notice of Loss-** If you are hauling feed/livestock/water due to a qualifying drought during the 2023 grazing period, a new NOL is required - even if you already submitted a NOL prior to the 2023 grazing period.

LIP notice of loss must be filed within **30 days** of when the loss is apparent.

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## From the Desk of the SED: Maureen Wicks

School is back in session and that means education and outreach are in full swing. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) prides itself on our outreach efforts and cooperating with our partner organizations when it comes to keeping our producers informed and educated on agriculture opportunities that are available to them through the FSA. Outreach efforts at colleges and universities are critical to educating our young people of the opportunities that are available to them as up and coming beginning farmers and ranchers, as well as recruitment opportunities for those individuals that are looking to serve their community through employment with the FSA. If you're interested in having some outreach opportunities in your local area, please reach out to your local FSA Service Center or the Montana FSA State Office.

I wish you all a happy and healthy school year!

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9/07/23: Montana Farm Service Agency State Office Staff, reading left to right: Leslie Rispens, Farm Program Director; Kristi Parker, Agricultural Program Specialist; Amanda Ness, Agricultural Program Specialist; Heather Hagestad, State Executive Director's Administrative Assistant; Edward Bullock, Administrative Officer; Angela Nelson, Administrative Assistant; Michelle Eder, Administrative Specialist; Stephen Glowacki, Administrative Assistant; Maureen Wicks, State Executive Director

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## Inflation Reduction Act Assistance for Producers Who Experienced Discrimination in USDA Farm Loan Programs

Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides \$2.2 billion in financial assistance for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs prior to January 1, 2021. Distribution of these funds is one step in the long march towards justice and an inclusive, equitable USDA. The program complements other assistance made possible through the IRA, including [assistance for distressed borrowers](#).

### Application Period Now Open

The application process is now open, and applications are due October 31. Applications for this program are **free**, and **do not require a lawyer**. Visit [www.22007apply.gov](http://www.22007apply.gov) or [download our fact sheet](#) for detailed information about application procedures.

### How the Process Will Work

The IRA specifies this assistance must be delivered to impacted producers by nongovernmental program administrators. In May, USDA signed contracts with three vendors who, together, constitute a national administrator and four regional hubs. The vendors are working together to solicit applications from eligible farmers, provide technical assistance, and make decisions about each case (following rules set by USDA).

The vendors include:

- Midtown Group, serving as the national administrator;
- Windsor Group, serving producers in the eastern regions of the U.S.; and
- Analytic Acquisitions, serving the western regions (Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho).
  - Contact Anyello Diaz for more information:  
3010 Santa Fe Ct., Suite 102 Missoula, MT 59808  
Analytic Acquisitions  
Work phone: 203-549-1013  
Email: [Anyello.Diaz@AnalyticAcquisitions.com](mailto:Anyello.Diaz@AnalyticAcquisitions.com)

The national administrator will manage all aspects of the application process including making determinations on applications, while the regional hubs will conduct outreach and technical assistance in addition to providing recommendations on applications.

The vendors are opening regional locations; they and USDA are working closely with community-based organizations across the country who are known and trusted by producer communities, including:

- [AgrAbility](#)
- [Farmer Veteran Coalition](#)
- [Farmers' Legal Action Group](#)
- [Federation of Southern Cooperatives](#)
- [Intertribal Agriculture Council](#)
- [Land Loss Prevention Project](#)
- [National Young Farmers Coalition](#)
- [Rural Coalition](#) - Rural Coalition is working with their member organizations on this program, including:
  - Grupo Amor de Homestead
  - Latino Farmers of the Southeast
  - [American Indian Mothers, Inc.](#)
  - [Compañeras Campesinas](#)
  - Cottage House Inc.
  - [Kansas Black Farmers Association](#)
  - [Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.](#)
  - [Latino Farmers and Ranchers International, Inc.](#)
  - [Rural Advancement of the National Sharecroppers Fund](#)
  - [Texas Coalition of Rural Landowners](#)

These organizations, will conduct outreach and technical assistance, ensuring potential applicants are informed about the program and have the opportunity to apply.

### **Timeline and How to Get Assistance**

The application process is now open. Applications for this program are **free**, and **do not require a lawyer**.

Visit [www.22007apply.gov](http://www.22007apply.gov) for detailed information about application procedures.

This online resource provides information about eligibility requirements, available assistance, and application forms. Further assistance can be obtained by calling the National Call Center at 1-800-721-0970 or emailing [info@22007apply.gov](mailto:info@22007apply.gov).

Also, regional offices have been set up around the country so that individuals can visit, get help, and apply in-person; help will also be available at mobile events. [Find regional resources](#).

### Timeline for Applications

Applications are due October 31, 2023. To ensure timely processing, there will be no extensions to the deadline. The specifics depend on the application submission method:

- U.S. or overnight mail must be postmarked by **October 31, 2023**
- E-Filing by 11:59 p.m. Pacific time **October 31, 2023**
- In person, at a regional office by 8 p.m. on **October 31, 2023**

USDA is aware of some lawyers and groups spreading misleading information about the discrimination assistance process, as well as requesting private and sensitive information. Read our [fact sheet about the program timeline](#) and how to protect yourself from scams.

