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Colorado USDA Newsletter - March 11, 2024

Farm Service Agency | Natural Resources Conservation Service | Risk Management Agency

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From Colorado FSA's State Executive Director, Kent Pepler

We are already into March and it seems like time is flying by. I look down the road and my number one priority is to make any structural changes to Colorado FSA to improve service to our producers and to create a better work environment for our employees.

My frustration grows as we continually fear for our funding almost week to week now. Agriculture asks for around 13 billion for disaster and we end up with 4 billion. We distribute the short dollar amount as equitable as possible and we then receive criticism for how we distributed the money. You all know the story about getting blood out of a turnip. We have a federal food policy that needs to be taken care of and a Farm Bill is needed so we can all plan for the future.

We are also in an election year. It can make political appointees, such as myself, a bit nervous. Gainful employment was always one of my goals; talking with the career

employees of Colorado's FSA, it is obvious to me that our folks have been through enough elections, that whatever happens you all can depend on top quality service from FSA folks. It is important employees, producers, and stakeholders keep working together to serve producers and consumers properly.

This is my third year as your SED and of course I learn something new every day. My favorite part of the job is working for all of you. You all are dedicated employees, very smart producers, and stakeholders that show a real interest. It is easy to get up and go to work.

Thanks to all.
- KP

Colorado USDA Webinar Series for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

USDA is an "Every Day, Every Way" department that touches the lives of every American, every day by supporting the agriculture sector, strengthening rural communities, promoting healthy eating, and helping to protect our natural resources. At the forefront of our mission is the support we provide to farmers to help them start—and continue—farming. If you have been wondering where to start at USDA, this is the place for you.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Risk Management Agency (RMA), Rural Development (RD), and other partner organizations have come together to create a webinar series for all. The Webinar series will take place virtually every third Wednesday of the Month from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

[Register for the March Meeting here!](#)

Our Agenda for the year is as follows (subject to change):

- March 20, Working with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Loans
- April 17, How to get Started with FSA and Why it's important
- May 15, RD financial assistance programs REAP Program and Value-Added Producer Grants
- June 19, Working with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) Crop & Livestock Insurance
- July 17, Technical and financial assistance to producers and forest landowners to address natural resource concerns (NRCS)
- August 21, Soil Health and how use Web Soil Survey
- September 18, Urban Ag
- October 16, What CSU has to offer!
- November 18, Colorado Department of Agriculture New Farmer & Rancher Resources

For more information for beginning farmers visit: [Beginning Farmers and Ranchers | Farmers.gov](#)

FSA to Host In-Person Informational Meetings for Producers

The Colorado Farm Service Agency will be conducting in-person producer informational meetings around the state to cover a variety of FSA topics. The topics range from Farm Programs to Farm Loans to USDA Electronic processes, and more. Below are the dates, times, locations, topics, and registration links for each event. Please register for the event that you would like to attend, however, registration is not required to attend.

Date	Time	Location	Topic	Registration Link
Thursday, March 28, 2024	9:00am-12:00pm	Lamar Community Bld: 610 S 6th Street, Lamar, CO, 81052	Farm Loans, and Payment Eligibility	FSA Informational Session: Lamar

