



Farm Bill Programs for You and Your Community

Traci Bruckner
Kim Preston
Center for Rural Affairs

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RURAL AFFAIRS
Lyons, NE 68038 Population 963



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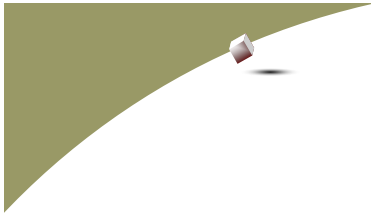
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Programs

CCPI—Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative

CSP—Conservation Stewardship Program

CRP—Conservation Reserve Program

EQIP—Environmental Quality Incentives Program

BFR IDA—Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account Program

RMAP—Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

VAPG—Value Added Producer Grants Program

FMPP—Farmers Market Promotion Program

CFP—Community Food Projects

BFRDP—Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

OREI—Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

Government Agencies

USDA—United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS—Natural Resource Conservation Service

FSA—Farm Service Agency



Introduction

Farm Bill Programs for You and Your Community is designed to provide farmers and ranchers information on farm bill programs that can help them get started in farming or ranching, establish high-value niche markets, implement conservation-based farming or ranching systems as well as transition to organic farming or ranching.

The programs included in this guide stem from the programs and opportunities we highlighted in our report *Giving a Beginner a Chance*. This report examined a series of farm bill recommendations designed to address the challenges facing beginning and mid-size farmers and ranchers in the hopes of educating members of Congress on their needs. We worked to make the case that if these public policy recommendations were to be included in the new farm bill, it could work to encourage a new generation of agriculturists and ensure the future vitality of rural communities. The report offered examples of how farmers and ranchers have responded to challenges present in 21st century agriculture and provide summaries discussing relevant issues taken from research previously published by others.

At the time of this writing, most of the programs included in this guide are still in the draft rulemaking stage with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Basically, that means some of the programs are not currently available but will be soon. As rules and regulations are finalized, we will be updating this guide to reflect the nitty gritty details of exactly how these programs work, how you apply and what will make your application successful. We will also be updating this guide to include a special “examples” section that will illustrate how beginning and small and mid-size family farmers and ranchers can “package” these programs together to assist them with their farming endeavors.

Additionally, when the proposed rules and regulations for these programs become available there is generally a comment period where the public can provide comments on those proposed rules and regulations to emphasize what is good and what is not so good. It is critical that farmers and ranchers add their voices to this process so these programs work effectively to serve their needs and the needs of their communities.

Once these programs become officially available, it is also critically important that as many farmers and ranchers as possible participate and use them to ensure we build a strong constituency for them. Moreover, the way we learn about how a program is being implemented is from farmers and ranchers going through the process. We rely heavily on farmers and ranchers relaying their experiences to us to enable us to work for any needed program changes. All of these efforts are critical components of working towards the next farm bill.

Special Note: *Some of the program information provided in this guide comes from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition’s (NSAC) Grassroots Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is a national alliance of farm, rural development, and conservation groups coming together to affect federal agriculture policy. NSAC member groups advance common positions to support small and mid-size family farms, protect natural resources, promote healthy rural communities, and provide nutritious and healthy food to consumers. By bringing grassroots perspectives to the table normally dominated by big business, NSAC levels the playing field and gives voice to small and mid-size family farmers and ranchers employing sustainable and organic methods, and to rural communities. The Center for Rural Affairs is one of the founding members of the NSAC. We are grateful for their efforts and dedication to small and mid-size family farmers and ranchers employing sustainable agriculture, and to rural communities.*



Conservation Programs

- *Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative*
Supports special regional or local conservation projects
- *Conservation Reserve Program Transition Option*
Return land to sustainable grazing or crop production
- *Conservation Stewardship Program*
Reward comprehensive conservation of resources on working lands
- *Environmental Quality Incentives Program—Organic Conversion*
Encourage transition to organic crops and livestock
- *Conservation Reserve Program*
Conservation and improve soil, water and wildlife resources



Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative

What Is the Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative?

The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) supports special local and regional conservation projects that involve groups of farmers or ranchers in partnership with USDA, farm, conservation and other non-governmental organizations, state and tribal agencies, and/or other entities. To implement the Initiative, the 2008 Farm Bill directs USDA to reserve 6 percent of the total funds or total acres, for each fiscal year (2009 through 2012) from the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#), the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program. This translates into over \$100 million a year being available for special cooperative conservation projects.

The CCPI ensures specific attention to state and local conservation priorities and concerns, with 90 percent of the funds and acres reserved for projects chosen by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) state conservationist, in consultation with the NRCS State Technical Committees. The USDA Secretary is directed to use the remaining 10 percent of the funding for multi-state CCPI projects selected through a national competitive process. Project partnership agreements with USDA can run for up to 5 years.

During the 2008 Farm Bill deliberations, the House version of the farm bill included ***a priority for projects that addressed conservation and rural community development opportunities simultaneously***. While that priority did not make it into the final version of the CCPI in the 2008 Farm Bill, there are still opportunities to promote projects that address both conservation and rural development goals through the State Technical Committees. Additionally, there are other farm bill programs that we believe will work well with the CCPI and can help promote such objectives. For example, the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program, which will support state programs that provide incentives to farmers and ranchers who allow public access on their land.

We will be developing practical ideas on how farmers and communities can work together to utilize the CCPI and other farm bill programs to maximize conservation and rural development opportunities. Stay tuned to our website for such information at www.cfra.org

What Has Changed?

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized USDA to use funding from all the farm bill conservation programs to implement a "Partnerships and Cooperation" initiative, the precursor to CCPI. Unfortunately, the 2002 program was discretionary and USDA chose not to implement it. In the 2008 Farm Bill, therefore, Congress made CCPI mandatory so that now USDA must implement the initiative.

While the 2002 Farm Bill's P&C initiative included all conservation programs as possible funding sources, the new CCPI limits the funding sources to the Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.

Key Aspects of the New CCPI

Partnership Purposes – The CCPI funds projects with the following purposes:

- Addressing conservation priorities on a local, state, multi-state or regional level;
- Encouraging producers to cooperate in meeting applicable federal, state and local regulatory requirements;
- Encouraging producers to cooperate in the installation and maintenance of conservation practices that affect multiple operations; or
- Promoting the development and demonstration of innovative conservation practices and methods for delivering conservation services, including those for specialty crop and organic producers.



Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative (cont.)

Eligible Applicants – Farmers and ranchers may enter into partnerships which include one or more of the following:

- States and local governments
- Indian tribes
- Producer associations
- Farmer cooperatives
- Institutions of higher education or
- Nongovernmental organizations

Required Information for Applications – A CCPI partnership agreement must include:

- Description of the conservation objectives to be achieved.
- Expected level of participation by agricultural producers in the area to be covered.
- Partnership to be developed.
- Amount of farm bill conservation funding requested.
- Amount of non-Federal contributions (in cash or in kind) that will be brought to the table.
- A plan for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on progress made towards achieving the objectives.

Priorities for Project Selection – NRCS will give priority to applications that

- Have a high percentage of agricultural producers involved.
- Significantly leverage non-Federal financial and technical resources and coordinate with other local, State, or Federal efforts.
- Deliver high percentages of applied conservation.
- Provide innovation in conservation methods and delivery, including outcome-based performance measures and methods.

Technical and Financial Assistance

NRCS is directed to provide appropriate technical and financial assistance to producers participating in the project in an amount determined to be necessary to achieve the project objectives.

NRCS will ensure that basic rules for conservation programs apply, such as rules governing appeals, payment limitations, and conservation compliance. Beyond those basic rules, special partnership projects may apply for, and NRCS may approve, adjustments to the CSP, EQIP, or WHIP program practices, specifications or payment rates to:

- Better reflect unique local circumstances and purposes; and
- Provide preferential enrollment to producers who are eligible for the applicable program and who are participating in a CCPI partnership project.

CCPI projects may include funding and programmatic aspects from multiple eligible programs, for instance, CSP and WHIP or EQIP and CSP. It is also possible in a given location that a CCPI special project might dovetail with a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) or Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) project, such that the land retirement aspect of a project comes via the CREP or WREP and the working lands aspect of the project comes through the CCPI.



Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative (cont.)

Status of the Initiative

The first Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative was released on Tuesday, March 10th and proposals were due on April 23rd. This RFP only included the use of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. The next RFP will also include the Conservation Stewardship Program as a source for CCPI projects. They wanted to get the 2009 RFP out the door and the CSP rule wasn't finalized yet so they moved forward without that for this first year.

State NRCS offices and the State Technical Committees will have a major role to play in developing requests for proposals and a process for evaluating proposals and making awards.

Example of a CCPI Special Project

The Statement of the Managers in the 2008 Farm Bill Conference Report provided the following example of a possible CCPI partnership project:

A cannery has closed and, without a cannery, nearby orchards are going out of business. A local watershed council joins with partners such as a state university, a wildlife organization and an organic growers' cooperative. They develop a project proposal to improve water quality and wildlife habitat by working with interested local producers to transition their orchards to organic grass-based cattle operations. The project assigns various tasks to the organizational partners. The watershed council takes the lead in submitting a CCPI application to the NRCS State Conservationist to designate \$10,000,000 in EQIP funds and \$250,000 in WHIP funds to the project. The State Conservationist approves the project and sets aside the approved funding for producers participating in the project. Producers participating in the project and meeting program qualifications apply for and are enrolled in EQIP and WHIP without having to go through individual program ranking processes.

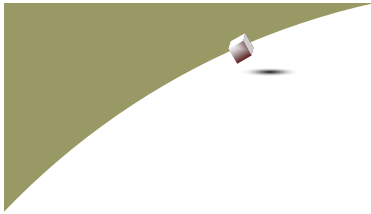
USDA Contact Information

The USDA website for the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative is <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ccpi/>.

Access your state NRCS office here: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/organization/regions.html#state>

A new National Program Manager for CCPI has not yet been named. Information about this will be posted on the web-version of the guide as it is made available. The current National Program Manager is Gus Jordan, gus.jordan@usda.gov, 202-690-2621.

[1] For purposes of estimating the value of CCPI funding each year, we have approximated and monetized the value of the CSP acreage reserved for CCPI projects, and then combined that sum with the EQIP and WHIP dollars that will be available. Also note that CCPI funding is reserved for CCPI special projects for the first 6 months of each fiscal year. If there are insufficient partnership awards, and remaining funds will be returned to the general pool of dollars (or acres in the case of CSP) available for the underlying program.



Conservation Reserve Program Transition

What Is the Conservation Reserve Program Transition?

The Conservation Reserve Program Transition Option is designed to facilitate the transition of land to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers for the purpose of returning the land to production using sustainable grazing or crop production methods. The program is open to any current Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract holder/landowner when their contract is set to expire. The beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher cannot be related to the CRP contract holder/landowner.

How the Program Works:

For the Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher

One year before the contract is set to expire, the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is allowed to make conservation and land improvements and begin organic certification. The applicant must develop and implement an approved conservation plan for the land.

Applicants will be provided the opportunity and information for enrolling the land in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program to assist with implementing conservation practices and management systems or the Conservation Stewardship Program.

For the CRP Contract Holder/Landowner

When the CRP contract expires, the landowner/contract holder must sell or provide a long-term lease (with an option to purchase) of the land to the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher. The land owner/contract holder will receive two additional annual rental payments for selling or leasing the land to the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.

What Has changed?

The Farm Bill secured \$25 million over 10 years in mandatory funding for this new program that encourages owners of CRP land that is returning to production to rent or sell to beginning and minority farmers.

To encourage this transition, the CRP Transition will provide the contract holder two years of additional CRP payments for leasing or selling that land to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.

With thousands of acres set to come out of the CRP in the next few years, this provision can provide current contract holders/landowners the opportunity to receive two extra CRP payments while helping another farmer or rancher get a start in agriculture in a conservation based manner.

Status of the Program

Currently the Administration is drafting rules and regulations for this program. This information will be updated as details become available. Also, please keep in mind that they will be seeking public comment on those rules. This is your opportunity to help shape what the final program will look like. Please contact us if you would like to be notified of such opportunities.

Program Contact Information

Information about the CRP Transition Option will be posted on the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Program page: www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=landing.

Mike Linsenbigler, Deputy Director, Conservation and Environmental Division for Farm Programs
mike.linsenbigler@usda.gov, 202-720-5295.



Conservation Stewardship Program—CStP

What Is the Conservation Stewardship Program?

The new Conservation Stewardship Program (formerly the Conservation Security Program-CSP) is greatly improved in the 2008 Farm Bill. With increased funding and nationwide continuous sign up, any farmer will now be able to apply for the CSP. The new CSP streamlines and improves farmer access to the program.

CSP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is designed to bring a comprehensive approach to working lands conservation, protecting our natural resources for generations to come. CSP provides payment to farmers and ranchers to maintain and manage existing conservation practices and implement additional conservation activities on land in agricultural production. Under the terms and funding provided by the new farm bill, the program is slated to enroll nearly 13 million acres each year. CSP acreage eligible for enrollment will be allocated to each state based on the amount of agricultural land in that state relative to the national total.

How will the Program Work?

Eligibility—Eligible land includes all the acres of an agricultural operation under the effective control of a producer, regardless of whether or not it is contiguous, owned or rented, cropland, pasture or rangeland. All acres of the operation must be enrolled. Land currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve, Wetland Reserve, or Grassland Reserve Programs (CRP, WRP, or GRP) is ineligible. In addition, land that has not been cropped for four of the six years prior to 2008 but is then put under crop cultivation is *ineligible* for the CSP unless it was previously enrolled in the CRP; the land was managed under a long-term crop rotation; or is an incidental portion of the land.

Qualifying farmers and ranchers must: 1) meet the “stewardship threshold” (an NRCS standard set for improving the long-term sustainability of a natural resource) for one priority resource concern at the time of the contract; and 2) at a minimum, meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the contract period. Priority resource concerns include soil, water or air quality, soil and water conservation, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, energy conservation, and similar issues. Each watershed will have at least three, and no more than five priority resource concerns. Those local priorities will be determined by the state NRCS office in consultation with the State Technical Committee.

Contracts—Under the terms of the new CSP, all contracts are five years, with an option to renew it for an additional five year term, so long as the farmer or rancher has complied with the terms of the preceding contract and is willing to adopt additional conservation activities as part of the new contract. The farmer or rancher will work with their NRCS office to outline their existing conservation activities and new activities to their operation over the course of the contract.

The new CSP will use a ranking system to determine who will receive contracts. This will be based on how far farmers and ranchers address natural resource concerns, with a priority for more comprehensive efforts. The primary ranking factors are:

1. The extent of the baseline level of conservation on the ground at the time of enrollment;
2. The degree to which the proposed new conservation activities address the priority resources and improve conservation outcomes over baseline levels;
3. The total number of priority resource concerns that are addressed to the stewardship threshold level, out of the three to five designated for the producer's watershed;



Conservation Stewardship Program—CStP (continued)

4. The extent to which other natural resource concerns, non-priority resource concerns, are addressed to a level that will improve and conserve them by the end of the contract period; and
5. The extent to which the environmental benefits from the contract are provided at the least cost relative to other similarly beneficial contracts. (Note: the “least cost” provision rewards cost-effective conservation, but does not allow producers to improve their bids by accepting lower payments than would otherwise be available for their conservation activities.)

Payments—The new CSP greatly simplifies the payment process. “Base” payments of the old CSP are eliminated. The **payments under the new CSP will compensate the producer for:** improving, maintaining and actively managing conservation activities in place at the time of the application and adopting new conservation activities during the contract term.

Payment amounts will be determined by the following: costs incurred for planning, design, materials, installation, labor, management, maintenance or training; income forgone by the farmer or rancher; expected environmental benefits the conservation activities will provide (as determined by conservation measurement tools).

Supplemental payments will be available for farmers willing to adopt resource-conserving crop rotations: that include cover crops, forages, green manures, and the like. Also, on-farm research, demonstration, and pilot testing of alternative conservation activities can receive supplemental payments. Under special arrangements, farmers and ranchers can also be paid for costs incurred for participation in on-farm conservation research and demonstration projects and pilot testing of specific practices.

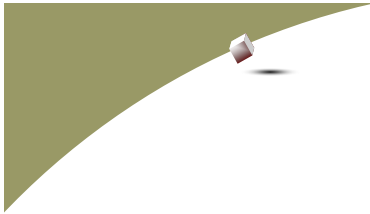
How Does the Program Work for Organic Farmers and Ranchers?

The new CSP includes specific references to ensure the program will work for, and benefit organic farming and ranching systems. USDA is required to provide appropriate outreach and technical assistance to organic farmers and ranchers so that they will participate in CSP. USDA is also required to create a transparent process that will allow organic farmers and ranchers to coordinate the organic certification process with their participation in the CSP, including organic plans and CSP conservation plans. The supplemental payment provision for diversified crop rotations and the contract ranking features which emphasize comprehensive system approaches to environmental and natural resource protection will support many organic farmers.

When Will I be Able to Sign-up?

Rather than a short sign-up period, under the new CSP, farmers can submit an application to enroll in CSP at any time during the year. At least once a year, NRCS will have a cut-off date at which point they will take all applications in hand at that point and will put them through the ranking process. Applications that are accepted will then immediately be eligible for technical assistance for finalizing CSP conservation plans and getting ready to implement any new conservation activities. CSP financial assistance payments can be expected after October 1st, the beginning of the federal fiscal year. Payments for maintaining and actively managing existing conservation activities begin immediately; those for newly implemented activities during the contract term will begin once implementation occurs.

Each subsequent year will see nearly 13 million acres admitted into the program. Farmers who do not initially rank high enough can resubmit for the next ranking date. In some cases, it may be beneficial to the producer to apply to the other major farm bill working lands conservation program—the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)—to receive payment for fixing a particular conservation problem, possibly improving the producer’s subsequent application to the CSP.



Conservation Stewardship Program—CStP (continued)

Status of the Program

USDA will be drafting rules and regulations that will ultimately govern how the program will operate on the ground. Those draft rules are open for public comment, so stay tuned for opportunities later this year to help us make sure they get it right.

As the CSP rule and guidance material becomes available, farmers and ranchers will want to watch for a new version of the CSP Applicant and Land Eligibility Self-Assessment form as well as the resource-specific indices, such as the Soil and Water Quality Assessment Tool or the Rangeland Health Assessment Tool, which will likely be used to help rank proposals and determine payment rates. This material should be available electronically from the national and state NRCS websites and from your local NRCS office.

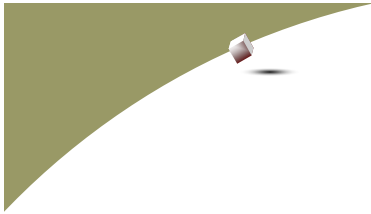
Program Contact Information

The USDA website for the Conservation Security Program: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/.

A new page for the Conservation Stewardship Program is under development. When it is ready, you will be able to access it from www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/

Access your state NRCS office here: www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/organization/regions.html#state

Dwayne Howard, CSP National Program Manager, Dwayne.Howard@wdc.usda.gov, 202-720-3524.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program— Organic Transition Incentive

What Is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Transition Incentive?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a conservation cost-share and incentives based program that assists farmers and ranchers with the installation of conservation-based practices and farming systems. The program is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

EQIP now includes an incentive provision for transition to organic production. This incentive is available for those who want to transition to organic for the first time, as well as for those who are already organic but want to transition additional acres or livestock to organic.

How Does the Organic Incentive Work?

To participate in this organic incentive provision, farmers or ranchers need to develop and implement an organic systems plan. There are several organizations that can provide organic systems technical assistance to help you with implementing an organic systems plan. Please see our resource guide in the back to find these organizations.