USDA aims for applications to be processed by the end of 2023, so that payments can be distributed no later than early 2024. More information will be posted to this webpage as it becomes available.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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## Disaster Assistance for 2023 Livestock Forage Losses in 13 Montana counties

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

Livestock producers in **13 Montana counties** are eligible to apply for 2023 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 **13 Montana counties** have triggered the 2023 LFP drought criteria: **Blaine, Chouteau, Flathead, Glacier, Hill, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Pondera, Sanders, Teton, and Toole**. Producers must complete a CCC-853 and provide required supporting documentation no later than January 30, 2024, for 2023 losses.

Producers in these counties are also eligible to apply for benefits under the 2023 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 to file a Notice of Loss for livestock losses under ELAP is 30 days after the date

that the loss is apparent. Applications for payment must be completed no later than January 30, 2024, for 2023 losses.

For additional information about 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).

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## Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible losses include:

- **Livestock** - grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water, livestock and/or feed because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.
- **Honeybee** - loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.
- **Farm-Raised Fish** - death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

If you've suffered eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses during calendar year 2023, you must file:

1. A notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent (15 days for honeybee losses)
2. An application for payment by Jan. 30, 2024

For additional information about ELAP, contact your local USDA Service Center and/or visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

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## 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 2023 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](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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## Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre-authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful if you use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at [rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines](https://rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines). Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a "filter" on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three-month period, the preauthorized debit agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

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

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## 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.

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

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## NRCS Sets Conservation Program Funding Application Date for October 27, 2023

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Montana is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE). To be considered for funding in the current cycle, producers and landowners should apply by October 27, 2023.

"NRCS provides funding and technical assistance to help farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners implement conservation practices that improve their environmental and economic sustainability," said Tome Watson, NRCS State Conservationist for Montana. "Conservation work focused on local outcomes with support of local partners and land managers achieves meaningful conservation across a landscape. These opportunities are open to ag operations of any scale." [Read the press release for more information.](#)

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## NRCS and Pheasants Forever Announce Funding Opportunity Focused on Grassland Conservation

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering technical and financial assistance through the Big Game Habitat Improvement Project in partnership with Pheasants Forever to agricultural landowners in eight central Montana counties. While NRCS accepts applications for all programs year-round, producers and landowners should apply for this opportunity by the October 6, 2023, batching date to be considered for this funding cycle.

This Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Big Game Habitat Improvement Project addresses threats to big game migration corridors and winter ranges through outreach, technical assistance, and producer contracts. The robust group of thirteen partners works with producers to improve grazing operations, restore grassland habitats, and retain intact rangelands. Additional benefits include improved grazing management, improved plant productivity and health, making grasslands more resilient to drought, and restoring marginal cropland to perennial grasses. [Read the full announcement.](#)

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## USDA NASS Notifies Producers that the September Acreage and Production Survey has Been Mailed

Montana's farmers and rancher will have the opportunity to tell their story about this year's crop. September Acreage and Production Survey is the first look at this year's grain harvest. September Small Grain Summary is based on the responses received from the producer.

September is the third quarterly survey and is focused on small grain production. On-farm grain storage is also collected at this time. Your data is important and is handled accordingly. Data from this survey is only published at a state level.

We take every measure to ensure individual data is protected.

This is your voice! Your Opportunity to tell your story! The story of Montana Agriculture! We ask you to talk to fellow producers about this critical effort. Your answers to the survey help grow your farm's future, shape farm programs, and boost services for you, your community and your industry.

September Acreage and Production questionnaires were mailed out in late August and NASS will begin following up with producers the first part of September. Producers are highly encouraged to complete their forms online. New and improved this year, the online form is convenient and dynamic—you can access it on any electronic device.

For more information about the census, visit [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov) or call 1-888-424-7828.

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## RMA Announces Changes to Whole Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm Policies

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that it is improving crop insurance options for small and diversified farmers through improvements to the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) and Micro Farm insurance plans. These updates are part of USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) efforts to increase participation and access to crop insurance.

"The improvements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm policies are a direct response from feedback we've received from producers" said RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger. "These are two of the most comprehensive risk management plans available, and they are especially important to specialty crop, organic, urban, and direct-market producers."

### Improvements to WFRP for the 2024 policy year include:

- Allowing all eligible producers to qualify for 80% and 85% coverage levels.
- Allowing producers to purchase catastrophic coverage level policies for individual crops with WFRP.
- Expanding yield history to a 10-year maximum (from 4 years) for all crops not covered by another federal crop insurance policy.
- Making the policy more affordable for single commodity producers.
- Allowing producers to customize their coverage by choosing whether WFRP will consider other federal crop insurance policies as primary insurance when calculating premium and revenue to count during claim time.

### Improvements to Micro Farm for the 2024 policy year include:

- Moving the sales closing date to a less busy time of year to help agents dedicate time to marketing the program. This is important specifically for producers that are purchasing Micro Farm for the first time as it provides additional time for agents to assist growers with important risk management decisions.
- Allowing producers to purchase other Federal crop insurance with Micro Farm.
- Allowing vertically integrated entities to be eligible for Micro Farm.
- Making the Expanding Operations feature available with Micro Farm.

Read the full news released here: [RMA Announces Changes to Whole Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm Policies](#)

[RMA \(usda.gov\)](#)

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**FSA Policy Reminders:** [2021 Annual Notification to FSA Customers](#)

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State Conservationist:  
TOM WATSON

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Web: <https://www.rma.usda.gov/>

Regional Director:  
ERIC BASHORE

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

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