Tuesday, April 2, 2024	9:30am-12:00pm	Pueblo Public Library, Rawlins: 100 E Abriendo Ave. Pueblo, CO 81004	Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Farm Loans, and Payment Eligibility	FSA Informational Session: Pueblo
Wednesday, April 3, 2024	9:00am-12:00pm	Colorado Parks and Wildlife: 4255 Sinton Road Colorado Springs, CO	Farm Loans, Livestock Programs, and Conservation Programs	FSA Informational Session: Colorado Springs
Thursday, April 4, 2024	9:00am-12:00pm	Grand Junction-TBD	Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and Livestock Programs	FSA Informational Session: Grand Junction
Thursday April 4, 2024	9:00am-12:00pm	Rio Grande Water Conservation District: 8805 Independence Way, Alamosa, CO 81101	Farm Loans, Payment Eligibility, and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program	FSA Informational Session: Alamosa
Thursday, April 18, 2024	9:00am-12:00pm	Moffat County Pavilion: 750 East 4th Street, Craig, CO 81625	Best Practices to apply for programs and General Farm Program overview	FSA Informational Session: Craig
Tuesday, April 23, 2024	9:00am-12:00pm	Hi-Country Auction: 15062 Hwy140 Hesperus, CO 81326	Acreage Reporting and Livestock Programs	FSA Informational Session: Durango
Tuesday, August 13, 2024	9:00am-12:00pm	Limon Community Bld: 477 D. Avenue, Limon, CO 80828	Livestock Programs, Conservation Programs, and USDA Electronic Processing for Producers	FSA Informational Session: Limon
Wednesday, August 14, 2023	9:00am-12:00pm	FSA Office: 2150 Centre Ave. Bldg. A Ste. 116, Fort Collins, CO 80526	Farm Loans, Farm Programs, and USDA Electronic Processing for Producers	FSA Informational Session: Fort Collins

We look forward to seeing you! For more information on programs and Colorado FSA Information, visit [Colorado State Office \(usda.gov\)](https://usda.gov); for more information on specific meetings, please contact the applicable [County FSA Office](#).

USDA FSA Announces Conservation Reserve Program General and Continuous Signups for 2024

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin signing up for the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) **starting March 4 and running through March 29, 2024**. The announcement was made earlier today by Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator of the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) at this year's National Pheasant Fest, in Sioux Falls, SD.

On Nov. 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024 (Pub. L. 118-22), which extended the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334), more commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill, through Sept. 30, 2024. This extension allows authorized programs, including CRP, to continue operating.

As one of the largest private lands conservation programs in the United States, CRP offers a range of conservation options to farmers, ranchers, and landowners. It has been an especially strong opportunity for farmers with less productive or marginal cropland, helping them re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and support wildlife habitat.

Producers and landowners enrolled about 926,000 acres in General CRP in 2023, bringing the total of enrolled acres in General CRP to 7.78 million. This, combined with all other acres in CRP through other enrollment opportunities, such as Grassland and Continuous CRP, bring the current total of enrolled acres to 24.8 million.

General CRP

General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Additionally, General CRP includes a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to help increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping producers and landowners establish trees and permanent grasses, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands.

General CRP is one of several ways agricultural producers and private landowners can participate in the program.

Other CRP Options

This past January FSA began accepting applications for the [Continuous CRP](#) signup can be enrolled in CRP at any time. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Under this enrollment, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length.

The USDA also offers financial assistance to producers and landowners enrolled in CRP to improve the health of their forests through the [Forest Management Incentive](#) (FMI), which can help participants with forest management practices, such as brush management and prescribed burning.

FSA will announce the dates for [Grassland CRP](#) signup in the near future.

Producers with expiring CRP acres can use the [Transition Incentives Program](#) (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.

How to Sign Up

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before their deadlines.

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. 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](#).

USDA RMA Expands Insurance Option for Nursery Growers to All States

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expanding crop insurance tailored for nursery producers to all counties in all states. [Nursery Value Select](#) (NVS) is a pilot program that enables nursery producers to select the dollar amount of coverage that best fits their risk management needs. Its expansion is part of USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) efforts to provide insurance options for a broader group of producers, including specialty crop producers.

"Risk Management Agency is excited to expand Nursery Value Select so nursery producers in all states have an opportunity to purchase nursery crop insurance," said RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger. "This insurance option meets a critical need of American nursery producers."

NVS provides similar but improved coverage to the longstanding Nursery Field Grown and Container (FG&C) program. NVS also covers field grown and containerized nursery plants and offers coverage levels between catastrophic and 75 percent.

Prior to this expansion, NVS was only available in select counties in these states: Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. Beginning with the 2025 crop year, NVS will now be available in all counties in all states. The sales closing date for the 2025 crop year is May 1, 2024, or September 1, 2024, as provided in the actuarial documents.