What Has Changed?

The 2008 Farm Bill establishes the new Organic Production and Transition Assistance as an option within EQIP. EQIP in general provides technical and financial assistance for the implementation of conservation practices. Financial assistance can cover up to 75 percent of the costs associated with planning, design, materials, equipment, installation, labor, management, training, or income forgone, except that beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are eligible for up to 90 percent (see below). EQIP operates on a continuous sign-up basis throughout the year, with applications ranked and contracts awarded at specific intervals.

Producers who agree to develop and carry out an organic system plan and pursue organic certification through USDA's National Organic Program can receive up to \$20,000 per year with payments not to exceed \$80,000 during any 6-year period for financial assistance in implementing conservation practices related to the transition to organic production.

The \$20,000 a year limit does not include any payments the producer may receive for technical assistance. Technical assistance can be provided directly by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), indirectly through a cooperative agreement with other agencies and nongovernmental organizations, or through a payment to the producer to use for an approved third-party technical assistance provider. However it is provided, USDA is required to make available an adequate and appropriate range of technical assistance for those involved with organic production.

Special provisions for **beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers** include:

- 10% of total funds set-aside to fund applications from these groups.
- Up to 90% cost-share or at least a 25% greater cost-share for these participants. (Note: the 90% cost-share is not a new provision but the 25% differential is as we found under the last farm bill some states weren't providing higher cost share for beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.)
- 30% advanced payments (Note: Traditionally under EQIP the practice has to be put in place and then the farmer or rancher is reimbursed. This will allow a beginner or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher to get a portion of the cost-share in advance of doing the work.)



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (continued)

How Do I Apply?

To apply for EQIP you need to inquire with your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office. We have included information in our resource guide in back for all the state NRCS offices and they can help guide you to your local office if you need that assistance.

EQIP is operated under continuous sign-up process so you may apply for the program at any time. They will periodically rank all applications they have received to that point.

Status of the Program

NRCS published the Interim Final Rule on January 15th, 2009, asking for comments by March 16th. This rule fell far short of our expectations and failed to provide greater direction to the state on how to implement the Organic Conversion Assistance.

However, this was fixed on May 5th, 2009 when Kathleen Merrigan, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, announced a special three-week sign-up for farmers and ranchers in the process of converting to organic farming to receive technical and financial assistance through this program.

This special sign-up sets-aside \$50 million out of the \$1 billion EQIP program for farms converting to organic production, farms expanding their organic production, or existing organic farms who desire conservation support to reach even higher levels of environmental performance. The sign-up period begins Monday, May 11, 2009 and goes through Friday, May 29.

This a very short window for this year as they have to get this money out the door or lose it. However, EQIP is a continuous sign-up and if you miss the cut off for this year, you can catch the next cycle, which will be right around the corner. Information on how this special sign-up works, we are including on the next page a special fact sheet specific to this 2009 sign-up.

Program Contact Information

The national program manager for EQIP is Edward Brzostek. You can reach him by calling (202) 720-1834 or by emailing him at edward.brzostek@wdc.usda.gov.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program— Organic Initiative 2009 Special Sign-up Info

Environmental Quality Incentives Program – Organic Initiative

The USDA recently announced a \$50 million set-aside for the new Organic Initiative under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

This three-week sign-up is for farmers in the process of converting to organic, producers expanding their organic production, or existing organic farms increasing their environmental performance even more.

Sign-up Period

Interested producers must hurry! The sign-up period begins **Monday, May 11 and goes through Friday, May 29.**

Eligible Conservation Practices and Payments

Farmers can receive compensation for six core conservation practices. Payment rates for practices are established by each state. Under this special Organic Initiative, these practices will be paid at higher rates than regular state EQIP contract rates.

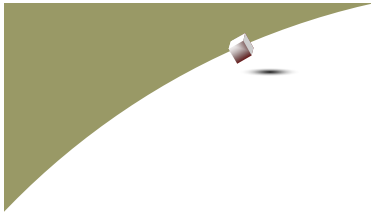
- Conservation Crop Rotation (34% higher payment rate) – growing several different crops in a planned sequence on the same field.
- Cover Cropping (46% higher payment rate) – crops such as grasses, legumes and forbs planted for seasonal cover to prevent erosion and build soil health.
- Integrated Pest Management (60% higher payment rate) - environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices.
- Nutrient Management (30% higher payment rate) – developing and implementing a plan to ensure proper application and utilization of soil amendments such as manure.
- Rotational Grazing (2% higher payment rate) – managing grazing herds by rotating them through a paddock systems rather than allowing them to graze an entire pasture continuously.
- Forage Harvest Management (2% higher payment rate) – properly managing the cutting and removal of forage crops to optimize quality and promote vigorous plant re-growth.

The more practices you are willing to implement, the higher you will rank. Those farmers applying to do at least three of the six core practices will rank the highest.

Conservation Activity Plan and Payment - Farmers who are transitioning to organic production are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to develop a conservation activity plan (CAP). This will provide financial assistance to pay for the conservation planning portion of the Organic Systems Plan required for organic certification. The CAP option does not apply to existing certified organic producers.

How to Apply

All farmers and ranchers wishing to apply must contact their local Natural Resource Conservation Service Office. Use the following link to find your local office <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> by clicking on your state and then your county.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program—Organic Initiative FY2009 Sign-up Info

You will need a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number if the expectation is that the final EQIP contract will imply greater than \$25,000. This can take at least at least 2-3 days. Though it is part of the screening for organic applicants (ie one can not proceed with finalizing and application without one), it may be difficult to know in advance if the ultimate contract is going to be more than \$25,000. So just in case you should register for a DUNS number at this link: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>

All farmers and ranchers will be required to fill out a “screening worksheet” that determines basic eligibility. In addition,

Transitioning farmers must:

- provide a “written self-certification”, which states your intent to transition to organic production;
- develop an Organic Systems Plan (OSP); and
- implement one or more of the six core practices and/or facilitating practices

Certified organic farmers must:

- provide a copy of their current Organic System Plan (OSP); and
- agree to implement conservation practices.

For Additional Assistance

Please contact our Farm Bill Helpline here at the Center with questions. You can reach the Helpline by calling (402) 687-2100 or by emailing tracib@cfra.org.

Please remember that this is a pilot program this first year and many NRCS offices have limited experience working with organic farmers. Please be patient with them and remember we all need to work together to make this program work effectively. And please, share your experience with us so that if there are some kinks and problems in the program we can work to fix them.

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service website has detailed information on how to apply for the program: Find that at the following link:

<http://www.mosesorganic.org/attachments/projects/eqipfunds.html>



Conservation Reserve Program

What Is the Conservation Reserve Program?

The primary purposes of the **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** are to conserve and improve the soil, water, and wildlife resources by temporarily removing land from agricultural production. Under the CRP general sign-up provision, USDA offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to farmers to establish long-term conserving cover, primarily grasses and trees, on land that has been in row crop production. USDA periodically holds general sign-ups, and land is bid into the program on a competitive basis, with ranking based on environmental benefits and cost.

The CRP also has a **continuous signup provision, the CCRP (sometimes referred to as the CRP buffer initiative)**, which provides payments to farmers to establish riparian buffers, grass waterways, contour grass strips, and other specific partial field conservation practices on land in agricultural production. Farmers and landowners may enroll land on which those partial field practices will be adopted at any time, hence the term “continuous” sign-up.

In addition, USDA may enter into a **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** agreement with a state, under which the state provides funding, in addition to the federal CRP funding, to pay farmers to address targeted conservation issues within the state.

All CRP contracts between USDA and agricultural landowners are for 10 to 15 years, with the longer agreements for land planted to trees. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the CRP, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) providing technical land eligibility determinations, conservation planning and practice implementation. State forestry agencies also provide some technical support.

What Has Changed?

The total CRP acreage cap was lowered from 39.2 million acres through 2009 as provided in the 2002 Farm Bill to 32 million acres for 2010 through 2012. There are no acreage limits imposed on the CCRP or the CREP program components within the overall 32 million acres. Based on predictions about renewal rates on general sign-up contracts that expire in the coming years, it is expected that there will be no constraints on CCRP or CREP sign-ups within the new 32 million acre cap.

Generally, no more than 25 percent of a county’s cropland can enroll in the CRP and WRP. The 2008 Farm Bill includes new authority for the USDA secretary to waive this cropland limit, if the county agrees, in order to enroll cropland in the CCRP or CREP. In addition, the Managers’ Statement for the Farm Bill directs USDA to update rental rates and use incentive payments for all CCRP practices to make the program more competitive and more economically viable for producers.

The Farm Bill modifies the land eligibility requirements by:

- Including highly erodible cropland land cropped in four out of six years prior to 2008.
- Providing that alfalfa and other multi-year grasses and legumes in a rotation practice, approved by USDA, are agricultural commodities making the land eligible for CRP enrollment.
- Clarifying that alfalfa grown in approved rotation practice can be considered an agricultural commodity and can be used to fulfill the requirement that eligible land be cropped in four out of six previous years.

The 2008 Farm Bill includes a new “local preference” criterion among the ranking criteria for bids to enroll in the CRP. This measure gives priority to an offer from a landowner or operator who is a resident of the county, or a contiguous county, provided that the land offered for enrollment has at least equivalent conservation benefits to land as competing offers from non-local landowners.



Conservation Reserve Program (cont.)

The 2008 Farm Bill amends provisions which allow certain commercial uses of CRP land with a reduction in the CRP rental payment:

- Managed harvesting, including harvesting of biomass, is permitted on CRP acreage subject to vegetation management and timing requirements.
- Routine grazing, or prescribed grazing for the control of invasive species, is permitted with appropriate vegetative management.
- Installation of wind turbines is permitted subject to vegetative and wildlife management requirements.
- Dryland crop production and grazing are allowed on CREP acreage where the CREP is intended to address declining water resources.

The Managers' Statement to the Farm Bill directs USDA to review the rules for routine grazing and to consult with NRCS State Technical Committees to develop site-specific management plans for grazing. The Managers also direct USDA to allow limited grazing of adjacent field buffers enrolled in the CRP while crop residue is gleaned from an adjacent field not enrolled in the CRP, without a reduction in the CRP rental payment for the field buffer.

The new bill also provides \$100 million in cost-share payments from fiscal years 2009-2012 for the thinning of trees, windbreaks, shelterbelts, and wildlife corridors to improve resources on the land.

The 2008 Farm Bill adds a new requirement that USDA conduct an annual survey of county average dryland and irrigated cash rental rates for pasture and cropland in all counties of a state with 20,000 acres or more of cropland or pastureland. USDA must post estimates of county rental rates from the survey on the USDA website.

The new Farm Bill also expands the purposes of the CRP to include issues raised by state, regional and national conservation initiatives, including State Wildlife Action Plans, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The 2008 bill also adds a new transition option for the transfer of CRP land from retiring farmers or ranchers to beginning farmers and ranchers and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. This **CRP transition** option is described in greater detail in a separate section of this Farm Bill Guide.

Note also that Section 15301 of Title XV of the Farm Bill amends the Internal Revenue Code Section 1402 (a)(1) to exclude CRP payments from self-employment income for purposes of the Self-Employment Contributions Act tax for persons who are receiving Social Security retirement or disability benefits, effective for CRP payments made after December 31, 2007.

Key Aspects of the CRP

1. CRP General Sign-Up

Farmers can apply for CRP general sign-up enrollment only during designated sign-up periods. USDA accepts land into the CRP based on a competitive bidding process. For information on upcoming general sign-ups, farmers should contact their local FSA office. No general sign-ups are expected in 2009.

Eligible Producers – To be eligible for CRP enrollment, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to close of the CRP sign-up period, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death.



Conservation Reserve Program (cont.)

- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right or redemption in accordance with state law.
- The circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

Eligible Land – To be eligible for placement in CRP, land must be either:

- Cropland (including field margins) that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity 4 of the previous 6 crop years from 2002 to 2007, and which is physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity; or
- Certain marginal pastureland that is enrolled in the Water Bank Program or suitable for use as a riparian buffer or for similar water quality purposes.

Ranking CRP Land Enrollment Offers – Offers for CRP contracts are ranked according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data for each of the EBI factors based on the relative environmental benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other offers and selections made from that ranking. FSA currently uses the following EBI factors to assess the environmental benefits for the land offered:

- Wildlife habitat benefits resulting from covers on contract acreage;
- Water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff, and leaching;
- On-farm benefits from reduced erosion;
- Benefits that will likely endure beyond the contract period;
- Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion; and
- Cost.

General CRP Contracts: CRP contracts generally require farmers to establish and maintain the conservation practices specified in the contract for 10 years. For conservation practices such as tree planting that may require more time, the contracts run for 15 years. **CRP Payments** – FSA provides CRP participants with annual rental payments, including certain incentive payments, and cost-share assistance:

- **Rental Payments:** FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent or cash-rent equivalent. The maximum CRP rental rate for each offer is calculated in advance of enrollment. Producers may offer land at that rate or offer a lower rental rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted
- **Maintenance Incentive Payments:** CRP annual rental payments may include an additional amount up to \$5 per acre per year as an incentive to perform certain maintenance obligations
- **Cost-share Assistance:** FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance cannot exceed 50 percent of the participants' costs in establishing approved practices.

2. Continuous CRP (CCRP) Sign-Up

Farmers may apply to their local FSA office for enrollment in the CCRP at any time. Offers that meet eligibility requirements are automatically accepted and are not subject to competitive bidding. The CCRP allows farmers to enroll partial fields, or occasionally whole fields, in conjunction with working agricultural land.

Eligible Producers and Land – Eligibility is the same as for regular CRP, except that land within an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-designated public wellhead area may also be eligible for enrollment on a continuous basis.



Conservation Reserve Program (cont.)

Eligible Practices – The CCRP pays farmers to implement conservation practices that improve the conservation performance of agricultural working land. Currently, these practices include:

- riparian buffers
- wildlife habitat buffers
- wetland buffers
- filter strips
- wetland restoration
- grass waterways
- shelterbelts
- living snow fences
- contour grass strips
- salt tolerant vegetation
- shallow water areas for wildlife

CCRP Payments – In addition to cost share assistance to establish practices and annual rental payments, FSA provides certain CCRP continuous sign-up participants with special incentives, including a bonus of up to 20 percent on rental rates for windbreaks, filter strips, grass waterways, and riparian buffers, a 10 percent rental rate bonus for land located in EPA-designated wellhead protection areas, and up-front sign-up bonus of \$100 per acre and 40 percent bonus on cost share assistance for some but not all eligible CCRP practices. It is possible FSA will extend the bonus payments to additional practices, in keeping with the Statement of the Managers of the 2008 Farm Bill.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) – In January 2008, USDA launched a new administrative initiative as a continuous CRP practice called State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE). Under SAFE, projects are developed to benefit threatened, endangered and other high-priority species. Unlike CREP (see below), the SAFE initiative does not require an agreement between USDA and a state but does generally involve state or tribal agencies and conservation groups working with USDA to develop projects. But like the CREP, SAFE projects are limited geographically. Farmers should contact their local FSA office to for information about SAFE projects in their locality. Farmers enroll land under SAFE project contracts with similar terms to CCRP contracts.

3. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The CREP is based on partnership agreements between the USDA and state or tribal governments and may also involve non-governmental organizations that provide funding or conservation services. CREP agreements address high-priority conservation issues of both local and national significance, such as impacts to water supplies or loss of critical habitat for threatened and endangered wildlife species or fish populations. Each CREP has its geographic limitations, acreage cap, and specified conservation practices. Generally farmers who meet the eligibility requirements of a particular CREP can enroll any time until the acreage requirements of the CREP have been met.

Eligible Land — CREP agreements are limited to specific geographic areas and to farmland where specific conservation practices are suitable to dealing with the conservation issues identified in the CRP. Farmers should contact their local county FSA office to determine if land in their state and county is involved in a CREP.



Conservation Reserve Program (cont.)

CREP Payments — Like regular CRP, CREP contracts are from 10 to 15 years. CREP participants receive the federal annual rental payment, maintenance incentive payment, and up to 50 percent cost-share. In addition, a CREP generally includes a sign-up incentive for participants to install specific practices. State and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations may also provide additional payments. For example, many states offer to pay for permanent easements on riparian or wetland buffers or other practices or environmentally sensitive land of specific relevance to the particular CREP project.

Status of the Program

USDA is currently drafting an Interim Final Rule to implement the 2008 Farm Bill changes to the CRP. Farmers and landowners may continue to place eligible land into the CCRP. States may continue to make proposals to FSA for new CREP projects.

Farmers and landowners with land in the CRP whose contracts are expiring in coming years will likely be given options to automatically renew those contracts if they are of high environmental value. Farmers and landowners with whole fields or whole farms in CRP who are exiting the program have the option to retain conservation buffers in the program through the CCRP. For those putting land back into production, options are available under the Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Grasslands Reserve Program to retain many conservation benefits while resuming agricultural activities.

USDA Contact Information

The FSA website for the Conservation Reserve Program is www.fsa.usda.gov and click on Conservation Programs.

To find your local office, visit FSA's Web site:

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa>.

Beverly J. Preston, FSA Program Manager for the Conservation Reserve Program, e-mail: beverly.preston@usda.gov, 202-720-9563.

Astor Boozer, NRCS National Program Manager for the Conservation Reserve Program, e-mail: astor.boozar@usde.gov, 202-720-0242.



Credit And Land Access Programs

- *Direct and Guaranteed Loans*
Supports farm ownership and operating
- *Conservation Loans and Guarantees*
Supports installation of conservation practices
- *Down Payment Loan Program*
Supports farm ownership
- *Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher Land Contract Sales Program*
Supports farm ownership by providing guarantees on land sold through contracts
- *Beginning Farmer or Rancher Individual Development Account Pilot Program*
A program to be tested to support beginning farmers with land ownership by encouraging establishment of savings and acquiring training
- *Agricultural Bonds (Aggie Bonds)*



Direct and Guaranteed Loans

What Is the Direct and Guaranteed Loan Program?

The Farm Service Agency provides **Direct and Guaranteed Farm Ownership and Operating Loans** for farmers and ranchers. FSA makes direct loans, while banks, credit unions or other lenders make loans with a guarantee against significant loss of principal or interest on an FSA loan. Percentages of both direct and guaranteed ownership and operating loans are ***reserved for beginning farmers and ranchers and for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.***

Direct Operating Loans may be used to purchase items such as livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other operating expenses. Operating Loans can also be used to pay for minor improvements to buildings, costs associated with land and water development, family subsistence, and to refinance debts under certain conditions.

Loan funds cannot be used to finance non-farm enterprises, which include raising earthworms, exotic birds, tropical fish, dogs, or horses for non-farm purposes (racing, pleasure or show).

The limit on Direct Farm Operating Loans is \$300,000. Operating Loans are normally repaid within seven years.

Direct Ownership Loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings and other fixtures, and promote soil and water conservation. The maximum amount for the Direct Farm Ownership Loan is \$300,000.

Eligibility Criteria for a direct loan applicant include: sufficient education, training, or experience in managing and operating a farm or ranch that demonstrates the managerial ability needed to succeed in farming. Direct farm ownership loans require that the applicant must have participated in the operation of a farm or ranch for at least 3 of the last 10 years.

Preference is given to applicants who are unable to obtain credit elsewhere and have an acceptable credit history. Applicants must be the operator or tenant operator of a farm that is not larger than a "family farm" after the loan is closed.

