Benefits of USDA Programs
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USDA
Helping People Help the Land

With the mission of “Helping People Help the Land,” the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the Nation’s soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands. With our help, people are better able to conserve, maintain, or improve their natural resources. As a result of our technical and financial assistance, land managers and communities take a comprehensive approach to the use and protection of natural resources in rural, suburban, urban, and developing areas.

A Partnership Approach

Since the Dust Bowl of the 1930’s, NRCS has worked with conservation districts and others throughout the U.S. to help landowners, as well as Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and community groups.

NRCS has six mission goals: high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands. To achieve these goals, the Agency implements these strategies:

• Cooperative conservation: seeking and promoting cooperative efforts to achieve conservation goals.
• Watershed approach: providing information and assistance to encourage and enable locally-led, watershed-scale conservation.
• Market-based approach: facilitating the growth of market-based opportunities that encourage the private sector to invest in conservation on private lands.

Conservation Assistance

Our locally-based NRCS staff works directly with farmers, ranchers, and others, to provide technical and financial conservation assistance. Our guiding principles are service, partnership, and technical excellence.

NRCS helps landowners develop conservation plans and provides advice on the design, layout, construction, management, operation, maintenance, and evaluation of the recommended, voluntary conservation practices. NRCS activities include farmland protection, upstream flood prevention, emergency watershed protection, urban conservation, and local community projects designed to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions.

NRCS conducts soil surveys, conservation needs assessments, and the National Resources Inventory to provide a basis for resource conservation planning activities and to provide an accurate assessment of the condition of the Nation’s private lands.

As the leading source of technology as it applies to natural resource conservation on private lands, NRCS develops technical guides and other Web-based tools to help enhance natural resource conservation efforts.

For More Information


Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers and manages farm commodity, credit, conservation, disaster and loan programs as laid out by Congress through a network of federal, state and county offices.

These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of the agricultural industry and to help farmers adjust production to meet demand. Economically, the desired result of these programs is a steady price range for agricultural commodities for both farmers and consumers.

In the Eisenhower administration, the Congress split the functions of the Triple A committees, creating the state and county office system to take care of administrative functions and kept the farmer county committee to oversee implementation of federal programs in their county.

State and county offices directly administer FSA programs. These offices certify farmers for farm programs and pay out farm subsidies and disaster payments. Currently, there are 2,346 FSA county offices in the continental states. FSA also has offices in Hawaii, and a few American territories.

More than 8,000 farmer county committee members serve in FSA county offices nationwide. Committee members are the local authorities responsible for fairly and equitably resolving local issues while remaining dually and directly accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture and local producers though the elective process. They operate within official regulations designed to carry out Federal laws and provide a necessary and important voice in Federal decisions affecting their counties and communities.

Committee members make decisions affecting which FSA programs are implemented county-wide, the establishment of allotment and yields, commodity price support loans and payments, conservation programs, incentive, indemnity, and disaster payments for commodities, and other farm disaster assistance.

Structure & Organization
Provides contact information as well as a listing of the programs and offices that make up the Farm Service Agency.

FSA Biographies
Includes biographies of the Farm Service Agency leadership.

History & Mission
Provides a history of the agency and describes its vision and mission.

Budget & Performance
Includes information about the budget, the strategic plan, and efforts to ensure that activities are managed efficiently.
FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and operating loans (OL) to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. Our loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. See our loan information chart which describes maximum loan amounts, rates, term, and use of proceeds.

Many FSA loan application forms are available on our website! We also encourage you to contact your local office or USDA Service Center to learn more about our programs and the information you will need for a complete application.

FSA loans are often provided to beginning farmers who cannot qualify for conventional loans because they have insufficient financial resources. FSA also helps established farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters, or whose resources are too limited to maintain profitable farming operations.

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Welcome to USDA Rural Development. Rural Development is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in all of rural America. Through our programs, we touch rural America in many ways.

Our financial programs support such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service. We promote economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. We offer technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services. And we provide technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.

We have an $86 billion dollar portfolio of loans and we will administer nearly $16 billion in program loans, loan guarantees, and grants through our programs.

Rural Development achieves its mission by helping rural individuals, communities and businesses obtain the financial and technical assistance needed to address their diverse and unique needs. Rural Development works to make sure that rural citizens can participate fully in the global economy.
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