NVS was first available in the 2021 crop year, and producers insured more than \$460 million in liabilities in crop year 2023.

More Information

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov or by contacting your [RMA Regional Office](#).

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.

Interested in applying for the USDA Rural Development Rural Energy for America Program? Don't know where to start? Check out our two technical assistance providers for application assistance.

Apply Today for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)

USDA Rural Development's [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#) provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing. Applications are being accepted on a quarterly basis. The deadlines for this Fiscal Year are March 31, June 30, and September 30.

USDA Rural Development has two providers in Colorado available to offer hands-on assistance to agricultural producers and small business owners applying for REAP funding - the Colorado Department of Agriculture and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Inc. Assistance provided to potential applicants includes help with the application process, energy audits, preparing technical reports, registering with System Award Management (SAM), construction planning, and providing guidance in the completion of environmental reports. This technical assistance focuses on assisting

distressed or disadvantaged communities and ensuring applicants pursuing projects applying underutilized technologies or seeking grants under \$20,000 have success.

If you are interested in this technical assistance, contact either of the following:

Colorado Department of Agriculture - <https://bit.ly/CO-REAP-assistance> or email cda_aero@state.co.us

Tri State Generation and Transmission Association Inc - <https://www.tristate.coop/programs>, email onbill@tristategt.org

If you have additional questions on the USDA REAP program, please send an email to sm.co.reap@usda.gov.

Apply Today for the Value-Added Producer Grant Program

USDA Rural Development is currently accepting applications for the [Value-Added Producer Grant program](#). Paper Applications are due April 16, 2024. The program helps agricultural producers enter value-added activities to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income. Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, are eligible to apply. For more information in Colorado contact kisha.westcott@usda.gov.

Got questions about your application?

Join us for Office Hours, sign up by clicking the date below:

[March 13 at 10 AM](#)

[March 14 at 2 PM](#)

OR

[March 27 at 10 AM](#)

[March 28 at 2 PM](#)

Agricultural Producers Have Until March 15 to Enroll in USDA's Key Commodity Safety Net Programs for the 2024 Crop Year

Agricultural producers who have not yet enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2024 crop year have until March 15, 2024, to revise elections and sign contracts. Both safety net programs, delivered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provide vital income support to farmers who experience substantial declines in crop prices or revenues for the 2024 crop year. In Colorado, producers have completed 11,322 contracts to date, representing 0.6% (nationwide) 70.4% (statewide) of the more than 1,804,967 (nationwide) 16,114 (state) expected contracts.

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual, which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2024 are optional, producers must enroll, with a signed contract, each year. If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm, the contract will continue for 2024 unless an election change is made.

If producers do not submit their election revision by the March 15, 2024, deadline, the election remains the same as their 2023 election for eligible commodities on the farm. Also, producers who do not complete enrollment and sign their contract by the deadline will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2024 year and will not receive a payment if one is triggered. Farm owners can only enroll in these programs if they have a share interest in the commodity.

Producers are eligible to enroll farms with base acres for the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, cramble, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Crop Insurance Considerations

Producers are reminded that enrolling in ARC or PLC programs can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products offered by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). Producers who elect and enroll in PLC also have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider, but producers of covered commodities who elect ARC are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres.

Unlike SCO, RMA's Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by participating in ARC for the same crop, on the same acres. You may elect ECO regardless of your farm

program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan, or STAX, on their planted cotton acres.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact their [local USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and view other farm records data and customer information by logging into their farmers.gov account. If you don't have an account, sign up today.

Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?

Farmers and ranchers rely on crop insurance to protect themselves from disasters and unforeseen events, but not all crops are insurable through the USDA's Risk Management Agency. The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides producers another option to obtain coverage against disaster for these crops. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

Commercially produced crops and agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available are generally eligible for NAP. Eligible crops include those grown specifically for food, fiber, livestock consumption, biofuel or biobased products, or value loss crops such as aquaculture, Christmas trees, ornamental nursery, and others. Contact your local FSA office to see which crops are eligible in your state and county.

Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, earthquake and flood. These events must occur during the NAP policy coverage period, before or during harvest, and the disaster must directly affect the eligible crop. For guidance on causes of loss not listed, contact your local FSA county office.

Interested producers apply for NAP coverage using FSA form [CCC-471](#), "Application for Coverage," and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. These must be filed by the application closing date, which varies by crop. Contact your local FSA office to verify application closing dates and ensure coverage for eligible NAP crops.

At the time of application, each producer acknowledges they have received the [NAP Basic Provisions](#), which describes NAP requirements for coverage. NAP participants must report crop acreage shortly after planting and provide verifiable or reliable crop production records when required by FSA.

Producers are required to pay service fees which vary depending on the number of crops and number of counties your operation is located in. The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums also apply when producers elect higher levels of coverage with a maximum premium of \$15,750 per person or legal entity.

A producer's certification on Form CCC-860 *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification* may serve as an application for basic NAP coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived, in addition to a 50 percent premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected.

For more detailed information on NAP, download the [NAP Fact Sheet](#). To get started with NAP, we recommend you contact your [local USDA service center](#).

USDA FSA Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2024 Dairy Margin Coverage

Starting February 28, dairy producers will be 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 begins 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.

2024 DMC Coverage and Premium Fees

FSA has revised DMC regulations to extend coverage for calendar year 2024, which is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2024, and to provide an adjustment to the production history for dairy operations with less than 5 million pounds of production. In previous years, smaller dairy operations could establish a supplemental production history and receive Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage. For 2024, dairy producers can establish one adjusted base production history through DMC for each participating dairy operation to better reflect the operation's current production.

For 2024 DMC enrollment, dairy operations that established supplemental production history through Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage for coverage years 2021 through 2023, will combine the supplemental production history with established production history for one adjusted base production history.

For dairy operations enrolled in 2023 DMC under a multi-year lock-in contract, lock-in eligibility will be extended until Dec. 31, 2024. In addition, dairy operations enrolled in multi-year lock-in contracts are eligible for the discounted DMC premium rate during the 2024 coverage year. To confirm 2024 DMC lock-in coverage or opt out in favor of an annual contract for 2024, dairy operations having lock-in contracts must enroll during the 2024 DMC enrollment period.

DMC offers different levels of coverage, even an option that is free to producers, minus a \$100 administrative fee. The administrative fee is waived for dairy producers who are considered limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or a military veteran. To determine the appropriate level of DMC coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can use the [online dairy decision tool](#).

DMC Payments

DMC payments are calculated using updated feed and premium hay costs, making the program more reflective of actual dairy producer expenses. These updated feed calculations use 100% premium alfalfa hay.

More Information

USDA also offers other risk management tools for dairy producers, including the [Dairy Revenue Protection \(DRP\)](#) plan that protects against a decline in milk revenue (yield and price) and the [Livestock Gross Margin \(LGM\)](#) plan, which provides protection against the loss of the market value of milk minus the feed costs. Both DRP and LGM livestock insurance policies are offered through the Risk Management Agency. Producers should contact their local [crop insurance agent](#) for more information.

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

Three Key Ways NRCS Supports Double Wins for Wildlife and Working Lands Conservation

From the iconic sage grouse in the west to the spotted turtle in the east, NRCS supports farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in delivering win-win conservation solutions for wildlife and working lands.

1. NRCS empowers voluntary, locally-led efforts that benefit wildlife, working lands, and agricultural communities:

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are some of our nation's most dedicated land stewards. At NRCS, we work with these producers to benefit wildlife while keeping working farms, ranches, and private forestlands healthy and productive. Our [Working Lands for Wildlife \(WLFW\) effort](#) unites conservation partners, producers, and other landowners through the shared vision of sustainable food and fiber production, healthy wildlife populations, and thriving local communities.