Once an applicant is qualified, the loan applicant contacts the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office and receives an application package, completes the loan application, with FSA assistance if needed; and meets with FSA to review and discuss the application. FSA determines if the applicant is eligible and reviews the application for repayment ability, security, and compliance with other regulations. The loan applicant receives the funds once the FSA approves and obligates the loan.

Loan Terms and Interest Rates vary according to the type of loan made, the collateral securing the loan, and the applicant's ability to repay. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years, and farm ownership loan terms cannot exceed 40 years. The interest rates for direct loans are adjusted periodically based on the federal government's cost of borrowing.

A lower interest rate may be available for producers with limited resources. Loans to limited resource producers are reviewed periodically to adjust the interest rate based on repayment ability.

What Security is Required?

Loans must be adequately secured. Collateral for operating loans consist of a first lien on crops to be produced and on livestock and equipment purchased or refinanced with loan funds. A lien may be taken on certain other chattel and real estate property, and an assignment usually will be taken on income such as that from a dairy enterprise. Collateral for farm operation loans consist of real estate only or a combination of real estate and chattels. FSA requires security of 150 percent of the loan amount, if



Direct and Guaranteed Loans (continued)

available. At a minimum, the security must equal the loan amount.

Are There any Special Loan Conditions?

FSA provides temporary credit to its direct loan borrowers; therefore, all borrowers are required to refinance their loans with a private, commercial lender when they are financially able to do so. The 2008 Farm Bill directs FSA to develop a plan that will promote the goal of transitioning borrowers from direct to guaranteed credit and from guaranteed to regular commercial credit in the shortest amount of time possible. In doing so, FSA is instructed to coordinate this graduation policy with its borrower training, loan assessment, and market placement programs and services.

To improve their production and financial management ability, FSA requires all borrowers to complete farm and financial training courses. Some borrowers may receive a waiver from the course if they have demonstrated adequate knowledge and ability in the subject areas covered by the course.

As part of its supervised credit role, FSA will require borrowers to provide updated financial information periodically and participate in an annual review of their operation by FSA. The Agency completes a comprehensive evaluation of the real estate and chattel property used in the operation, the farm business organization and key personnel, and any planned changes to the operation. FSA will then identify and prioritize training and supervisory needs, and help the borrower complete a plan of supervision to assist the producer in achieving financial viability.

Also, all borrowers must operate their farms in an environmentally sound manner, comply with highly erodible land and wetland policies, and if necessary, operate according to a USDA land management plan.

Where Can You Apply for a Loan?

For direct loans, farmers apply at the local FSA county office servicing the area in which they expect to carry out their operations.

Does it Cost Anything to Apply for a Loan?

To process a direct loan application, FSA requires the loan applicant to pay a credit report fee. In addition, if a loan is made, the producer pays the fees charged for lien searches and for filing and recording security instruments.

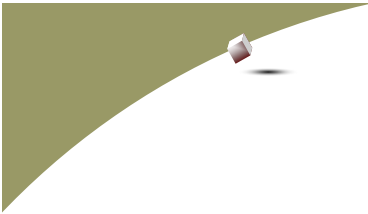
Program Contact Information

The Farm Service Agency of USDA administers the direct and guaranteed loan programs. Additional information about the programs is posted on the FSA website: www.fsa.usda.gov.

To locate your state or county FSA offices, visit this website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=contact&subject=landing&topic=landing>.

Mike Hinton, Direct Loan Branch Chief, Farm Service Agency, mike.hinton@usda.gov, 202-720-1472.

Bob Bonnet, Guaranteed Loan Branch Chief, Farm Service Agency, bob.bonnet@usda.gov, 202-720-3889.



Conservation Loan and Conservation Loan Guarantee Program

What Is the Conservation Loan and Conservation Loan Guarantee Program?

The 2008 Farm Bill creates a newly revised loan authority for USDA's Farm Service Agency to provide direct or guaranteed conservation loans to qualified borrowers. Eligible farmers or ranchers, including farmer cooperatives, private corporations, partnerships, or limited liability companies, can apply for a loan to cover the costs of:

"Qualified conservation projects" such as:

- Installation of conservation structures or water conservation systems
- Establishment of forest cover
- Establishment of permanent pasture
- Conservation practices needed to comply with highly erodible land "compliance" requirements

Conservation buffer practices such as:

- Grassed waterways
- Shelterbelts
- Windbreaks
- Riparian buffers and filterstrips
- Living snow fences, and other similar vegetative practices

A conservation project is "qualified" for a loan if it is included in a conservation plan that is approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The 2008 Farm Bill also establishes a priority for the conservation loan program for qualified beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, owners or tenants that use the loans to convert to sustainable or organic agricultural production systems, and producers who use the loans to build conservation structures or establish conservation practices to comply with highly erodible land "compliance" regulations. In addition, USDA is to give strong consideration to applicants who are on waiting lists to receive farm bill conservation program financial assistance.

Direct and guaranteed conservation loans operate under the same rules and loan limitations as regular direct and guaranteed FSA farm ownership loans with two exceptions. First, for guaranteed loans the Farm Service Agency can guarantee no more than 75 percent of the principal amount of the loan, a lower rate than normal. Second, for both direct and guaranteed loans, the borrower does not have to be a family-sized farm, does not have to demonstrate an inability to secure credit from private, commercial sources at reasonable terms, and does not have to apply for commercial credit during the term of the loan should it become available at reasonable terms.

What Has changed?

The previous conservation loan program had many of the same features as the new program in the 2008 Farm Bill, except that guaranteed loans were not limited to 75 percent guarantees and borrowers had to operate not larger than family-sized farms and demonstrate an inability to get credit elsewhere. In addition, the new farm bill has added the priorities for beginning, socially disadvantaged, and organic and sustainable farmers and ranchers. Finally, the new farm bill eliminates an outdated \$50,000 limit on direct conservation loans.



Conservation Loan and Conservation Loan Guarantee Program

Program Contact Information

The Conservation Loans program is administered by the Farm Service Agency of USDA. Information about the program will be posted on the FSA website: www.fsa.usda.gov

Mike Hinton, Direct Loan Branch Chief, Farm Service Agency, mike.hinton@usda.gov, 202-720-1472
Bob Bonnet, Guaranteed Loan Branch Chief, Farm Service Agency, bob.bonnet@usda.gov, 202- 720-3889

For information and applications, go to your FSA regional Service Centers or to your state FSA office. You can locate all of the contact information by clicking on your state at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa>



Down Payment Loan Program

What Is the Down Payment Loan Program?

The Down-Payment Loan Program reflects the dual realities of scarce federal resources and the significant cash flow requirements of most new farm operations. It combines the resources of the Farm Service Agency, a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer, and a commercial lender or private seller to enable beginning, minority, and women farmers to make a down payment on a farm or ranch. Since 1994, the program has assisted nearly 3,000 new farmers purchase farms.

To qualify, the borrower must be able to make a cash down payment of at least 5 percent of the purchase price. [1] The loan amount from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is equal to 45 percent of the purchase price of the land to be acquired, not to exceed its appraised value and not to exceed \$500,000. With this \$500,000 cap, the maximum FSA loan amount is thus \$225,000. Note, however, that this is a cap on the amount of the loan, not a cap on the value of the land to be acquired.

The FSA loan term is 20 years, with an interest rate that is 4 percent lower than the regular FSA direct farm ownership loan interest rate, but no less than 1.5 percent. Hence, if the regular (and already subsidized) FSA direct farm ownership interest rate is 7 percent, the Down Payment loan interest rate will be 3 percent. Or, for instance, if the regular rate is 5 percent, the down payment rate will be 1.5 percent.

The remaining balance of the loan (50 percent) may be obtained from a commercial lender or a private party. FSA can provide a 95 percent federal guarantee to the commercial lender and the lender does not have to pay the normal guarantee loan fee. FSA can provide two types of federal guarantees to private landowners who sell to the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer

[1] *In cases where the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer is not able to make the 5 percent down payment, two other options are available. One is a "participation loan" in which FSA provides a loan for up to 50 percent of the land value and a commercial lender provides 50 percent or more of the loan package. The interest rate for FSA portion of the participation loan is generally the same as the regular direct farm ownership loan program; the FSA loan term is 40 years. The other option is a regular FSA direct farm ownership loan program in which FSA provides 100 percent, 40-year financing.*

Participation loans share an advantage with Down Payment loans in that, for a given amount of funding provided by Congress, two or three times more borrowers can be served than under the regular direct farm ownership program. Experience suggests, however, that new farmer success rates are higher when the beginning farmer builds the farming operation slowly and provides some of the equity upfront. From the dual perspective of "best bang for the taxpayer dollar" and highest probability of success, then, down payment loans have considerable appeal.

What Has Changed?

The 2008 Farm Bill reduced the interest rates (which was four percent regardless of the regular rate) and down payment requirement (previously 10%), as well as longer loan terms (going from 15 year loans to 20 years), and higher maximum purchase price on first-time land purchases for new farmers, plus program expansion to also cover minority farmers.

To qualify an applicant must make a cash down payment of at least five percent of the purchase price. FSA may provide a maximum loan amount not exceeding 45 percent of the least of:

- the purchase price of the farm or ranch acquired;
- the appraised value of the farm or ranch acquired; or
- \$500,000 (Note: this results in a maximum loan of \$225,000). The term of the loan is 20 years.



Down Payment Loan Program (continued)

The interest rate is four percent below the direct farm ownership rate, but not lower than one and a half percent. The remaining balance may be obtained from a commercial lender or private party. FSA can provide up to a 95 percent guarantee if financing is obtained from a commercial lender. Participating lenders do not have to pay a guarantee fee.

Status of the Program

Down Payment Loan Program changes were essentially self-implementing, so the new provisions were already in effect shortly after passage of the 2008 Farm Bill. The program has seen a dramatic increase in usage since the changes went into effect. To apply, go to the local FSA office serving the area where the farming operation is located.

Program Contact Information

Information about the special down payment loans for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers can be found on the Farm Service Agency website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/.

Mark Falcone, Deputy Director for Loan Making Division, Farm Service Agency, mark.falcone@usda.gov, 202-720-1632.

You can locate contact information for local FSA offices by clicking on your state at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa>.



Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Contract Land Sales Program

What Is the Beginning and Socially Disadvantage Farmers and Ranchers Contract Land Sales Program?

The Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher Land Contract Program is a guarantee program designed to encourage retiring landowners to sell to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers through private, contractual agreements. The program was first created under the 2002 Farm Bill as a pilot program. The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorized the program to be nationwide.

How the Program Works

The program will be structured to provide the seller of the land one of two types of guarantees:

- A "prompt payment" guarantee for three amortized annual installments or an amount equaling three amortized annual installments, including three years' taxes and insurance; or a
- 90% principal loan value guarantee.

Under either option the guarantee will be in effect for 10 years.

Under the prompt payment guarantee, if the new farmer/buyer does not pay an annual installment due on the contract, or pays only part of an installment, USDA's Farm Service Agency provides the scheduled payment or the unpaid portion to the seller through an escrow agent after the seller unsuccessfully attempts collection. In that circumstance, the buyer would then try to restructure the debt through an approved repayment plan.

Under the asset guarantee, the seller is protecting himself or herself against the possibility that the value of the farm may have sharply declined between the time the contract was entered and any default by the buyer.

Eligibility Requirements

The guarantee will only cover those farm or ranch land purchases that are made on a private contractual basis. Guarantees will only be provided on new contracts. Existing contracts are not eligible for a guarantee under the program.

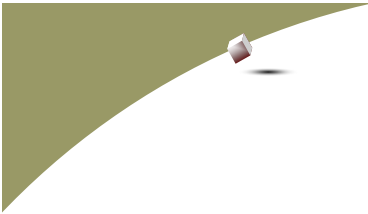
The purchase price or appraised value of the farm or ranch to be guaranteed must not exceed \$500,000.

The buyer of a farm or ranch to be guaranteed must meet the following requirements:

- Be a beginning farmer or rancher with at least three but not more than ten years experience in farming or ranching;
- Be the owner or operator of the farm or ranch when the contract is complete;
- Have an acceptable credit history demonstrated by satisfactory debt repayment;
- Be unable to obtain sufficient credit elsewhere without a guarantee to finance actual needs at reasonable rates and terms.
- Make a 5% down payment;

What has Changed?

The 2002 Farm Bill established the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Land Contract program as a pilot program in 9 states. The 2008 Farm Bill makes the program permanent and available nationwide. The 2008 Farm Bill also includes socially disadvantaged farmers as an eligible group for the loan guarantee program. Finally, the new Farm Bill adds the standard asset guarantee option, with the stipulation that the seller obtains the services of a loan servicing agent.



Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Contract Land Sales Program (continued)

Status of the Program

As of this writing, we are still waiting for the Farm Service Agency of USDA to release draft rules and regulations for the program. Once the program rules are published and finalized, the program will then be available. There are some positive changes that were made to the program to make it more user friendly. However, the Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to phase in the changes and could delay their implementation until the 2011 fiscal year would begin. We hope that won't be the case but we will keep you posted on the status so keep checking our website.

Program Contact Information

Inquire with your local Farm Service Agency office about this program. We have listed the state offices in our Resource Guide in the back and they can connect you with your local office.



Beginning Farmer or Rancher IDA Pilot Program

What Is the Beginning Farmer and Rancher IDA Pilot Program?

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts Pilot program will work to help those beginning farmers and ranchers with limited financial means to establish a pattern of savings that can be used to jump start them into agriculture.

Based on a model created by California FarmLink, this program is a matched savings account program, where the beginning farmer or rancher must participate in a financial training program and save a certain percentage of their income each month. That amount will be matched.

How Will the Program Work?

This program will be run through eligible nonprofit organizations or local or state government agencies that apply for the competitive grant when it becomes available. The selected groups will both establish and administer the IDAs and are also responsible for providing access to business and financial education for the participating farmers and/or ranchers.

This program is considered a pilot program that is authorized to be tested in at least 15 states. Those states have not been selected yet, and the program will not be officially up and running until Congress provides funding.

Once Congress dedicates the needed funding and the organizations or collaborations have been selected to operate a Beginning Farmer or Rancher IDA project, they can then begin to work with eligible beginning farmers or ranchers to set up an account and start depositing a certain amount that is "matched" by that organization.

How Do the Matched Savings Accounts Work?

- Savings are matched either dollar for dollar or up to two dollars for every dollar;
 - **Annual cap** on amount that can be matched is **\$3,000**;
 - At the end of two years, the beginning farmer or rancher could have **\$18,000 saved**;
- Money can be used for a down payment on farmland or to purchase breeding stock, farm equipment, or other productive assets.

Program Status

As indicated above this program has not yet been funded. The Farm Service Agency will be drafting a proposed or an interim final rule for the program, hopefully by late 2008 or early 2009.

USDA Contact Information

Information about the program, once draft rules have been issued, will be posted on the FSA website: www.fsa.usda.gov

Mike Hinton, Direct Loan Branch Chief, Farm Service Agency, mike.hinton@usda.gov, 202-720-1472



Increase in Loan Limits of Agricultural Bonds

What Is the Agricultural Bond (“Aggie Bond”) Program?

Several states participate in programs designed to help finance beginning farmers and ranchers. Most common is the Agricultural Bond or “Aggie Bond”.

The states participating in the program assist beginning, first-time farmers with purchasing land, farm equipment, farm buildings and breeding livestock through reduced interest rate loans. Through the Aggie Bond program, banks are able to earn federally-tax exempt interest income on loans to eligible beginning farmers and ranchers, which in turn enables them to provide the loans at a reduced interest rate to the first time farmer.

The following states have active agricultural bond Aggie Bond programs: Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

What Has changed?

The loan limit was raised from \$250,000 to \$450,000 with an index for inflation. The law also eliminates the limitation of \$125,000 on the amount of farmland a person can own and still qualify.

Administration and Contact Information

In many cases, the contact for each state is within the department of agriculture. Please check the resource guide in this toolkit or go to <http://www.stateagfinance.org/directory.html> and find your state.



Rural Development and Local Food Programs

- *Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program*
Supports development of rural microenterprise
- *Value-Added Agricultural Market Development Program*
Supports development of high-value, niche markets
- *Farmer's Market Promotion Program*
Supports development of direct marketing ventures
- *Local or Regional Food Enterprises*
Supports development of infrastructure to support local and regional food enterprises
- *Community Food Projects*
Supports the development of food security in low-income communities



Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

What Is the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program?

The **Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program** is a new program created by the 2008 Farm Bill. USDA will administer the program, which will make grants to organizations that provide training, technical assistance or make small loans to new and existing rural small businesses. The Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program will have \$4 million available for fiscal years 2009-2011, and \$3 million for 2012.

Who Can Apply for Grants?

This program **will provide grants and loan funds to organizations** that provide training and technical assistance to rural small business owners, facilitate access to capital and access to services for rural microenterprises.

Organizations eligible to apply for funding include nonprofit organizations, public institutions of higher education, and tribal governments that are not served by a nonprofit development organization. Applicants should have a demonstrated record of delivering services to rural microentrepreneurs or an effective plan to develop such a program. Applicant organizations do not need to be located in a rural area, but they must serve rural entrepreneurs. Microenterprises can be food or agriculture-related but are not required to be. The farm bill defines organizations meeting the above qualifications as Microenterprise Development Organizations.

What Does the Program Support?

The Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program provides funding for three areas of work.

- **Loans to microentrepreneurs through applicant organizations:** Funds to provide fixed interest rate microloans of less than \$50,000 to rural entrepreneurs for the development or startup of successful microenterprises in rural areas. Loans can be made to rural sole proprietorships or businesses with less than ten employees which could not obtain funding from other lending sources due to lack of credit or limited business development experience. Loans cannot exceed a twenty-year timeframe and must have an annual interest rate of at least 1 percent.
- **Grants to organizations to assist microentrepreneurs (connected to loan funds):** Funding to organizations to provide marketing, management, and other technical assistance to microentrepreneurs who received or are seeking a loan from the microenterprise development organization. The maximum annual grant award is limited to no more than 25 percent of the organization's outstanding microloan balance.
- **Grants to support microenterprise development (not connected to loan funds):** Funding to organizations to provide training, operational support, business planning, market development assistance, and other services to rural entrepreneurs. To the greatest extent possible grants will be targeted to organizations which serve microenterprises in rural areas that have suffered significant outward migration. USDA is directed to ensure that recipients will be organizations of varying sizes and those which serve racially and ethnically diverse populations.

Applications must meet the following standards:

- Federal share of the cost of a project funded by this program shall not exceed 75%
- MDOs must match at least 15% of any grant amount

Not more than 10% of any grant received by an MDO may be used for administrative expenses



Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

Status of the Program

We expect the program to be made available the first half of 2009.

Examples of Current Microenterprise Development Organizations

Center for Rural Affairs

Established in 1990, the Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP) at the Center for Rural Affairs, delivers small business training, networking, one-on-one technical assistance, and microloans to rural entrepreneurs. To read about success stories of various microenterprises [visit this link](#).

NC Rural Economic Development Center

North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc.'s Business Loan Program provides loans to rural small businesses. Their loan program works in partnership with small business centers at local community colleges and technology development centers to provide technical assistance and business planning to microenterprises.

Definitions

The farm bill provides several definitions related to the program.

- **Microenterprise development organization (MDO):** an organization that is a nonprofit entity, Indian tribe (that is not served by an MDO), or public institution of higher education that provides training and technical assistance to rural microentrepreneurs, facilitates access to capital and services to rural microenterprises and has a demonstrated record of delivering services to rural microentrepreneurs or an effective plan to develop such a program.
- **Microentrepreneur:** an owner and operator or prospective owner or operator of a rural microenterprise unable to obtain sufficient training, technical assistance or credit.
- **Microloan:** a business loan of not more than \$50,000.
- **Rural:** any area other than 1) a city or town with 50,000 or greater population, or 2) an urbanized area contiguous or adjacent to a city or town with 50,000 or greater population.
- **Rural Microenterprise:** sole proprietorship or business with no more than 10 full-time equivalent employees.

