



News Release

USDA Announces New Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Department Implementing New Farm Bill Programs, Unveiling New Centralized Online Resource to Support Next Generation of Farmers

DAVIS, California, June 23, 2014 – U.S. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden today announced the implementation of new Farm Bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Harden also unveiled www.USDA.gov/newfarmers, a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

“New and beginning farmers are the future of American agriculture,” said Deputy Secretary Harden. “The average age of an American farmer is 58 and rising, so we must help new farmers get started if America is going to continue feeding the world and maintain a strong agriculture economy. The new policies announced today will help give beginning farmers the financial security they need to succeed. Our new online tool will provide one-stop shopping for beginning farmers to learn more about accessing USDA services that can help their operations thrive.”

USDA’s www.usda.gov/newfarmers has in depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.

Today’s policy announcements in support of beginning farmers and ranchers include:

- Waiving service fees for new and beginning farmers or ranchers to enroll in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the 2014 crop year. NAP provides risk management tools to farmers who grow crops for which there is no crop insurance product. Under this waiver, announced via an [official notice](#) to Farm Service Agency offices, farmers and ranchers whom already enrolled in NAP for the 2014 crop year are eligible for a service fee refund.
- Eliminating payment reductions under the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans. Previously, farmers and ranchers grazing on CRP land were subject to a reduction in CRP payments of up to 25 percent. Waiving these reductions for new and beginning farmers will

provide extra financial support during times of emergency like drought and other natural disasters.

- Increasing payment rates to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for [Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#). Under this provision, beginning farmers and ranchers can claim up to 90 percent of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a fifty percent increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

In the near future, USDA will also announce additional crop insurance program changes for beginning farmers and ranchers – including discounted premiums, waiver of administrative fees, and other benefits.

These policy announcements are made possible through the 2014 Farm Bill, which builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for the taxpayer. Since enactment, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

The Deputy Secretary made these announcements at the inaugural meeting of the reconvened Beginning Farmer and Rancher Advisory Committee held at the University of California, Davis, California. This Advisory Committee, composed of 20 members, including Extension agents, lenders, farmers, ranchers and academics will meet through 2015 to learn, discuss, and formulate recommendations to USDA on how to support new and beginning farmers.

Additional information about USDA actions in support of beginning farmers and ranchers is available [here](#) .

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