WLFW is driven by an innovative partnership between NRCS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Through WLFW:

- NRCS supports landowners in implementing voluntary conservation practices that deliver targeted improvements for both key species and the working lands they inhabit. For example, [brush management](#) is a conservation practice used to reduce the threat of trees growing into and degrading grasslands. This benefits the operation through increased forage production for livestock, provides the conservation benefits of reduced wildfire and soil erosion risk, and improves wildlife habitat for grassland species.
- USFWS provides regulatory predictability under the Endangered Species Act. This gives producers the peace of mind that, no matter the legal status of species occurring on participating working lands, they can stay in production with an NRCS conservation plan in place.

[Last summer, we announced](#) a \$500 million investment in WLFW over the next five years, with an additional \$30 million to increase our science and coordination capacity through partnerships. Four new Frameworks for Conservation Action are in development for Western Migratory Big Game, Eastern Deciduous Forest, Eastern Aquatic Connectivity, and Southeastern Pine Ecosystems, and we're updating three existing Frameworks to guide conservation efforts focused on the [Sagebrush Biome](#), [Great Plains Grasslands](#), and [Northern Bobwhite, Grasslands, and Savannas](#). These updates will include integration of the Farm Service Agency's [Conservation Reserve Program](#). As a whole, these efforts will benefit wildlife, support agriculture and producers, and empower landscape-scale conservation through locally-led actions.

2. NRCS delivers resources to inform science-based, data-driven conservation:

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture's primary private lands conservation agency, NRCS delivers the data, technology, and standards that enable landowners and our many conservation partners to make decisions informed by objective, reliable science.

The [Conservation Effects Assessment Project \(CEAP\)](#) is an effort led by NRCS to evaluate and inform voluntary conservation across the nation's working lands. From a [decadal report on the outcomes of voluntary conservation in the sagebrush biome](#) to new data-driven tools for individual landowners, CEAP helps provide the science backing we need to:

- Identify how and where to invest conservation resources most strategically.
- Evaluate the outcomes of on-the-ground conservation actions.
- Leverage lessons learned from these findings to strengthen future conservation delivery.

Recent CEAP deliverables that support voluntary wildlife conservation include:

- [Conservation Outcomes Webinars](#) on [targeting conservation in sagebrush country](#), [rare turtle conservation in the Northeast](#), [reducing woody encroachment to conserve rangeland production](#), and [managing working lands for lesser prairie-chickens](#).
- [New research](#) quantifying the important role wetland easements play in wintering waterfowl conservation.
- [The Rangeland Brush Estimation Tool](#), which ranchers and other land managers may use to quickly estimate woody plant canopy cover and assess woody encroachment on western rangelands.

Our next webinar, scheduled for 2:00 p.m. eastern on April 25, will share new findings on the effects of cover crops on grassland birds. Additional details are available on the [Conservation Outcomes Webinar Series webpage](#).

I encourage you to visit the [CEAP Wildlife Assessments webpage](#) to access more than 130 publications and other reports, webinar recordings, and interactive, data-based tools to support voluntary wildlife conservation.

3. NRCS works one-on-one with agricultural producers in approximately 2,300 Service Centers nationwide:

From farmers and ranchers who've worked with us for generations to new producers just learning about NRCS, our conservationists are ready to serve. A great first step for anyone interested in exploring opportunities for their operation is to contact the NRCS office at their local USDA Service Center. You may find contact information for your local office by selecting your state and county in our [Service Center Locator](#).

We'll visit your land, walk that land with you, and provide technical expertise on potential conservation opportunities to meet your unique production and conservation goals. This service is free for every agricultural producer and landowner. NRCS staff may also share information about our conservation programs, like the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) and [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#), that deliver cost share for eligible producers to support implementation of our ever-growing list of conservation practices.

Let's work together to deliver win-win solutions that keep your working lands healthy, productive, and profitable while conserving natural resources and benefiting our nation's wildlife.

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