USDA Contact Information

Jody Raskind, Director, Specialty Lenders Division (SLD), USDA Rural Development – Business Programs, jody.raskind@wdc.usda.gov, 202-720-1400.



Value-Added Agriculture Market Development Program

What is the Value Added Agriculture Market Development Program?

The **Value-Added Agriculture Market Development Program (formerly known as the Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG))** is a competitive grants program administered by the Rural Business Cooperative Service at USDA to help producers move into value-added agricultural enterprises. The program was first created under the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000. It was then expanded and improved under the 2002 Farm Bill and has now been improved even further under the 2008 Farm Bill. This program aims to provide planning and/or capital investment for value adding enterprises started by farmers and ranchers.

To be eligible for grant funding, applicants for a Value-Added Agriculture Market Development Grant must meet fairly strict requirements that will be outlined in the Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA). If you are an independent producer, a farmer or rancher cooperative, agricultural producer group, or a majority-controlled producer-based business venture, you are eligible to apply for a value-added grant. The NOSA will provide definitions for each of these categories, along with other requirements of the program. A new NOSA is published each fiscal year and includes any information relating to any particular emphasis they are considering.

Status of the Program

USDA issued a proposed rule for this program in October of 2008 and public comments were due in December of 2008. The proposed rule fell short in addressing some of the changes made to the program in the 2008 Farm Bill. Hopefully, the public comments will encourage them to revise the rule to better reflect the farm bill changes. Once the department finalizes the rule, they will publish a Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) for the 2009 funding cycle. Any changes to the program rules will be spelled out in the new NOFA.

Types of grants:

When applying for a grant, applicants must choose between two different types of activities for funding. Funding is available for:

- 1) Developing *feasibility studies or business plans*, which include marketing plans, or;
- 2) *Working capital* to operate a value-added business or alliance.

Applicants are eligible to apply for only one of these two types of grants each grant cycle. Grant funds may not be used for repair, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility or to purchase, rent or install fixed equipment. Cash and/or in-kind matching funds are required, must be at least equal to the amount of Federal funds awarded, and must be expended in advance, such that for each grant dollar advanced, an equal amount of match shall have been expended first.

New Program Features and Priorities

The 2008 Farm Bill made some positive changes to this program. Those changes include:

- An expanded definition of value-added to include locally-produced agricultural food product
- New priorities for awarding grants to projects that focus on increasing opportunities for the following: small and mid-size family farmers and ranchers; beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.
- Grants for projects that help farmers and ranchers establish marketing partnerships that are equitable for all parties involved. This is called "mid-tier value chains." This will help those mid-size farms that are too large to market directly but too small to be profitable selling raw commodities.
- 20% of the total funding (10% for each) will be set-aside for projects from the following: Beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; and mid-tier value chains.



Value-Added Agriculture Market Development Program (continued)

- USDA will now be offering a **simplified application form and process for small projects** requesting less than \$50,000. Many of the smaller grants are single farmer projects or lower cost feasibility studies, for which larger scale working capital applications are unnecessarily complex.

Matching Funds

The program requires a one to one match. A cash match is defined as actual funds dedicated to the project. An in-kind match includes time, equipment, space, staff salaries, etc. Examples of a cash match might be: third party contributions from groups, farm organizations or individuals donating cash towards a project; the salary of a person or persons working on a project (cash transaction); travel expenses to attend meetings or participate in training sessions; state appropriations or non-federal funds that have not been spent; bank financing; revolving loan funds; or county financing.

Examples of in-kind contributions include: space; equipment; supplies, copies, telephone and other expenses which are dedicated to the project; volunteer time/unpaid services provided to a recipient by an individual or employee working on a project (non cash transaction); value of hours of non-federally funded personnel assisting with project, e.g. State Dept. of Agriculture, local economic development agencies, volunteer board members, etc; donation of office space or meeting rooms; or donation of inventory including equipment or buildings.

Types of Valued-Added Activities Eligible for Grants

| Commodity Processing | Market Differentiation | Commodity Segregation | On-Farm Renewable Energy | Local Food | Mid-Tier Value Chain |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Increasing value by changing commodity's physical state | Increasing value by marketing the commodity's special identity or character | Increasing value by keeping the commodity physically apart in production and distribution | Realizing value by transforming natural resources into energy on the farmstead | Increasing value by aggregating and marketing food for local markets | Increasing value by linking farmers with local and regional supply networks in which they are equal partners |
| Examples: wine, flour, cheese, jam, biodiesel | Examples: organic, grass-fed, humane, state branding | Examples: GMO-free, no-rBGH, Varietal purity | Examples: wind, solar, geothermal, on-farm biodiesel | Examples: buy local - buy fresh, community based food enterprises, supplying local procurement preferences | Examples: farm to institution, farm to food service or restaurant , value chain using a consumer seal |
| Planning or working capital | Planning or working capital | Planning or working capital | Planning or working capital | Planning or working capital | Planning or working capital |



Value-Added Agriculture Market Development Program (continued)

Examples of Past Grant Recipients

Nebraska Small Farms Cooperative, Oneill, Nebraska

The Nebraska Small Farms Cooperative received a \$250,000 grant in 2004 to expand its product line and market overseas. The coop has grown from 29 farmers/members in 2004 to over 90 today. It markets pre-cooked, USDA verified, non-hormone treated meat to businesses in the U.S. and Europe. Not only has the coop passed value-added profits back to farmers, but its success has also spilled over to a local meat processing plant as annual processing contracts were signed to benefit both parties.

Pinn-Oak Ridge Farm, Delavan, Wisconsin (www.wisconsinlamb.com/)

In 2005, Steve and Darlene Pinnow received a \$150,000 grant to brand and direct market their pasture-raised lamb. It has allowed them to expand their market from 40 restaurants and grocery stores to 60 retailers in Wisconsin and Illinois. The Pinnows are now working with a distributor in Chicago who learned about their pastured lamb from the USDA announcement of their VAPG grant.

Ives Cream, Norwich, New York (www.ivescream.biz/ivesstory.htm)

The Ives family operates a sustainable dairy farm that has been handed down through six generations. With the help of a \$47,550 VAPG grant in 2004, they planned and executed a successful marketing campaign for their premium ice cream. Today, they operate a seasonal retail ice cream parlor in downtown Norwich, NY where great locally-produced ice cream, customer service, and a community focus have proven to be a winning business combination.

Prairie Pride, Inc., Deerfield, Missouri (www.prairieprideinc.us)

This new-generation, producer cooperative that will be converting soybean oil into bio-diesel fuel with the help of a \$300,000 working capital grant in 2006. The new facility will ultimately crush 21,000,000 bushels of soy beans per year to obtain soy oil. The refinery will then convert that soy oil into 30,000,000 gallons of bio-diesel.

How Do I Start?

We strongly recommend that you locate a resource person in your county, state or region that can give you some professional advice on your grant application, as well as your business ideas. We have provided some contacts in our resource guide that are organized by state.

The most recent information on funding availability and applications is available through your state USDA Rural Development Office. Now is a good time to check with your state office or your state's Department of Agriculture about recent news or upcoming workshops about the program. They can provide information, applications and guidance on when and how to apply for a grant. Set up a meeting with your USDA Rural Development office and educate them about your project and ask them for information about the program.

Other sources for information regarding value-added enterprises or how to apply for a VAPG can be found at:

1) The Agriculture Marketing Resource Center website: www.agMRC.org. This website offers a broad range of information on value-added, direct marketing initiatives. Through links to Innovation Centers around the country at the state level, the website makes available information on a broad range of issues.

2) The University of Nebraska offers a template of the grant proposal, which is helpful in completing the financial reporting requirements in the application. That template is available at: <http://fpc.unl.edu/marketing/grant.htm>.



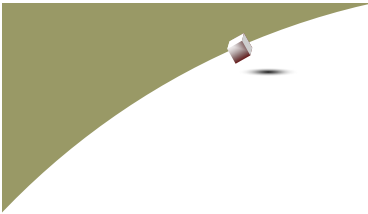
Value-Added Agriculture Market Development Program (continued)

USDA Contact Information and Online Resources

USDA website for the VAPG Program: www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm.

An online assessment tool is available at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vapgea.htm that will assist you in determining whether or not you are eligible to apply for a VAPG grant.

Tracey Kennedy, USDA VAPG Program Manager, 202-690-1428



Farmer's Market Promotion Program

What Is the Farmers Market Promotion Program?

The **Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)** is a competitive grants program focused on improving and increasing opportunities for direct farmer-to-consumer marketing. This program supports proposals for marketing projects related to community-supported agriculture programs, farmers' markets, roadside stands, and other direct marketing strategies.

Grants under this program may be used to support direct marketing projects that provide assistance with organizing, marketing, training, business plan development, community outreach and education and other activities that to improve direct marketing opportunities. Eligible entities under FMPP are farmer-owned cooperatives, non-profit corporations, agricultural cooperatives, local governments, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, public benefit corporations, and Tribal Governments.

What Has Changed?

- Agri-tourism activities are now included as eligible activities to be supported by this program;
- Producer networks or associations are now eligible;
- Ten percent of the funds are designated to support electronic benefit transfer technology to accommodate customers using federal nutrition programs at farmers markets and community supported agriculture businesses;
- The farm bill also clarifies that grants under this program are designed to support all types of direct marketing and the activities involved in establishing or improving direct marketing. For example, training, business planning, and community outreach and education are activities that can be included in a grant.

Status of the Program

On Friday, March 13th, 2009 USDA released Notice of Funds of Available for the 2009 funding cycle. Proposals were due April 27th so if you missed it this time, start planning for the next cycle. The link to the guide is: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?DocName=STELPRDC5075760&acct=fmpp>

USDA Contact Information

Carmen Humphrey
Program Leader for FMPP
Marketing Services Division,
USDA-AMS
carmen.humphrey@usda.gov
Phone: (202) 720-8317

Errol Bragg
Director of Marketing Services
Division
USDA-AMS
errol.bragg@usda.gov
Phone: (202) 720-8317

Debra Tropp
Branch Chief of Farmers Market
and Direct Marketing Research
Marketing Services Division
USDA-AMS
debra.topp@usda.gov
Phone: (202) 720-8326



Locally or Regionally Produced Agricultural Food Products Guaranteed Loans

What Is the Locally or Regionally Produced Agricultural Food Products Guaranteed Loans?

The 2008 Farm Bill creates new loan and loan guarantee authority for local and regional food enterprises through the Business and Industry (B&I) Loan program administered by the Rural Development branch of the USDA. While the authority allows USDA to make or guarantee loans, the B&I program currently is entirely federal guarantees of commercial loans.

The purpose of the B&I program in general is to help improve, develop, or finance businesses and employment in rural areas by bolstering the existing private credit market through federal guarantees. The purpose of the local and regional food subprogram is to support farm and ranch incomes as well as the renewal of local food system infrastructure and community development.

Loans can be used to support and establish enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, store, and market foods produced either in-state or transported less than 400 miles from the origin of the product. Individuals, cooperatives, cooperative organizations, businesses, and other entities are eligible for these loan guarantees.

Loans may be used for business conversion, enlargement, modernization, purchase and development of land, buildings, facilities, purchase of equipment, machinery, supplies, inventory, and similar purposes, and may also be used for business acquisitions when the loan will keep a business from closing or prevent the loss of employment or expand job opportunities.

Priority will be given to projects that in some way benefit communities that have limited access to affordable and healthy foods and that have a high rate of hunger, food insecurity, or poverty.

The recipient of the loan or loan guarantee is required to inform consumers in some way of the locally- or regionally-produced attribute of the food products.

The maximum loan guarantee is 80 percent for loans of \$5 million or less, 70 percent for loans between \$5 and \$10 million, and 60 percent for loans exceeding \$10 million. Generally loans to a single borrower are capped at \$10 million, though several exceptions apply.

B&I loans are generally available only in rural areas, which include all areas other than towns of more than 50,000 people and those contiguous or adjacent to urbanized areas. Grants may be made to cooperatives for value-added processing facilities in non-rural areas provided they service agricultural producers within 80 miles of the facility and help improve producer income.

What Has changed?

The 2008 Farm Bill establishes that local and regional food enterprises are eligible for loans and loan guarantees to establish and facilitate the growth of local and regional food markets under the B&I program. It defines for the first time in statute what locally or regionally produced means, which is an agricultural product that is raised, produced, and distributed within the locality or region and that is transported less than 400 miles from the origin of the agricultural product or the state in which the agricultural product is produced. The Secretary of Agriculture is required to reserve at least five percent of the Business and Industry's program's funds for these types of activities.¹



Locally or Regionally Produced Agricultural Food Products

The recipient of a loan or loan guarantee shall include in an appropriate agreement with retail and institutional facilities to which the recipient sells locally or regionally produced agricultural food products a requirement to inform consumers of the retail or institutional facilities that the consumers are purchasing or consuming locally or regionally produced agricultural food products.

In making or guaranteeing a loan the Secretary shall give priority to projects that have components benefiting underserved communities—limited access to affordable, healthy foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, in grocery retail stores or farmer-to-consumer direct markets and a high rate of hunger or food insecurity or a high poverty rate.

Status of the Program

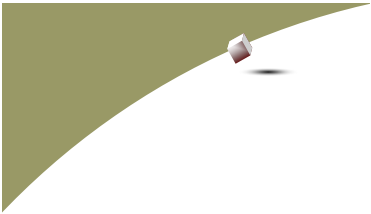
A revised rule for the B&I program is required before the food enterprise subprogram can go into effect. USDA issued an interim final rule for rural development guaranteed loans that included the B&I program but has postponed the effective date of the interim final rule and the end of the public comment period was February 17, 2009. There has been opposition to the interim final rule and it may be significantly revised.

Once there is an effective B&I program rule, loan applications will be available from local USDA Service Centers and can be submitted to the USDA Rural Development State Office. Potential borrowers will work directly with their commercial lending source to develop a loan package that can then be submitted as a candidate for the federal guarantee. The guarantee helps banks, credit unions, and other lenders provide loans to businesses that might not otherwise meet their underwriting standards.

Outreach to eligible entities, including processors, wholesalers, distributors, as well as to community and independent bankers, is critical to ensuring this new program is used. The program will get off the ground if local farm and food groups and business and community development networks, as well as USDA rural development offices, engage in and coordinate publicity and outreach efforts.

Administration and Contact Information

Complete applications should be sent to the USDA Rural Development State Office for the project location. A list of offices and additional information can be obtained at www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html.



Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program

What Is the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program?

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFP) was first authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill as a program to fight food insecurity through developing community food projects that help promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities. Community Food Projects assist nonprofit, community based organizations with the development of projects that would require a one-time infusion of federal assistance to become self-sustaining. They are designed to:

- Meet the food needs of low-income people by increasing their access to fresher, more nutritious food supplies.
- Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs.
- Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues by combining the resources of multiple sectors of the food system.

Grants are awarded to three types of projects, community food projects, training and technical assistance, and planning for long-term solutions. These projects should create innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers and promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues.

Preferred projects also develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system, support the development of entrepreneurial projects, develop innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors, encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system linkages build long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of communities, such as food policy councils and food planning associations.

These grants are intended to help eligible private nonprofit entities that need a one-time infusion of federal assistance to establish and carry out multipurpose community food projects. Projects are funded from \$10,000-\$300,000 and from 1 to 3 years. They are one-time grants that require a dollar-for-dollar match in resources. Approximately 18 percent of the submitted proposals have received awards during the history of this program.

Status of the Program

The program has received \$5 million per year in mandatory funding, and each year after, making it a permanent program.

Administration and Contact Information

In typical years requests for applications will be published by Cooperative State Research , Education and Extension Services (CSREES) around the end of the calendar year, awards will be made known in June, and funding will be available at the end of September.

This is a good opportunity for cooperatives to access grant money to meet a local need and open doors to market their products.

www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/in_focus/hunger_if_competitive.html



Research Programs

- *Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program*
Supports mentoring and education for beginning farmers and ranchers
- *Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative*
Supports research and education for organic production and markets



Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

What Is the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program?

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), reauthorized as Section 7410 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, is the first ever USDA program other than farm credit/debt financing programs targeted specifically to beginning farmers and ranchers.

The BFRDP is a competitive grants program designed to provide support to collaborative networks or partnerships, which may include community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, and extension and educational institutions that provide beginning farmer and rancher education, training and mentoring.

So while this program doesn't provide grants directly to beginning farmers and ranchers, it does provide grants that enable those with successful track records in serving beginning farmers and ranchers to provide the mentoring, training and technical assistance beginners need to allow them to enter agriculture successfully, with a knowledge base and access to resources to continue learning.

This program was given \$75 million in dedicated funding through the 2008 farm bill, with roughly \$18 million of that available each year to pursue broad-based strategies to assist beginning farmers and ranchers. Activities to be included in such strategies are:

- Mentoring, apprenticeships and internships
- "LandLink" assistance to match retiring farmers and ranchers with new farmers and ranchers
- Other means of assisting beginning farmers and ranchers to acquire land
- Model land leasing contracts
- Innovative farm transfer tools and transition strategies
- Entrepreneurial, financial management and business training
- Acquisition and management of agricultural credit
- Risk management education
- Whole farm training and technical assistance with holistic conservation systems
- Enterprise diversification and developing new markets and marketing strategies
- Basic livestock and crop farming practices
- Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization
- Environmental compliance

And more...

The program also establishes education "teams," made up of representatives of colleges and universities, cooperative extension, non-governmental organizations, and agencies, whose task is to develop curriculum and educational modules geared to different regions and farming systems for use in a variety of educational settings and available online from USDA.

The future of agriculture depends on the ability of new family farmers and ranchers to enter agriculture. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program can play an important role in addressing critical issues facing new farmers and ranchers through such educational opportunities. To find an organization in your state that can assist you or a beginning farmer and rancher that you may know, please see our Resource Guide in the back of this Farm Bill Tool Kit.

Status of the Program?

On March 13th, the USDA published the Request for Applications for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, a competitive grants program designed to provide education, outreach, training



Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, continued

and technical assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers.

For more information about the request for applications, use the following links:

Grants.gov summary <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=f8nvJ6sKSKmyQK9lvylqRKpytQcGKDFh1L0BVNNh3ID1GpHch2n!1057178580?oppId=46027&flag2006=false&mode=VIEW>

For the application package: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/GetGrantFromFedgrants;jsessionid=T6FLJ6vKgQVTJ8yRzVpxRT18SN1MLys7PpQMZSsz4sLrLZD5vtvQV!1057178580?opportunity=USDA-CSREES-BFR-002115&agencycode=USDA-CSREE>

Who Can Participate in the Program?

BFRDP is a voluntary program, and grants will be awarded to eligible proposals according to ranking criteria established in the Request for Applicants. As noted above, this grant program will not award grants directly to beginning farmers and ranchers but to organizations, extension, and others with a proven track record of serving beginning farmers and ranchers. In turn they will provide these farmers and ranchers with mentoring, education and training.

Contact Information

Janie Simms Hipp, J.D., LL.M.

National Program Leader

CSREES/USDA

T: 202/720-3605

F: 202/690-3162

jhipp@csrees.usda.gov

S. Sureshwaran, Ph.D.

National Program Leader, Small Business Innovation Research Program

USDA / CSREES/ CP

Mail Stop 2243

1400 Independence Avenue SW

Washington, D.C. 20250

Telephone: (202) 720 7536

Fax: (202) 401 6070

Email: ssureshwaran@csrees.usda.gov



Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

What Is the Organic Research and Extension Initiative?

The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) is USDA's flagship competitive grants program specific to organic systems. OREI funds research, education, and extension projects that enhance the ability of producers and processors to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products. State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, federal agencies, national laboratories, private organizations, corporations, and individuals are eligible to apply to receive these grants.

Six legislatively defined purposes have guided grant making under the program since it was first established in 2002. These purposes are:

1. Facilitating the development of organic agriculture production, breeding, and processing methods.
2. Evaluating the potential economic benefits to producers and processors who use organic methods.
3. Exploring international trade opportunities for organically grown and processed agricultural commodities.
4. Determining desirable traits for organic commodities.
5. Identifying marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture.
6. Conducting advanced on-farm research and development that emphasizes observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for working organic farms, including research relating to production and marketing and to socioeconomic conditions.

The program is administered by USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). Starting in 2004, CSREES began to group OREI together with the Organic Transitions Research Program to form the Integrated Organic Program (IOP). Both programs retain their identities and funding streams, but CSREES releases one Request for Applications for both programs under the Integrated Organic Program.

What has Changed?

The 2008 Farm Bill adds two new grant purposes to the six existing purposes:

- (1) Examining optimal conservation and environmental outcomes relating to organically produced agricultural products; and
- (2) Developing new and improved seed varieties that are particularly suited for organic agriculture.

Status of the Program

As mentioned above, OREI is administered as part of the Integrated Organic Program. A Request for Applications (RFA) for the Integrated Organic Program is typically released each fall and announced in the Federal Register. Once the RFA is released, there is a six-month period from the date of release, to provide comments on the RFA (to impact the design of the following year's RFA). The 2009 RFA was published on January 12, 2009 with an application deadline of March 9, 2009. Through this RFA they are also seeking comments that can help shape the next RFA. The comments are due within six months of the RFA being published, making them due on July 21, 2009.

USDA Contact Information

The website for the Integrated Organic Program of the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service is: www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/integratedorganicprogramicgp.cfm.

Tom Bewick, CSREES National Program Leader – Horticulture, tbewick@csrees.usda.gov (202) 401-3356.

Special note: CSREES will become the National Institute for Food and Agriculture or NIFA.



Horticulture and Organic Programs

- *Specialty Crop Block Grants*
Competitive grants to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops
- *Organic Certification Cost-share*
Assists organic farmers and ranchers with the cost of becoming certified organic
- *Interstate Movement of Meat and Poultry*
New provision allowing for meat and poultry products processed in small, state inspected packing and processing establishments to be sold across state lines



Specialty Crop Block Grants

What Is the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program?

The *Specialty Crop Block Grant Program* was adopted in 2004. Each state is eligible to apply for funds. Within the application, the state must designate the use of the funds available to them. Acceptable projects enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops; benefit the specialty crop industry as a whole; and potentially impact and produce measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution or individual.

With the 2008 Farm Bill, there is now the *Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill*. It broadens the definition of specialty crops as: fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Examples of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops include, but are not limited to: Food safety, food security, nutrition, trade enhancement, education, research, promotion, marketing, plant health programs, "buy local" programs, increased consumption increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, and developing cooperatives. Provides mandatory funding, \$60 million in FY 08, \$65 million in FY 09, \$70 million in FY 10, \$75 million in FY 11, and \$95 million in FY 12.

What Has Changed?

The Agricultural Marketing Service will be administering two separate programs to assist state Departments of Agriculture in enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops. The two programs will have different names to distinguish them from one another. While similar, the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) and Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB) are distinct with different definitions and separate deadlines. While these funds are only available to states, each state is given the authority to grant out the funds.

Status of the Program

In FY2008, AMS is administering two separate specialty crop block grant programs. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is the pre-2008 Farm Bill version of the program. State Departments of Agriculture were eligible to apply for grants under this program until March 5, 2009.

The 2008 Farm Bill version of the program is the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB). USDA announced the availability of \$10 million in FY2008 funds, less USDA administrative costs, on July 20, 2008. This funding round had a tight turn around time, and the date for applications closed on September 8, 2008.

USDA issued the Interim Final Rule for the SCBGP-FB on September 4, 2008 with an effective date of September 5, 2008. USDA solicited public comments on the Interim Final Rule until November 3, 2008. These comments will be considered as USDA fashions a final rule for the program. The Interim Final Rule establishes grant eligibility and application requirements, the review and approval process, and grant administration procedures for the program consistent with the 2008 Farm Bill.

A copy of the Interim Final Rule for the SCBGP-FB and the announcement of FY2008 funding for the SCBGP (pre-2008 Farm Bill) is on the AMS website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbqp.html>.



Specialty Crop Block Grants (continued)

Examples of Past Grant Recipients

Kansas Department of Agriculture

One of the seven projects the Kansas Department of Agriculture funded with its \$102,197.15 Specialty Crop Block Grant in 2006 was a project working with 30 farmers' markets and 5 five stands to develop a "Buy Fresh/Buy Local" campaign to promote the purchase of fresh, local foods including specialty crops. The project was carried out in partnership with the Kansas Rural Center.

www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5069112

Washington State Department of Agriculture

One of the five projects the Washington Department of Agriculture funded in 2007 with the \$182,441.82 it received was partnering with the Organic Seed Alliance to develop a premium national market for specialty grown organic vegetable seed and launch a Growers Organic Seed Cooperative as a producer-owned business.

www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5069113

Implementing Agency and Website

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp.html>.

Trista Etzig, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, trista.etzig@usda.gov, 202-690-4942.

For more information about how your state is planning to use its block grant funding, go to the website of your state Department of Agriculture. You can find the address by clicking on your state on the map located at www.nasda.org.



National Organic Certification Cost Share Program

What is the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program?

The **National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP)** provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers as well as organic product handlers to help defray the costs of organic certification. This program provides up to 75 percent of the annual certification costs up to a maximum payment of \$750 per year.

Handlers in all states, and farmers and ranchers in every state except the 12 Northeast states plus HI, NV, UT, and WY, are eligible to receive cost share assistance under this program. A separate but nearly identical program called the Agricultural Management Assistance Program provides cost share assistance to farmers or ranchers in the 12 Northeast states plus HI, NV, UT, and WY.

In either case, the assistance is made available to farmers, ranchers and organic product handlers through the state Departments of Agriculture. Recipients must be certified by a USDA accredited certifying agent under the National Organic Program.

What Has Changed?

The most significant improvement for this program coming from the 2008 Farm Bill is the almost five-fold increase in mandatory funding for the program, from \$5 million to \$22 million. The maximum annual payment per operation was increased from \$500 to \$750.

How Do I Start?

Farmers, ranchers and organic product handlers should inquire and apply with the state Department of Agriculture. The Agricultural Marketing Service directs the funding through state Departments of Agriculture. The organic certifier you are working with will be able to assist you in applying for the cost-share.

A complete list of organic contacts for each state is available from the National Association of State Organic Programs at www.nasda.org/nasop/.

USDA Contact Information

The Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA manages the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

Currently the AMS website (www.ams.usda.gov) maintains a section devoted to the smaller, regional program but provides no information for the larger National Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

Bob Pooler, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, National Organic Program, Bob.Pooler@usda.gov, 202-720-3252



Interstate Movement of Meat and Poultry

What Is the Interstate Movement of Meat and Poultry?

Before enactment of the 2008 Farm Bill, the Federal Meat Inspection Act and Poultry Products Inspection Act prohibited selling state-inspected meat and poultry products (beef, poultry, pork, lamb and goat) across state lines. This regulation was in sharp contrast to other state-inspected food products (milk, dairy products, fruit, vegetables, fish and shellfish), which are freely marketed across the country. Furthermore, meat and poultry products from 34 foreign countries can also be freely shipped and sold anywhere in the United States. Even “non-amenable” products—such as venison, bison, pheasant, quail, rabbit and others—can be shipped across state lines without restriction even though these products are normally regulated by state inspection programs.

The federal restrictions on interstate shipment of meat and poultry was a burden on small farmers and ranchers, who may not live near small-scale federally-inspected meat and poultry plants and are often shut out of large-scale federally-inspected plants, because they do not have contracts with the processors or because they deliver relatively small lots at one time for processing.

Twenty-eight states currently have meat and poultry inspection programs. They serve more than 2,000 state-inspected meat processors, which are mostly small, family-owned businesses often providing processing services for smaller-scale farms or for specialized, niche markets such as grass-fed beef or pasture-raised pork.

What Has Changed?

Section 11015 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA) of 2008 amends the Federal Meat Inspection Act by adding a new Title V- Inspections by federal and state agencies. This new provision allows for the interstate shipment of meat and poultry and their products from certain small state inspected packing and processing establishments.

The new provision does not allow for the interstate shipment of all meat and poultry that have been inspected by state agencies under state law. The new system creates a hybrid federal-state process, with the following features.

- In states with state-inspected meat and poultry programs, USDA is authorized to select meat and poultry processing establishments to participate in the new inspection program. These establishments previously operated under state inspection laws and must want to sell their products in interstate commerce.
- Under the new program, USDA will designate a federal employee as a state coordinator for each state agency that has a state meat or poultry inspection program. Although the meat and poultry are inspected by state-employed inspectors, the federally-employed state coordinator will oversee the training and inspection activities of state agency personnel, assure that meat and poultry processing plants are in full compliance with the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and report to USDA on the status of the processing operations.
- Meat and poultry inspected in the new program will use a federal mark, stamp, tag or label of inspection.
- The new program will be open to meat and poultry processors with up to 25 employees.
- USDA may also develop a procedure to help establishments that employ between 26-35 employees to transition to federal inspection in order to ship their products in interstate commerce.
- USDA is required to reimburse the states for at least 60% of the costs related to inspection of the meat and poultry processors selected for the new inspection program.
- USDA is required to establish an inspection training division within the Food Safety Inspection Service



Interstate Movement of Meat and Poultry, continued

to coordinate initiatives to provide outreach, education, and training to small or very small establishments. USDA will provide funding to state agencies to provide outreach, technical assistance, education, and training to small or very small establishments.

- USDA's Office of Inspector General is required to conduct periodic audits to assure plants operating under Title V are complying with federal requirements.

Status of the Program

The 2008 Farm Bill directs USDA to disseminate final regulations for this new meat and poultry inspection program no later than 18 months after enactment of the 2008 Farm Bill.

The Farm Bill requires that the U.S. Government Accountability Office conduct an audit within three to five years after implementation.


Administration and Contact Information

The USDA website for the Food Safety Inspection Service is www.fsis.usda.gov.

A listing of the 28 states with state inspection programs is at: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations & Policies/Listing of Participating States/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations%20&%20Policies/Listing%20of%20Participating%20States/index.asp)

For FSIS office locations and phone numbers, see: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Contact Us/Office Locations & Phone Numbers/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Contact%20Us/Office%20Locations%20&%20Phone%20Numbers/index.asp).

For information about Interstate Sales of State-Inspected Meat and Poultry from the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, see: <http://www.nasda.org/cms/7196/7357/8552/8613.aspx>.



Risk Management and Outreach Programs

- *Risk Management Education for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers*
Competitive grants to enhance farmers knowledge on risk management tools and decision-making
- *Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers*
Competitive grants for organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers



Risk Management Education for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

What Is the Risk Management Education and Partnership Grants Program?

Risk management education and partnership programs fund projects to inform farmers about crop insurance, futures, options, forward contracts, as well as broader risk management topics such as crop and enterprise diversification, conservation planning, new and value-added markets, debt reduction, and asset building strategies. There are several distinct grant programs funded under this general heading, including:

- USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) manages the \$5 million a year Risk Management Education (RME) Program to provide farmers with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed risk management decisions for their operations, with the goal of enhancing farm profitability. The program operates through four regional risk management education centers, located at University of Delaware, Texas A&M, University of Nebraska, and Washington State University (see Implementation Basics for contact information).
- USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) administers several programs, including two that apply nationally — Community Outreach and Assistance Partnerships (COAP) and Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management Education, and one — Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States — that is focused on providing crop insurance education solely in the 15 states with the lowest participation rates in the federal crop insurance program. In recent years, each of these programs has funded a substantial number of projects related to sustainable and organic agriculture and to beginning, minority, and women farmers. The Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program in particular funds collaborative outreach and assistance initiatives between public and private entities that assist socially disadvantaged, beginning, and other traditionally under-served farmers and ranchers.

What Has Changed

The only farm bill change to the CSREES-administered regional Risk Management Education program was the addition of a special emphasis for awarding grants to risk management education projects that assist:

- Beginning farmers or ranchers
- Legal immigrant farmers or ranchers that are attempting to become established producers in the U.S.
- Socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers
- Farmers or ranchers that are preparing to retire and are pursuing transition strategies to help new farmers or ranchers get started
- New or established farmers or ranchers that are converting production and marketing systems to pursue new markets

The mandatory funding was continued at \$5 million a year.

The major change to the RMA-run programs was a cut in funding. Prior to the 2008 Farm Bill, RMA received \$20 million a year in mandatory funding which was used for both contracting with schools and firms to do research and development for new crop insurance products and risk management strategies for underserved commodities and areas, and for the partnership education and outreach programs. In addition, \$5 million a year in mandatory funding was available for Targeted States Education. That \$5 million for the 15 most underserved states (the northeastern states plus WY, UT, and NV; and the 2008 bill adds HI as the new 16th state) is continued in the new bill, but the \$20 million amount for the R&D contracting and the partnership programs was cut to \$12.5 million a year in mandatory funding.



Risk Management Education for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (cont.)

The new bill also directed RMA to enter into contracts, paid for out of the same \$12.5 million a year, for research and development of 6 new or revised insurance productions: crop insurance for organic production, energy crops, aquaculture, and bees, plus revenue insurance for contract poultry producers and for beginning farmers.

In addition, RMA was given the discretionary authority to transfer up to \$5 million a year from this same \$12.5 million line item to improve its computer systems.

As a result of the overall cut, the new mandated contracts, and the transfer authority, significantly less money will be available each year for the partnership education and outreach programs.

How the RME Program Works

Four regional centers administer the funding opportunities annually with input from producers and other stakeholders knowledgeable and interested in agricultural risk management

The Western Center for Risk Management Education

<http://www.westrme.wsu.edu/index.html>

The Southern Region Risk Management Education

<http://srrme.tamu.edu/index.html>

The North Central Risk Management Education Center

<http://www.ncrme.org/>

The Northeast Center for Risk Management Education

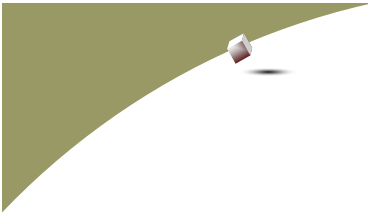
<http://www.necrme.org/grants/newfunding.html>

Application is a two-step process. Applicants first submit a short, online Pre-Proposal and, if they are selected, a more detailed Full Proposal. Grant awards normally do not exceed \$50,000 per project. The range of awards is generally from \$5,000–\$50,000; however, there is no absolute upper or lower limit on the funds provided to a project; awards reflect a mix of project sizes to meet a center's investment goal of a balanced portfolio. CSREES has stated that awards go projects that clearly identify risk management results and have a well-thought-out approach to achieve those results.

How the RMA Program Works

RMA announces the availability of funds for its partnership and cooperative agreements each year via the Federal Register and the RMA website (www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements/). Partners conduct risk management and crop insurance education, community outreach and assistance, and research and development activities. Information about eligibility criteria is outlined in each Federal Register Request for Applications.

The Request for Applications for the Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program for 2009 was published on December 15, 2008. About \$3.4 million was available for collaborative outreach, assistance, and training projects on risk management solutions for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or traditionally underserved farmers and ranchers who produce priority commodities. Applications were given higher points if they demonstrated that their projects would specifically incorporate training on the benefits and implementation of the Adjusted Gross Revenue Lite insurance coverage plan, promote energy alternatives for small farmers and ranchers, or partner with organizations that can meet the needs of limited resources, minority, or beginning farmers and ranchers.



Risk Management Education for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (cont.)

Applications for this round was due by February 13, 2009 and all awards and partnership agreements were set to be completed by September 30, 2009. So that gives you an idea of the turn around time for the application process, roughly 60 days. For complete information, go to <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-29549.pdf>.

Applicants interested in RMA funding can go to the [RMA website](#) for an application checklist, instructions, samples, templates, and all required forms needed to prepare an application. Applicants should pay close attention to the closing date and time for receipt of an application as applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Examples of Past Grant Recipients for the Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program

A full list of project funded under this program can be found at the [Digital Center for Risk Management Education](#) at the University of Minnesota <http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/>

Examples include:

California FarmLink

California FarmLink received \$105,000 in 2007 for a project entitled "Empowering Underserved Farmers to Manage Risk through Business Planning and Farm Financing" to offer trainings on business planning, farm financing, crop insurance, and land tenure to minority and young farmers, as well as succession planning.

Land Stewardship Project

Land Stewardship Project received \$93,940 in 2007 for a New Forsevic Ag Project to help beginning farmers who want to raise alternative crops and livestock find strategies to mitigate risk.

Michael Fields Ag Institute

Michael Fields Ag Institute received \$150,000 in 2007 to assist immigrant and other underserved farmers and ranchers increase the number of successful applications to RMA and other USDA programs by assuring that language and culture are not a barrier in completing an application.

Michigan Land Use Institute

The Michigan Land Use Institute received \$88,744 in 2007 to help increase the number and success of small scale farmers in the region by providing targeted risk management and outreach planning, promotion, and delivery of information addressing production, marketing and financial risks.

USDA Contact Information

Janie Hipp, CSREES, RME National Program Leader, jhipp@csrees.usda.gov, 202-720-3605

CSREES Regional Centers are at:

<http://srrme.tamu.edu/regionalcenters.html>

RMA:

<http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements/>

David Wiggins, USDA National Outreach Program Manager, David.wiggins@rma.usda.gov
(202) 690-2686

Michelle Fuller

Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management Education and the Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States

Phone (202) 720-6356; Fax (202) 690-3605

E-mail: michelle.fuller@wdc.usda.gov



Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

What Is the Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers?

The Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program (OASDFR) provides funds to organizations to conduct outreach and technical assistance to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to own and operate farms and ranches and to participate in agricultural programs. The OASDFR will support a wide range of outreach and assistance activities in farm management, financial management, marketing, application and bidding procedures, and other areas. The primary purpose of the OASDFR is to deliver outreach and technical assistance, to assure opportunities for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to successfully acquire, own, operate, and retain farms and ranches; and assure equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs.

This provision builds on USDA's outreach and technical assistance services in order to enhance greater participation of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in USDA programs. Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers include: African Americans, American Indians, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and Women. It provides, among other things, a stronger focus on program participation and requires that grants made under this section go to organizations that have a demonstrated track record of improving program participation.

What Has changed?

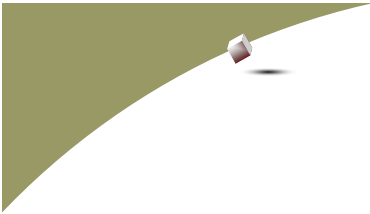
Two major legislative changes were made to the Section 2501 program in the 2008 Farm Bill. First, the program will now be administered by the new USDA Office of Outreach and Advocacy instead of CSREES, although the program may remain at CSREES for a transition period. Second, funding for the program is increased substantially (see funding section below) to help reach more farmers and ranchers in underserved areas and to improve and expand existing outreach and technical assistance projects.

Other changes include a requirement for grant recipients to have demonstrated an ability to carry out enhanced coordination of outreach, technical assistance, and education efforts; they must also help reach current and prospective socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers in a linguistically appropriate manner and improve the participation rate of these farmers in USDA programs.

For appropriate oversight and analysis of the program's impact, USDA is required to submit an annual report to both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees outlining the list of grant recipients, the activities and programs being funded to benefit socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, the number of producers being served by programs, and any problems or barriers identified by stakeholders that should be handled.

Status of the Program

The Department of Agriculture makes grants and contracts to entities that assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers in becoming owners and operators of farms and help them participate equitably in the full range of agricultural programs offered by the USDA. The authorized FY 2008 funding for this program was just \$6.4 million. In contrast, the new Farm Bill provides, for the first time, mandatory funding at a level of \$75 million over 4 years. The new bill also adds a requirement that outreach be language appropriate.



Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

As an annual competitive grant program, a Section 2501 program request for applications (RFA) is issued each year in the Federal Register and Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. These documents explain the program and its application instructions, in addition to the process for providing comments and public input on the RFA. The request for applications for 2008 was published on September 24, 2008 and closed on December 12, 2008. There is no Letter of Intent required for this grant.

The latest RFA, with additional information, is on the web at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/outreachassistancesociallydisadvantagedfarmersranchers.cfm>.

Who Is Eligible to Apply

- 1862 Land-Grant Institutions
- 1890 Land-Grant Institutions
- 1994 Land-Grant Institutions
- Hispanic-Serving Institutions
- Native American Tribal Governments (Federally Recognized)
- Native American Tribal Organizations, not Federally recognized Tribal Governments
- Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) IRS status, other than Institutions of Higher Ed
- Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) IRS status, other than Institutions of Higher Ed
- Other or Additional Information
- State Controlled Institutions of Higher Ed

Examples of Past Grant Recipients

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (www.albafarmers.org/)

The Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) in Salinas, CA received \$253,217 in FY 05 to enhance business management skills of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. ALBA has been successful in helping former migrant workers, some of which have never farmed before, become prosperous farm owners. With the help of this grant and other funding, ALBA has created several influential and thriving programs in agricultural training, business and marketing education, and leadership development which benefit a diverse group of farmers and ranchers.


Federation of Southern Cooperatives (www.federationsoutherncoop.com/)

In 2007, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives received \$299,723, more than doubling its 2005 and 2006 grants, to strengthen the farm management and marketing skills of minority farmers in the southern region of the United States. The funding helped FSC to operate programs such as the Small Farm and Sustainable Agriculture Program, which helps farmers develop successful family farm businesses with technical assistance in farm management, setting farm goals, and financial analysis.

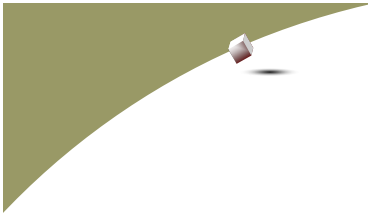
Administration and Contact Information

Please note that since this program will be under the Office of Outreach and Advocacy, this information will change. The updated contact information for this program will be posted to the web version of this guide once the new office is established. Current contact information is as follows:

Dionne Toombs, National Program Leader, Competitive Programs, dtoombs@csrees.usda.gov 202-401-2138



Resource Section: State-by-State Government Agency and Organizational Contacts



Alabama Alaska Arizona Arkansas

Alabama

Natural Resources Conservation Service
PO Box 311
3381 Skyway Drive
Auburn AL 36830
Phone: 334-887-4500
Fax: 334-887-4551
www.al.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Suite 601, Sterling Centre
4121 Carmichael Road
Montgomery AL 36106
Phone: 334-279-3616
Fax: 334-279-3403
www.rurdev.usda.gov/al

Farm Service Agency
4121 Carmichael Road, Suite 600
Montgomery AL 36106
Phone: 334-279-3500
www.fsa.usda.gov

Alabama Department of Agriculture
1445 Federal Drive
Montgomery AL 36107
Phone: 334-240-7171
Toll Free Phone: 800-642-7761
www.agi.state.al.us

Alabama Agricultural Development
Authority
PO Box 3336
Montgomery AL 36109
Phone: 334-240-7245
Fax: 334-240-7270
ageconadm@agi.state.al.us

Alaska

Natural Resources Conservation Service
800 West Evergreen Avenue, Suite 100
Palmer AK 99645
Phone: 907-761-7760
Fax: 907-761-7790
www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
800 W. Evergreen, Suite 201
Palmer AK 99645
Phone: 907-761-7705
Fax: 907-761-7783
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ak

Farm Service Agency
800 West Evergreen Avenue, Suite 216
Palmer AK 99645
Phone: 907-761-7738
Fax: 907-761-7789
www.fsa.usda.gov

Alaska Department of Agriculture
1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12
Palmer AK 99645
Phone: 907-745-7200
Fax: 907-745-7112
www.dnr.state.ak.us/ag

Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Division of Agriculture
Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund
1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12
Palmer AK 99645
Phone: 907-761-3851
Fax: 907-745-7112
www.dnr.state.ak.us/ag/ag_arlf.htm

Arizona

Natural Resources Conservation Service
230 North 1st Avenue, Suite 509
Phoenix AZ 85003
Phone: (602) 280-8801
www.az.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
230 North 1st Avenue, Suite 206
Phoenix AZ 85003
Phone: 602-280-8701
Fax: 602-280-8770
www.rurdev.usda.gov/az

Farm Service Agency
230 North 1st Avenue, Suite 506
Phoenix AZ 85003
Phone: 602-285-6300
Fax: 602-285-6325
www.fsa.usda.gov

Arizona Department of Agriculture
1688 West Adams Street
Phoenix AZ 85007
Phone: 602-542-4373
www.azda.gov

Arkansas

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Room 3416, Federal Building
700 West Capitol Avenue
Little Rock AR 72201
Phone: 501-301-3100
Fax: 501-301-3194
www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
700 West Capitol, Room 3416
Little Rock AR 72201
Phone: 501-301-3280
Fax: 501-301-3278
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ar

Farm Service Agency
700 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 3416
Little Rock AR 72201
Phone: 501-301-3000
www.fsa.usda.gov

Arkansas Department of Agriculture
1 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock AR 72205
Phone: 501-683-4851
Fax: 501-683-4852
<http://aad.arkansas.gov>

Delta Land and Community, Inc
920 Highway 153
Almyra AR 72003
Phone: 870-673-6346
Fax: 870-673-7219
www.deltanetwork.org/ar/dlc.htm

National Center for Appropriate
Technology
Southeast Region
207 West Center Street
PO Box 3657
Fayetteville AR 72701
Phone: 479-442-9824
Fax: 479-442-9842
www.ncat.org

Arkansas Development Finance Authority
PO Box 8023
Little Rock AR 72203
Phone: 501-682-5900
Fax: 501-682-5939
www.state.ar.us/adfa

California

Natural Resources Conservation Service
430 G Street #4164
Davis CA 95616
Phone: 530-792-5600
Fax: 530-792-5790
www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
430 G Street, Agency 4169
Davis CA 95616
Phone: 530-792-5800
Fax: 530-792-5837
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca

Farm Service Agency
430 G Street, Suite 4161
Davis CA 95616
Phone: 530-792-5520
www.fsa.usda.gov

California Department of Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento CA 95814
Phone: 916-654-0462
www.cdfa.ca.gov

Agriculture and Land-Based Training
Association
PO Box 6264
Salinas CA 93912
Phone: 831-758-1469
Fax: 831-758-3665
www.albafarmers.org

CA FarmLink
PO Box 2224
Sebastopol CA 95473
Phone: 707-829-1691
Fax: 707-829-1693
www.californiafarmlink.org

UC Santa Cruz
The Center for Agroecology
Sustainable Food Systems
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz CA 95604
Phone: 831-459-3240
casfs.ucsc.edu

Community Alliance with Family Farmers
36355 Russell Boulevard
PO Box 363
Davis CA 95617
Phone: 530-756-8518
Fax: 530-756-7857
www.caff.org

Ecological Farming Association
406 Main Street Suite 313
Watsonville CA 95076
Phone: 831-763-2111
<http://www.eco-farm.org>

National Center for Appropriate
Technology California
36355 Russell Boulevard
PO Box 2218
Davis CA 95616
Phone: 530-792-7338
www.ncat.org

Organic Farming Research Foundation
303 Potrero Street, Suite 29-203
PO Box 440
Santa Cruz CA 95060
Phone: 831-426-6606
Fax: 831-426-6670
www.ofrf.org

Sierra Club, National Headquarters
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco CA 94105
Phone: 415-977-5500
Fax: 415-977-5799
www.sierraclub.org

California Coastal Rural Development
Corporation
221 Main Street, Suite 301
Salinas CA 93901
Phone: 831-424-1099
Fax: 831-424-1094
www.calcoastal.org

Colorado

Natural Resources Conservation Service
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C
Lakewood CO 80215
Phone: 720-544-2810
Fax: 720-544-2962
www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
655 Parfet Street, Room E-100
Lakewood CO 80215
Phone: 720-544-2903
Fax: 720-544-2981
www.rurdev.usda.gov/co

Farm Service Agency
655 Parfet Street
Lakewood CO 80215
Phone: 720-544-2876
Fax: 720-544-2966
www.fsa.usda.gov

Colorado Department of Agriculture
700 Kipling Street, Suite 4000
Lakewood CO 80215
Phone: 303-239-4100
Fax: 303-239-4125
www.colorado.gov/ag

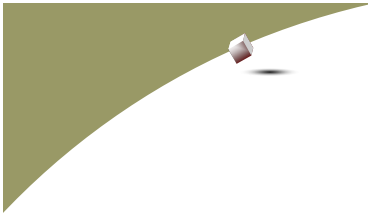
Colorado Agricultural Development
Authority
700 Kipling, Suite 4000
Lakewood CO 80215
Phone: 303-239-4114
Fax: 303-239-4125
www.coloradoagriculture.org

Connecticut

Natural Resources Conservation Service
344 Merrow Road, Suite A
Tolland CT 06084-3917
Phone: 860-871-4011
Phone: 860-875-6928
Fax: 860-871-4054
www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
451 West Street, Suite 2
Amherst MA 01002-2999
Phone: 413-253-4300
Toll Free Phone: 800-352-8015
Fax: 413-253-4347
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ma

Farm Service Agency
344 Merrow Road, Suite B
Tolland CT 06084
Phone: 860-871-2944
Fax: 860-871-4184
www.fsa.usda.gov



Delaware Florida Georgia Hawaii

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford CT 06106
Phone: 860-713-2569
Toll Free Phone: 800-861-9939
Fax: 860-713-2514
www.ct.gov/doag

Connecticut FarmLink Program
Connecticut Department of Agriculture,
Marketing Division
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 129
Hartford CT 06106
Phone: 860-713-2503
www.farmlink.uconn.edu

Delaware

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1221 College Park Drive, Suite 100
Dover DE 19904
Phone: 302-678-4160
Fax: 302-678-0843
www.de.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
1221 College Park Drive, Suite 200
Dover DE 19904
Phone: 302-857-3580
Fax: 302-857-3640
www.rurdev.usda.gov/de

Farm Service Agency
1221 College Park Drive, Suite 201
Dover DE 19904
Phone: 302-678-4250
Fax: 302-678-9100
www.fsa.usda.gov

Delaware Department of Agriculture
2320 South DuPont Highway
Dover Delaware 19901
Phone: 302-698-4500
Toll Free Phone: 800-282-8685
<http://dda.delaware.gov>

Florida

Natural Resources Conservation Service
2614 NW 43rd Avenue
Gainesville FL 32606
Phone: 352-338-9500
Fax: 352-338-9574
www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
4440 NW 25th Place
Gainesville FL 32606
Phone: 352-338-3402
Fax: 352-338-3482
www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl

Farm Service Agency
PO Box 141030
Gainesville FL 32614
Phone: 352-379-4500
Fax: 352-379-4580
www.fsa.usda.gov

Florida Department of Agriculture
The Capitol
Tallahassee FL 32399
Phone: 850-488-3022
<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us>

Georgia

Natural Resources Conservation Service
355 East Hancock Avenue
Stop Number 200
Athens GA 30601
Phone: 706-546-2272
Fax: 706-546-2120
www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Stephens Federal Building
355 East Hancock Avenue
Athens GA 30601
Phone: 706-546-2162
Fax: 706-546-2152
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga

Farm Service Agency
355 East Hancock Avenue STOP 100
Athens GA 30601
Phone: 706-546-2151
Fax: 706-546-2151
www.fsa.usda.gov

Georgia Department of Agriculture
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, SW
Atlanta GA 30334
Phone: 404-656-3645
Toll Free Phone: 800-282-5852
<http://agr.georgia.gov>

Georgia Development Authority
2200 Parklake Drive, Suite 150
Atlanta GA 30345
Phone: 770-414-3400
Fax: 770-414-3407
www.GDAOnline.com

Hawaii

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Prince Kuhio Federal Building
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 4-118
Honolulu HI 96850
Phone: 808-541-2600
Fax: 808-541-1335
www.hi.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Room 311, Federal Building
154 Waiianuenue Avenue
Hilo HI 96720
Phone: 808-933-8302
Fax: 808-933-8327
www.rurdev.usda.gov/hi

Farm Service Agency
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 5-112
Honolulu HI 96850
Phone: 808-541-2600, ext 353
Fax: 808-541-2648
www.fsa.usda.gov

Hawaii Department of Agriculture
1428 South King Street
Honolulu HI 96814
Phone: 808-973-9560
Fax: 808-973-9613
<http://hawaii.gov/hdoa>

Hawaii Department of Agriculture,
Agricultural Loan Division
1428 South King Street
Honolulu HI 96814
Phone: 808-973-9460
Fax: 808-973-9455
<http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/Info/financial>

Idaho

Natural Resources Conservation Service
9173 West Barnes Drive, Suite C
Boise ID 83709
Phone: 208-378-5700
Fax: 208-378-5735
www.id.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
9173 West Barnes Drive, Suite A1
Boise ID 83709
Phone: 208-378-5600
Toll Free Phone: 800-632-5991
Fax: 208-378-5643
www.rurdev.usda.gov/id

Farm Service Agency
9173 West Barnes Drive
Boise ID 83709
Phone: 208-378-5650
Fax: 208-378-5678
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 790
2270 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise ID 83701
Phone: 208-332-8500
Fax: 208-334-2170
www.agri.state.id.us
<http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/Marketing/financialassistance.php>

Cultivating Success
Amanda Snyder
Phone: 208-885-2049
Fax: 208-885-7760
www.cultivatinguccess.org

Illinois

Natural Resources Conservation Service
2118 W Park Court
Champaign IL 61821
Phone: 217-353-6600
Fax: 217-353-6676
www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
2118 West Park Court, Suite A
Champaign IL 61821
Phone: 217-403-6200
www.rurdev.usda.gov/il

Farm Service Agency
3500 Wabash Avenue
PO Box 19273
Springfield IL 62711
Phone: 217-241-6600, ext 2
Fax: 217-241-6619
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 19281
State Fairgrounds
Springfield IL 62794
Phone: 217-782-2172
Fax: 217-785-4505
www.agr.state.il.us

Angelic Organics Learning Center
1547 Rockton Road
Caledonia IL 61011
Phone: 815-389-8455
Fax: 425-969-0317
www.csalearningcenter.org

Central Illinois Farm Beginnings
1227 Dodge Avenue, Suite 200
Evanston IL 60202
Phone: 847-570-0701
Fax: 847-570-0711
<http://illinoisfarmbeginnings.org>

Prairie Crossing Beginning Farmer
Incubator
Mike Sands
mikesands@prairiecrossing.org

Delta Land and Community, Inc
920 Highway 153
Almyra AR 72003
Phone: 870-673-6346
Fax: 870-673-7219
www.deltanetwork.org/ar/dlc.htm

Illinois Stewardship Alliance
PO Box 648
Rochester IL 62563
Phone: 217-498-9707
Fax: 217-660-8008
www.illinoisstewardshipalliance.org

Illinois Finance Authority
427 East Monroe, Suite 202
Springfield IL 62701
Phone: 217-782-5792
Fax: 217-782-3989
www.il-fa.com

Indiana

Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis IN 46278
Phone: 317-290-3200
Fax: 317-290-3225
www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
5975 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis IN 46278
Phone: 317-290-3100
Fax: 317-290-3127
www.rurdev.usda.gov/in

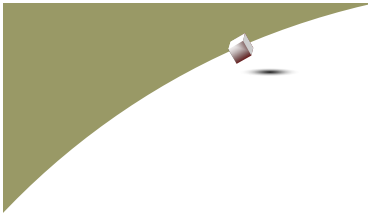
Farm Service Agency
5981 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis IN 46278
Phone: 317-290-3030
Fax: 317-290-3045
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
101 West Ohio Street, Suite 1200
Indianapolis IN 46204
Phone: 317-232-8770
www.in.gov/isda

Indiana Development Finance Authority
One North Capitol Avenue, Suite 900
Indianapolis IN 46204
Phone: 317-233-4332
Fax: 317-232-6786
www.in.gov/idfa

Iowa

Natural Resources Conservation Service
693 Federal Building
210 Walnut Street
Des Moines IA 50309
Phone: 515-284-4769
Fax: 515-284-4394
www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov



Iowa (cont)

Kansas

Kentucky

USDA Rural Development
210 Walnut Street, Room 873
Des Moines IA 50309
Phone: 515-284-4663
Fax: 515-284-4859
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ia

Farm Service Agency
10500 Buena Vista Court
Urbandale IA 50322
Phone: 515-254-1540
Fax: 515-254-1573
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
Wallace State Office Building
502 East 9th Street
Des Moines IA 50319
Phone: 515-281-5321
www.agriculture.state.ia.us

Farm On—Beginning Farmer Center
Iowa State University Extension
10861 Douglas Avenue, Suite B
Urbandale IA 50322
Phone: 515-252-7814
Toll Free Phone: 877-BFC-1999
Fax: 515-252-7828
www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc

Practical Farmers of Iowa
PO Box 349
137 Lynn Avenue, Suite 200
Ames IA 50010
Phone: 515-232-5661
Fax: 515-232-5649
www.practicalfarmers.org

Iowa Environmental Council
521 East Locust Street, Suite 220
Des Moines IA 50309
Phone: 515-244-1194
Fax: 515-244-7856
www.iaenvironment.org

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
505 Fifth Avenue, Suite 444
Des Moines IA 50309
Phone: 515-288-1846
Fax: 515-288-0137
www.inhf.org

National Catholic Rural Life Conference
4625 Beaver Avenue
Des Moines IA 50310
Phone: 515-270-2634
Fax: 515-270-9447
www.ncrlc.com

National Center for Appropriate
Technology Midwest
53020 Hitchcock Avenue
Lewis IA 51544
Phone: 712-769-2604
www.ncat.org

Iowa Agricultural Development Authority
505 Fifth Avenue, Suite 327
Des Moines IA 50309
Phone: 515-281-6444
Fax: 515-281-8618
www.iada.state.ia.us
iada@iada.state.ia.us

Kansas

Natural Resources Conservation Service
760 South Broadway
Salina KS 67401
Phone: 785-823-4500
Fax: 785-823-4540
www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
1303 SW First American Place, Suite 100
Topeka KS 66604
Phone: 785-271-2700
Fax: 785-271-2708
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

Farm Service Agency
3600 Anderson Avenue
Manhattan KS 66503
Phone: 785-539-3531
Fax: 785-537-9659
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
109 Southwest 9th Street
Topeka KS 66612
Phone: 785-296-3556
Fax: 785-296-8389
www.ksda.gov

Kansas Rural Center
304 Pratt
PO Box 133
Whiting KS 66552
Phone: 785-873-3431
www.kansasruralcenter.org

Kansas Development Finance Authority
555 S. Kansas Avenue, Suite 202
Topeka KS 66603
Phone: 785-357-4445
Fax: 785-357-4478
www.kdfa.org

Kentucky

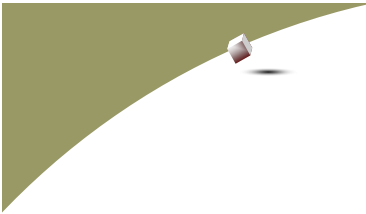
Natural Resources Conservation Service
771 Corporate Drive, Suite 210
Lexington KY 40503
Phone: 859-224-7350
Fax: 859-224-7399
www.ky.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200
Lexington KY 40503
Phone: 859-224-7400
Fax: 859-224-7425
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ky

Farm Service Agency
771 Corporate Drive, Suite 100
Lexington KY 40503
Phone: 859-224-7601
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
32 Fountain Place
Frankfort KY 40601
Phone: 502-564-4696
Fax: 502-564-2133
www.kyagr.com

Delta Land and Community, Inc
920 Highway 153
Almyra AR 72003
Phone: 870-673-6346
Fax: 870-673-7219
www.deltanetwork.org/ar/dlc.htm



Kentucky (cont)

Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation
404 Ann Street
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: 502-564-4627
Fax: 502-564-8990
<http://kafc.ky.gov>

Louisiana

Natural Resources Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria LA 71302
Phone: 318-473-7751
Fax: 318-473-7626
www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
3727 Government Street
Alexandria LA 71302
Phone: 318-473-7921
Fax: 318-473-7829
www.rurdev.usda.gov/la

Farm Service Agency
3737 Government Street
Alexandria LA 71302
Phone: 318-473-7721
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 631
Baton Rouge LA 70821
Phone: 866-927-2476
www.ldaf.state.la.us

Delta Land and Community, Inc
920 Highway 153
Almyra AR 72003
Phone: 870-673-6346
Fax: 870-673-7219
www.deltanetwork.org/ar/dlc.htm

National Center for Appropriate
Technology Gulf States
SLU Box 11435
Hammond LA 70402
Phone: 985-549-5134
www.ncat.org

Louisiana Agriculture Finance Authority
PO Box 3334
Baton Rouge LA 70821
Phone: 225-922-1292
Fax: 225-922-1289

Maine

Natural Resources Conservation Service
967 Illinois Avenue, Suite 3
Bangor ME 04401
Phone: 207-990-9100, ext 3
Fax: 207-990-9599
www.me.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
PO Box 405
967 Illinois Avenue, Suite 4
Bangor ME 04402
Phone: 207-990-9160
Fax: 207-990-9165
www.rurdev.usda.gov/me

Farm Service Agency
967 Illinois Avenue
Bangor ME 04401
Phone: 207-990-9100, ext 2
Fax: 207-990-9169
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
Deering Building—AMHI Complex
28 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333
Phone: 207-287-3419
Fax: 207-287-7548
www.maine.gov/agriculture

Maine Farmlink
97 Main Street
Belfast ME 04915
Phone: 207-338-6575
Fax: 207-338-6024
www.maineFarmlink.org

Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)
5 Community Drive
PO Box 949
Augusta ME 04332
Phone: 207-623-3263
Toll Free Phone: 800-228-3734
Fax: 207-623-0095
www.famemaine.com

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners
Association
PO Box 170
294 Crosby Brook Road
Unity ME 04988
Phone: 207-568-4142
Fax: 207-568-4141
www.mofga.org

Maryland

Natural Resources Conservation Service
John Hanson Business Center
339 Busch's Frontage Road, Suite 301
Annapolis MD 21409
Phone: 410-757-0861
Fax: 410-757-0687
www.md.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
1221 College Park Drive, Suite 200
Dover DE 19904
Phone: 302-857-3580
Fax: 302-857-3640
www.rurdev.usda.gov/md

Farm Service Agency
339 Busch's Frontage Road
Annapolis MD 21409
Phone: 443-482-2760
Fax: 410-757-9265
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
50 Harry S Truman Parkway
Annapolis MD 21401
Phone: 410-841-5700
www.mda.state.md.us

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
PO Box 169
Queenstown MD 21658
Phone: 410-827-9756
Fax: 410-827-5765
www.eslc.org

Future Harvest/Chesapeake Alliance for
Sustainable Agriculture (CASA)
PO Box 1544
Eldersburg MD 21784
Phone: 410-549-7878
Fax: 410-549-9778
www.futureharvestcasa.org



Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota

Massachusetts

Natural Resources Conservation Service
451 West Street
Amherst MA 01002
Phone: 413-253-4350
Fax: 413-253-4375
www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
451 West Street, Suite 2
Amherst MA 01002
Phone: 413-253-4300
Toll Free Phone: 800-352-8015
Fax: 413-253-4347
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ma

Farm Service Agency
445 West Street
Amherst MA 01002
Phone: 413-253-4500
Fax: 413-253-4540
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston MA 02114
Phone: 617-626-1700
Fax: 617-626-1850
www.mass.gov/agr

Flats Mentor Farms
Maria Moreira
237 Brockelman Road
Lancaster MA 01523
Phone: 978-815-2199
mmoreira@umext.umass.edu

New England Small Farm Institute
275 Jackson Street
Belchertown MA 01007
Phone: 413-323-4531
Fax: 413-323-9594
www.smallfarm.org

New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
9 Central Street, Suite 402
Lowell MA 01852
Phone: 978-654-6745
<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu>

The Farm School
Sentinel Farm
488 Moore Hill Road
Athol MA 01331
Phone: 978-249-9944
www.farmschool.org

Michigan

Natural Resources Conservation Service
3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing MI 48823
Phone: 517-324-5270
Fax: 517-324-5171
www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
3001 Coolidge, Suite 200
East Lansing MI 48823
Phone: 517-324-5188
Fax: 517-324-5225
www.rurdev.usda.gov/mi

Farm Service Agency
3001 Coolidge, Suite 350
East Lansing MI 48823
Phone: 517-324-5110
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 30017
Lansing MI 48909
Toll Free Phone: 800-292-3939
www.michigan.gov/mda

Michigan Land Use Institute
148 E Front Street, Suite 301
Traverse City MI 49684
Phone: 231-941-6584
Fax: 231-929-0937
<http://mlui.org>

Michigan Integrated Food and Farming
System
416 Agriculture Hall
East Lansing MI 48824
Phone: 517-432-0712
Fax: 517-353-7961
www.miffs.org

FarmLink
Michigan Farm Bureau
7373 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing MI 48917
Phone: 517-323-7000
www.michfb.com/benefits/farmlink

Minnesota

Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul MN 55101
Phone: 651-602-7900
Fax: 651-602-7914
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
410 Agribank Building
375 Jackson Street
St. Paul MN 55101
Phone: 651-602-7800
Fax: 651-602-7824
www.rurdev.usda.gov/mn

Farm Service Agency
375 Jackson Street, Suite 400
St. Paul MN 55101
Phone: 651-602-7700
Fax: 651-602-7744
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul MN 55155
Phone: 651-201-6000
www.mda.state.mn.us

Land Stewardship Project
Farm Beginnings
PO Box 130
Lewiston MN 55952
Phone: 507-523-3366
www.landstewardshipproject.org

Sustainable Farming Association
Phone: 866-760-8732
www.sfa-mn.org

Institute of Agriculture and Trade Policy
2105 First Avenue South
Minneapolis MN 55404
Phone: 612-870-0453
Fax: 612-870-4846
www.iatp.org



Minnesota (cont)

Mississippi

Missouri

Montana

Izaak Walton League
Midwest Office
1619 Davis Avenue, Suite 202
St Paul MN 55104
Phone: 651-649-1446
www.iwla.org

The Minnesota Project
1885 University Avenue, Suite 315
St Paul MN 55104
Phone: 651-645-6159
Fax: 651-645-1262
www.mnproject.org

Minnesota Rural Finance Authority
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul MN 55155
Phone: 651-297-3557
Fax: 651-296-9388
www.mda.state.mn.us/about/divisions/agfinance.htm

Mississippi

Natural Resources Conservation Service
100 Capitol Street
Federal Building, Suite 1321
Jackson MS 39269
Phone: 601-965-5205, ext 130
Fax: 601-965-4940
www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
100 West Capitol Street
Federal Building, Suite 831
Jackson MS 39269
Phone: 601-965-4316
Fax: 601-965-4088
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ms

Farm Service Agency
6311 Ridgewood Road, Suite W100
Jackson MS 39211
Phone: 601-965-4300
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 1609
121 N Jefferson Street
Jackson MS 39215
Phone: 601-359-1100
Fax: 601-354-6290
www.mdac.state.ms.us

Delta Land and Community, Inc
920 Highway 153
Almyra AR 72003
Phone: 870-673-6346
Fax: 870-673-7219
www.deltanetwork.org/ar/dlc.htm

Mississippi Development Authority
PO Box 849
501 North West Street
Jackson MS 39205
Phone: 601-359-3552
Fax: 601-359-3619
www.mississippi.org

Missouri

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Parkade Center Suite 250
601 Business Loop 70 West
Columbia MO 65203-2546
Phone: 573-876-0900
Fax: 573-876-0913
www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
601 Business Loop 70 West
Parkade Center, Suite 235
Columbia MO 65203
Phone: 573-876-0976
Fax: 573-876-0977
www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo

Farm Service Agency
Parkade Center, Suite 225
Columbia MO 65203
Phone: 573-876-0925
Fax: 573-876-0935
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 630
1616 Missouri Boulevard
Jefferson City MO 65102
Phone: 573-751-4211
www.mda.mo.gov

Delta Land and Community, Inc
920 Highway 153
Almyra AR 72003
Phone: 870-673-6346
Fax: 870-673-7219
www.deltanetwork.org/ar/dlc.htm

Missouri Agricultural and Small Business
Development Authority
PO Box 630
1616 Missouri Boulevard
Jefferson City MO 65102
Phone: 573-751-2129
Fax: 573-522-2416
www.mda.mo.gov/Financial/begfarm.htm

Montana

Natural Resources Conservation Service
10 East Babcock Street
Federal Building, Room 443
Bozeman MT 59715
Phone: 406-587-6811
Fax: 406-587-6761
www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Unit 1, Suite B
900 Technology Boulevard
Bozeman MT 59718
Phone: 406-585-2580
Fax: 406-585-2565
www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt

Farm Service Agency
10 E Babcock Street
Federal Building, Room 576
Bozeman MT 59715
Phone: 406-587-6872
Fax: 406-587-6887
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 200201
303 North Roberts Street
Helena MT 59620
Phone: 406-444-3144
Fax: 406-444-5409
<http://agr.mt.gov>

Land Link Montana
Community Food & Agriculture Coalition
127 N Higgins Avenue, Suite 305
Missoula MT 59802
Phone: 406-543-0542
www.landlinkmontana.org



Montana (cont)
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey

National Center for Appropriate
Technology
3040 Continental Drive
Butte MT 59702
Phone: 406-494-4572
Fax: 406-494-2905
www.ncat.org

Nebraska

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Room 152 Federal Building
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-437-5300
Fax: 402-437-5327
www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Federal Building, Room 152
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-437-5551
Fax: 402-437-5408
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne

Farm Service Agency
7131 A Street
Lincoln NE 68510
Phone: 402-437-5581
Fax: 402-437-5280
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 94947
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln NE 68509
Phone: 402-471-2341
Fax: 402-471-6876
www.agr.state.ne.us

Center for Rural Affairs
PO Box 136
145 Main Street
Lyons NE 68038
Phone: 402-687-2100
Fax: 402-687-2200
www.cfra.org

The Beginning Farmer Program
Nebraska Department of Agriculture
PO Box 94947
Lincoln NE 68509
Phone: 402-471-6890
Toll Free Phone: 800-446-4071
www.agr.ne.gov/division/med/begfrm.htm

Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
1230 "O" Street
Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-434-3900
Toll Free Phone: 1-800-204-NIFA
Fax: 402-434-3921
www.nifa.org

Nevada

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1365 Corporate Boulevard
Reno NV 89502
Phone: 775-857-8500
Fax: 775-857-8525
www.nv.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
1390 S Curry Street
Carson City NV 89703-5146
Phone: 775-887-1222, ext 19
Fax: 775-885-0841
www.rurdev.usda.gov/nv

Farm Service Agency
1755 E Plumb Lane Suite 202
Reno NV 89502
Phone: 775-784-5411
Fax: 775-784-5015
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
350 Capitol Hill
Reno NV 89502
Phone: 775-688-1180
Fax: 775-688-1178
<http://agri.state.nv.us>
<http://agri.nv.gov/>
ADMIN_JRAgriLoans.htm

New Hampshire

New Hampshire NRCS
Federal Building, 2 Madbury Road
Durham NH 03824
Phone: 603-868-7581
Fax: 603-868-5301
www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
City Center 3rd Floor
89 Main Street
Montpelier VT 05602
Phone: 802-828-6080
Fax: 802-828-6018
www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt

Farm Service Agency
22 Bridge Street, 4th Floor
Concord NH 03301
Phone: 603-224-7941
Fax: 603-225-1410
www.fsa.usda.gov

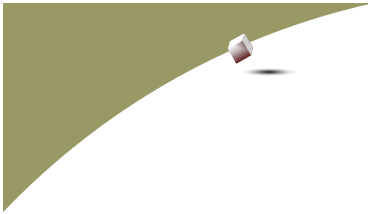
Department of Agriculture
25 Capitol Street, 2nd Floor
Concord NH 03302
Phone: 603-271-3551
Fax: 603-271-1109
<http://www.nh.gov/agric>

Beginning Farmers of New Hampshire
NH RC&D Area Councils
719 North Main Street, Room 220
Laconia NH 03246
Phone: 603-527-2093
www.sbfhn.org

Land for Good, Inc.
29 Center Street
Keene NH 03431
Phone: 603-357-1600
www.landforgood.org

New Jersey

Natural Resources Conservation Service
220 Davidson Avenue, 4th Floor
Somerset NJ 08873
Phone: 732-537-6040
Fax: 732-537-6095
www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov



New Jersey (cont)

New Mexico

New York

North Carolina

USDA Rural Development
5th Floor North
8000 Midlantic Drive
Mt Laurel NJ 08054
Phone: 856-787-7700
Fax: 856-787-7783
www.rurdev.usda.gov/nj

Farm Service Agency
163 US Highway, 130 Building 2
Bordertown NJ 08505
Phone: 609-298-3446
Fax: 609-298-8761
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
PO Box 330
Trenton NJ 08625
Phone: 609-292-3976
www.state.nj.us/agriculture

New Jersey Farm Link
State Ag Development Committee
PO Box 330
Trenton NJ 08625
Phone: 609-984-2504
Fax: 609-633-2004
www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmlink

New Mexico

Natural Resources Conservation Service
6200 Jefferson NE
Albuquerque NM 87109
Phone: 800-410-2067
Fax: 505-761-4462
www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
6200 Jefferson
Albuquerque NM 87109
Phone: 505-761-4950
Fax: 505-761-4976
www.rurdev.usda.gov/nm

Farm Service Agency
6200 Jefferson NE, Suite 211
Albuquerque NM 87109
Phone: 505-761-4900
Phone: 800-410-2067
Fax: 505-761-4934
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
MSC 3189, Box 30005
Las Cruces NM 88003
Phone: 575-646-3007
Fax: 575-646-8120
<http://nmdaweb.nmsu.edu>

New York

Natural Resources Conservation Service
441 South Salina Street, Suite 354
The Galleries of Syracuse
Syracuse NY 13202
Phone: 315-477-6524
Fax: 315-477-6560
www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
The Galleries of Syracuse
441 South Salina Street, Suite 357
Syracuse NY 13202
Phone: 315-477-6400
Fax: 315-477-6438
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ny

Farm Service Agency
441 South Salina Street, Suite 536
Syracuse NY 13202
Phone: 315-477-6300
Fax: 315-477-6323
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
10B Airline Drive
Albany NY 12235
Toll Free Phone: 800-554-4501
www.agmkt.state.ny.us

National Immigrant Farming Initiative
PO Box 8
Athens NY 12015
Phone: 518-945-2160
www.immigrantfarming.org

New Farmer Development Project
51 Chambers Street #228
New York NY 10007
Phone: 212-788-7900
<http://www.cenyc.org/greenmarket/nfdp>

New York Farm Link
415 Warren Hall
Ithaca NY 14853
Phone: 800-547-FARM (3276)
Fax: 607-254-7435
www.nyfarmlink.org

North Carolina

Natural Resources Conservation Service
4405 Bland Road Suite 205
Raleigh NC 27609
Phone: 919-873-2100
Fax: 919-873-2156
www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov

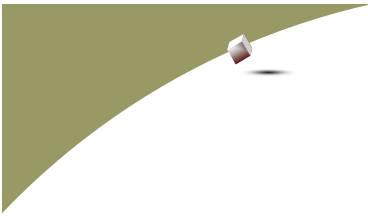
USDA Rural Development
4405 Bland Road Suite 260
Raleigh NC 27609
Phone: 919-873-2000
Fax: 919-873-2075
www.rurdev.usda.gov/nc

Farm Service Agency
4407 Bland Road, Suite 175
Raleigh NC 27609
Phone: 919-875-4800
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
1001 Mail Service Center
2 West Edenton Street
Raleigh NC 27699
Phone: 919-733-7125
www.ncagr.com

Land Loss Prevention Project
PO Box 179
Durham NC 27702
Phone: 919-682-5969
Toll Free Phone: 800-672-5839
Fax: 919-688-5596
www.landloss.org

Central Carolina Community College
The Sustainable Farming Program
764 West Street
Pittsboro NC 27312
Phone: 919-542-6492, ext. 229
www.ibiblio.org/farming-connection/localcon/groups/sfpeccc.htm



North Carolina North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma

Center for Environmental Farming
Systems
North Carolina State University
224 Kilgore Hall Box 7609
Raleigh NC 27695
Phone: 919-513-0954
www.cefs.ncsu.edu/index.htm

Rural Advancement Foundation
International, USA (RAFI-USA)
PO Box 640
Pittsboro NC 27312
Phone: 919-542-1396
Fax: 919-542-0069
www.rafiusa.org

North Carolina Agricultural Finance
Authority
PO Box 27908
Raleigh NC 27611
Phone: 919-790-3949
Fax: 919-733-1460

North Dakota

Natural Resources Conservation Service
220 East Rosser Avenue
Federal Building, Room 270
Bismarck ND 58501
Phone: 701-530-2000
Fax: 701-530-2109
www.nd.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Federal Building Room 208
PO Box 1737
Bismarck ND 58502
Phone: 701-530-2037
Fax: 701-530-2111
www.rurdev.usda.gov/nd

Farm Service Agency
1025 28th Street South
Fargo ND 58103
Phone: 701-239-5224
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
600 E Boulevard Avenue Dept 602
Bismarck ND 58505
Phone: 701-328-2231
Fax: 701-328-4567
www.agdepartment.com

Foundation for Agricultural and Rural
Resources Management and Sustainability
(FARRMS)
301 5th Avenue Southeast
Medina ND 58467
Phone: 701-486-3569
Fax: 701-486-3580
www.farrms.org

Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture
Society
PO Box 194
100 1 Avenue Southwest
La Moure ND 58458
Phone: 701-883-4304
Fax: 701-883-4204
www.npsas.org

The Bank of North Dakota
PO Box 5509
Bismarck ND 58506
Phone: 800-472-2166
Fax: 701-328-5731
www.banknd.com/ls/index.jsp

Ohio

Natural Resources Conservation Service
200 North High Street, Room 522
Columbus OH 43215
Phone: 614-255-2472
Fax: 614-255-2548
www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Federal Building, Room 507
200 North High Street
Columbus OH 43215
Phone: 614-255-2500, ext 4
Fax: 614-255-2559
www.rurdev.usda.gov/oh

Farm Service Agency
200 North High Street Room 540
Columbus OH 43215
Phone: 614-255-2441
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
8995 East Main Street
Reynoldsburg OH 43068
Phone: 614-728-6201
www.ohioagriculture.gov

The Farmland Center & Countryside
Conservancy
2179 Everett Road
Peninsula OH 44264
Phone: 330-657-2355 (Farmland Center)
Phone: 330-657-2542 (Countryside
Conservancy)
Fax: 330-657-2198
www.thefarmlandcenter.org
www.cvcountryside.org

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm
Association (OEFFA)
41 Crowell Road
Columbus OH 43214
Phone: 614-421-2022
Fax: 614-421-2011
www.oeffa.com

Ohio Rural Development Partnership
8995 East Main Street
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
Phone: 614-466-5495
Fax: 614-728-2652
www.ohioagriculture.gov/ordp

Oklahoma

Natural Resources Conservation Service
100 USDA Suite 206
Stillwater OK 74074
Phone: 405-742-1204
Fax: 405-742-1201
www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
100 USDA, Suite 108
Stillwater OK 74074
Phone: 405-742-1000
Fax: 405-742-1005
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ok

Farm Service Agency
100 USDA Suite 102
Stillwater OK 74074
Phone: 405-742-1130
Fax: 405-742-1177
www.fsa.usda.gov



Oklahoma (cont) Oregon Pennsylvania Rhode Island

Department of Agriculture
2800 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City OK 73105
Phone: 405-521-3864
Fax: 405-522-4912
www.oda.state.ok.us

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture
State Agriculture Finance Program
PO Box 528804
Oklahoma City OK 73152
Phone: 405-522-5563
[www.ok.gov/treasurer/
Linked Deposit Programs/index](http://www.ok.gov/treasurer/Linked%20Deposit%20Programs/index)
www.oda.state.ok.us/mktdev-loans.htm

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture
PO Box 588
Poteau OK 74953
Phone: 918-647-9123
Fax: 918-647-8712
www.kerrcenter.com

Oregon

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 900
Portland OR 97232
Phone: 503-414-3200
Fax: 503-414-3103
www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 801
Portland OR 97232
Phone: 503-414-3300
Fax: 503-414-3392
www.rurdev.usda.gov/or

Farm Service Agency
7620 SW Mohawk
Tualatin OR 97062
Phone: 503-692-6830
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
635 Capitol Street NE
Salem OR 97301
Phone: 503-986-4550
Phone: 503-986-4558 (financial assistance)
Fax: 503-986-4747
www.oregon.gov/ODA
<http://oregon.gov/ODA/grants.shtml>

Pennsylvania

Natural Resources Conservation Service
One Credit Union Place, Suite 340
Harrisburg PA 17110
Phone: 717-237-2100
Fax: 717-237-2238
www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
One Credit Union Place, Suite 330
Harrisburg PA 17110
Phone: 717-237-2262
Fax: 717-237-2191
www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa

Farm Service Agency
One Credit Union Place, Suite 320
Harrisburg PA 17110
Phone: 717-237-2117
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
2301 N Cameron Street
Harrisburg PA 17110
Phone: 717-787-4737
www.agriculture.state.pa.us

Next Generation Farmer Loan Program
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Phone: 1-800-PAGROWS
Fax: 717-754-0176
[www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/
cwp/view.asp?q=128628](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/cwp/view.asp?q=128628)

Center for Farm Transitions
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg PA 17110-9408
Toll Free Phone: 877-475-2686
www.iplantofarm.com

Pennsylvania Farm Link
2301 N Cameron Street, Room 311
Harrisburg PA 17110
Phone: 717-705-2121
www.pafarmlink.org

National Center for Appropriate
Technology Northeast
48 Church Road
Shavertown PA 18708
Phone: 570-696-6786
www.ncat.org

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable
Agriculture
114 West Main Street
PO Box 419
Millheim PA 16854
Phone: 814-349-9856
Fax: 814-349-9840
www.pasafarming.org

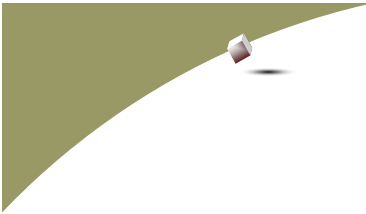
Rhode Island

Natural Resources Conservation Service
60 Quaker Lane
Warwick RI 02886
Phone: 401-828-1300
Fax: 401-828-0433
www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
451 West Street
Amherst MA 01002
Phone: 413-253-4300
Toll Free Phone: 800-352-8015
Fax: 413-253-4347
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ma

Farm Service Agency
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 40
Warwick RI 02886
Phone: 401-828-8232
Toll Free Phone: 800-551-5144
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
235 Promenade Street
Providence RI 02908
Phone: 401-222-2781
Fax: 401-222-6047
[www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/
agricult/index.htm](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/agricult/index.htm)



South Carolina Tennessee Texas

South Carolina

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Strom Thurmond Federal Building
1835 Assembly Street Room 950
Columbia SC 29201
Phone: 803-253-3935
Fax: 803-253-3670
www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Strom Thurmond Federal Building
1835 Assembly Street, Room 1007
Columbia SC 29201
Phone: 803-765-5163
Fax: 803-765-5633
www.rurdev.usda.gov/sc

Farm Service Agency
1927 Thurmond Mall, Suite 100
Columbia SC 29201
Phone: 803-806-3828
Fax: 803-806-3839
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
Wade Hampton Building, 5th Floor
PO Box 11280
Columbia SC 29211
Phone: 803-734-2210
Fax: 803-734-2192
<http://agriculture.sc.gov>

South Dakota

Natural Resources Conservation Service
200 4th Street Southwest
Federal Building, Room 203
Huron SD 57350
Phone: 605-352-1200
Fax: 605-352-1288
www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
200 4th Street Southwest
Federal Building, Room 210
Huron SD 57350
Phone: 605-352-1100
Toll Free Phone: 800-582-7584
Fax: 605-352-1146
www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd

Farm Service Agency
200 4th Street Southwest
Federal Building, Room 308
Huron SD 57350
Phone: 605-352-1160
Fax: 605-352-1195
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-5436
Toll Free Phone: 800-228-5254
Fax: 605-773-3481
www.state.sd.us/doa
www.state.sd.us/doa/ag_dev/loan

Dakota Rural Action
910 4th Street
Old Sanctuary Building, Suite A
Brookings SD 57006
Phone: 605-697-5204
Fax: 605-697-6230
www.dakotarural.org

Tennessee

Natural Resources Conservation Service
675 US Court
801 Broadway
Nashville TN 37203
Phone: 615-277-2531
Fax: 615-277-2577
www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
3322 West End Avenue, Suite 300
Nashville TN 37203
Phone: 615-783-1300
Fax: 615-783-1301
www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn

Farm Service Agency
801 Broadway, Suite 675
Nashville TN 37203
Phone: 615-277-2600
Fax: 615-277-2659
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
Ellington Agricultural Center
PO Box 40627 Melrose Station
440 Hogan Road
Nashville TN 37204
Phone: 615-837-5103
www.tennessee.gov/agriculture

Delta Land and Community, Inc
920 Highway 153
Almyra AR 72003
Phone: 870-673-6346
Fax: 870-673-7219
www.deltanetwork.org/ar/dlc.htm

Texas

Natural Resources Conservation Service
W.R. Poage Federal Building
101 South Main Street
Temple TX 76501
Phone: 254-742-9800
Fax: 254-742-9819
www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Federal Building, Suite 102
101 South Main Street
Temple TX 76501
Phone: 254-742-9700
Fax: 254-742-9709
www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx

Farm Service Agency
2405 Texas Avenue South
PO Box 2900
College Station TX 77840
Phone: 979-680-5150
Fax: 979-680-5235
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
1700 North Congress, 11th Floor
PO Box 12847
Austin TX 78711
Phone: 512-463-7476
Toll Free Phone: 800-835-5832
Fax: 888-223-8861
www.agr.state.tx.us



Texas (cont)

Utah

Vermont

Virginia

Texas Mexico Border Coalition
208 South Norris Street
Rio Grande TX 78582
Phone: 956-488-0534
Fax: 956-487-2412
www.tm-bc.org

C.A.S.A del Llano (Communities Assuring
a Sustainable Agriculture)
309 E 6th Street
Hereford TX 79045
Phone: 806-364-4445

Texas Agricultural Finance Authority
PO Box 12847
Austin TX 78711
Telephone: 512-936-0273
Toll Free Phone: 877-428-7848
Fax: 888-216-9867
[www.agr.state.tx.us/agr/
main_render/0.1968.1848_6080_0_0.00.ht
ml?channelId=6080](http://www.agr.state.tx.us/agr/main_render/0.1968.1848_6080_0_0.00.html?channelId=6080)

Utah

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building
125 South State Street, Room 4402
Salt Lake City UT 84138-1100
Phone: 801-524-4550
Fax: 801-524-4403
www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building
125 South State Street, Room 4311
Salt Lake City UT 84138
Phone: 801-524-4324
Fax: 801-524-4306
www.rurdev.usda.gov/ut

Farm Service Agency
125 South State Street, Suite 4425
Salt Lake City UT 84138
Phone: 801-524-4530
Fax: 801-524-5244
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
350 North Redwood Road
PO Box 146500
Salt Lake City UT 84114
Phone: 801-538-7100
Fax: 801-538-7126
<http://ag.utah.gov>
[http://ag.utah.gov/conservation/
agloans.html](http://ag.utah.gov/conservation/agloans.html)

Vermont

Natural Resources Conservation Service
356 Mountain View Drive, Suite 105
Colchester VT 05446
Phone: 802-951-6796
Fax: 802-951-6327
www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
City Center 3rd Floor, 89 Main Street
Montpelier VT 05602
Phone: 802-828-6080
Fax: 802-828-6018
www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt

Farm Service Agency
356 Mountain View Drive, Suite 104
Colchester VT 05446
Phone: 802-658-2803
Fax: 802-660-0953
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
116 State Street
Montpelier VT 05620
Phone: 802-828-2416
www.vermontagriculture.com

Land Link Vermont
Center for Sustainable Agriculture
106 High Point Center
Colchester VT 05446
Phone: 802-656-5459
Fax: 802-656-8874
www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture
<http://www.uvm.edu/landlinkvt/>

Vermont Economic Development
Authority
58 East State Street, Suite 5
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone: 802-828-5627
Fax: 802-828-5474
www.veda.org

Virginia

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209
Richmond VA 23229
Phone: 804-287-1691
Fax: 804-287-1737
www.va.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
Culpepper Building, Suite 238
1606 Santa Rosa Road
Richmond VA 23229
Phone: 804-287-1552
Fax: 804-287-1721
www.rurdev.usda.gov/va

Farm Service Agency
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 138
Richmond VA 23229
Phone: 804-287-1500
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
102 Governor Street
Richmond VA 23219
Phone: 804-786-2373
Fax: 804-371-6097
www.vdacs.virginia.gov

Virginia Farm Link
Virginia Department of Agriculture and
Consumer Services
PO Box 1163
Richmond VA 23218
Phone: 804-786-3501
www.savefarms.com/farmlink_about.htm



Washington West Virginia Wisconsin Wyoming

Washington

Natural Resources Conservation Service
316 W Boone, Suite 450
Spokane WA 99201
Phone: 509-323-2900
Fax: 509-323-2909
www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
1835 Black Lake Boulevard Southwest,
Suite B
Olympia WA 98512
Phone: 360-704-7715
Fax: 360-704-7742
www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa

Farm Service Agency
316 Boone Avenue, Suite 568
Spokane WA 99201
Phone: 509-323-3000
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
1111 Washington Street Southeast
Olympia WA 98504
Phone: 360-902-1800
Fax: 360-902-2092
<http://agr.wa.gov>

Cultivating Success
www.cultivatingsuccess.org

Washington FarmLink
Cascade Harvest Coalition
4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Room 123
Seattle WA 98103
Phone: 206-632-0606
Fax: 206-632-1080
www.cascadeharvest.org

Washington Sustainable Food and Farming
Network (WSFFN)
PO Box 762
419 South 1st Street, Suite 201
Mount Vernon WA 98273
Phone: 360-336-9694
Fax: 360-336-1579
www.wsffn.org

West Virginia

Natural Resources Conservation Service
75 High Street, Room 301
Morgantown WV 26505
Phone: 304-284-7540
Fax: 304-284-4839
www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
75 High Street, Suite 320
Morgantown WV 26505
Phone: 304-284-4860
Toll Free Phone: 800-295-8228
Fax: 304-284-4893
www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv

Farm Service Agency
75 High Street, Room 239
Morgantown WV 26505
Phone: 304-284-4800
Fax: 304-284-4821
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
State Capitol, Room E-28
Charleston WV 25305
Phone: 304-558-3500
Fax: 304-558-2203
www.wvagriculture.org

Wisconsin

Natural Resources Conservation Service
8030 Excelsior Drive
Madison WI 53717
Phone: 608-662-4422
Fax: 608-662-4430
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development
4949 Kirschling Court
Stevens Point WI 54481
Phone: 715-345-7600
Fax: 715-345-7669
www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi

Farm Service Agency
8030 Excelsior Drive, Suite 100
Madison WI 53717
Phone: 608-662-4422
Fax: 608-662-9425
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
Trade and Consumer Protection
PO Box 8911
Madison WI 53708
Phone: 608-224-5012
<http://datcp.state.wi.us>

Michael Field Agricultural Institute
W2493 County Road ES
PO Box 990
East Troy WI 53120
Phone: 262-642-3303
Fax: 262-642-4028
www.michaelfieldsagainst.org

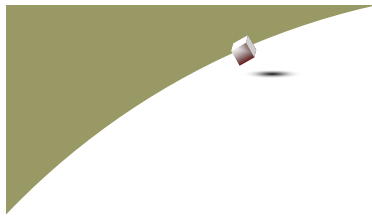
Wisconsin School for Beginning Farmers
UW of Madison
116 Agriculture Hall
1450 Linden Drive
Madison WI 53706
Phone: 608-265-6437
Phone: 608-588-2836
www.cias.wisc.edu/dairysch.html

Midwest Organic and Sustainable
Education Service
PO Box 339
Spring Valley WI 54767
Phone: 715-772-3153
Fax: 715-772-3162
www.mosesorganic.org

Wisconsin Housing and Economic
Development Authority (WHEDA)
201 West Washington Avenue
Madison WI 53703
Phone: 608-266-7884
Fax: 608-267-1099
Toll Free Phone: 800-334-6873
www.wheda.com

Wyoming

Natural Resources Conservation Service
PO Box 33124
100 East B Street, 3rd Floor
Casper WY 82602
Phone: 307-233-6750
Fax: 307-233-6753
www.wy.nrcs.usda.gov



Wyoming (cont) Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Sustainable Options Hotline

USDA Rural Development
PO Box 11005
100 East B Street, Room 1005
Casper WY 82602
Phone: 307-233-6700
Fax: 307-233-6727
www.rurdev.usda.gov/wy

Farm Service Agency
951 Werner Court, Suite 130
Casper WY 82601
Phone: 307-261-5231
Fax: 307-261-5857
www.fsa.usda.gov

Department of Agriculture
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne WY 82002
Phone: 307-777-7321
Fax: 307-777-6593
<http://wyagric.state.wy.us>

Office of State Lands and Investments
122 West 25th Street
Herschler Building 3rd Floor West
Cheyenne Wyoming 82001
Phone: 307-777-7331
Fax: 307-777-5400
<http://slf-web.state.wy.us>

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

North Central Region SARE
120 BAE University of Minnesota
1390 Eckles Avenue
St Paul MN 55108
Phone: 612-626-3113
Fax: 612-626-3132
www.sare.org/ncrsare

Northeast SARE
655 Spear Street
University of Vermont
Burlington VT 05405
Phone: 802-656-0471
Fax: 802-656-0500
www.uvm.edu/~nesare

Southern SARE
1109 Experiment St.
Room 206 Stuckey Building
University of Georgia
Agricultural Experiment Station
Griffin GA 30223
Phone: 770-412-4787
Fax: 770-412-4789
www.southernsare.uga.edu/contact.htm

Western SARE
Utah State University
Ag Science 305
Logan UT 84322
Phone: (435) 797-2257
Fax: (435) 797-3344
<http://wsare.usu.edu>

Sustainable Options Hotline

Center for Rural Affairs
PO Box 136
145 Main Street
Lyons NE 68038
Phone: 402-687-2100
Fax: 402-687-2200



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About the Author

Traci Bruckner has been with the Center for Rural Affairs since 2001 and is the Assistant Director of the Rural Policy Program. Traci worked extensively on the 2008 Farm Bill, guiding advocacy to include beginning farmer and rancher provisions in the bill, as well as conservation and value-added agriculture programs. She brings a national voice to beginning farm and ranch issues with her service on USDA's Beginning Farmer Committee. Traci also works closely with other organizations on organic and sustainable agriculture, and speaks frequently to groups across the nation.

Traci received her B.S. in Political Science and Sociology from Wayne State College, Wayne Nebraska in 2001.

Kim Preston has been with the Center for Rural Affairs since September 1999. Her work with the Rural Policy Program has included many issues at the state level including public education finance, property tax policy, microenterprise/small business, and agriculture. She has worked at the grassroots level to block or advance key issues within the legislature. She has trained groups and individuals on the policy making process and citizen advocacy. As part of the Rural Research and Analysis Program, she has contributed to major reports and studies affecting rural America, including Swept Away: Chronic Hardship and Fresh Promise of the Great Plains and Fresh Promises: Highlighting Promising Strategies of the Rural Great Plains and Beyond.

She received her B.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences from SDSU, Brookings in 1997 and lives on a small farm outside of Lyons, Nebraska where she and her husband farm part-time and raise Shorthorn cattle.



About the Center for Rural Affairs

The Center for Rural Affairs was established in 1973 by rural Nebraskans concerned about the loss of economic opportunities in their communities, and has since grown to a nationally recognized policy analysis and advocacy organization. In recent years our national grassroots supports base has grown to near 30,000 individuals including people in all 50 states. Our mission is to establish strong rural communities, social and economic justice, environmental stewardship, and genuine opportunity for all while engaging people in decisions that affect the quality of their lives and the future of their communities.

The Center has three broad program areas: policy, strategic services, and research. Our policy work strives to influence state and federal policies which strengthen family farms, small businesses and rural communities. Our strategic services involve individuals and families in demonstrating positive alternatives for rural areas in job creation, economic opportunity for beginning farm families, agricultural marketing, farm stewardship practices and community development. Our research work examines issues affecting rural America and informs and is informed by our policy and strategic service work. We have produced and disseminated research on federal underinvestment in rural development in the most demographically challenged communities, on rural socio-economic trends, on proven rural development strategies, and on the corporate takeover of many aspects of the rural economy.

