

Shavano District

SERVING MONTROSE, GUNNISON, OURAY AND
 SAN MIGUEL COUNTIES



SUMMER
 2022
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 ISSUE 2

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Mike and Becky Curtis are 'out standing' in their sorghum field. They had a great sorghum harvest this summer!

Curtis' Share CDA STAR Plus Field on Watershed Tour

Mike and Becky Curtis, one of 131 farmers and ranchers in Colorado to launch the Colorado Department of Agriculture STAR Plus program, are a featured stop on the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed Tour on August 18. The Curtis' are double cropping their 19 acres with sorghum and a cover crop mix, which they anticipate seeding in mid September.

According to the CDA's Soil Health Program website, STAR Plus provides financial and technical assistance to producers as they implement new soil health practices on one field over three years and consider adopting them across their operation.

Through the STAR PLUS program the Curtis's have identified areas for improved management to increase soil health, are documenting their progress, and are sharing their successes through events like the Watershed Tour. The evaluation system within the STAR Plus program assigns points for management activities on an annual basis and scores are converted to a 1 to 5 STAR Rating, with 5 STARs indicating commitment to a suite of practices proven to improve soil health, water quality and water availability.

**RSVP by Aug. 11
 Gunnison-Dolores
 Watershed Meeting**

In their 1st year of the STAR program, the Curtis's will earn stars at the end of each growing season as the increased health of their soil is evaluated and quantified.

Additional stops on the Watershed Tour include the Shavano Dams, operated by the Shavano Conservation District. Shavano Dams #1 and #2 were built completed in 1993 and 1996 through a PL566 Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention grant to stop flooding in Shavano Valley that regularly caused damage to crops, fields, and houses. Despite drought conditions in recent years, the dams continue to hold water regularly and prevent flooding in the valley following rain events.

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2023 Western Colorado Soil Health, Food and Farm Forum



We are pleased to announce the Western Colorado Soil Health, Food & Farm Forum January 27-28, 2023, in Montrose. For the first time, the Western Colorado Food & Farm Forum and the Western Colorado Soil Health Team are joining together to bring you one exciting agricultural event.

Our theme for 2023 is “From The Soil Up”. The Forum strives to improve the soil health, holistic production, marketing and consumption of local food. Producers, educators, and researchers with practical knowledge and regional experience will present. Soil health, water issues, marketing and management, as well as specialty agriculture topics will be discussed.

Palisade Insectary Update on Biological Control for Weed Management

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Preceding the tour, the Watershed Meeting and special guest presentations will be held in the Pioneer Room at Friendship Hall on the Montrose County Fairgrounds at 9:30am. Special guest speakers at the meeting this year include the Palisade Insectary and the Colorado River District. The Palisade Insectary will present an update on the Gunnison-Dolores Joint Watershed Weed Management Program, targeting Russian Knap Weed and Canada Thistle using biological controls. Lindsay DeFrates from the Colorado River District will also be giving an update on drought impacts and Colorado River issues at Lakes Mead and Powell.

The Meeting and Tour is open to the public and includes a complimentary lunch. To attend, register by August 11 at <https://gdw2022.eventbrite.com>

Bus transportation is available for individuals going on the watershed tour. The bus will leave from Friendship Hall following the Watershed meeting and lunch.

The Gunnison-Dolores

Watershed includes the Conservation Districts that drain into the Dolores, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison Rivers. These are the Shavano CD, Delta CD, and Gunnison CD. Together they cover San Miguel County, Ouray County, Montrose County, Gunnison County and Delta County. Each year the 3 Conservation Districts give a report on their activities and resource concerns they have identified in the past year. The Conservation Districts within the watershed each take turns hosting the event and this year it falls to the Shavano Conservation District located in Montrose.





USDA Announces Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans to provide up to \$200 million in assistance for specialty crop producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 or 2023. USDA's new Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program will help to offset costs for specialty crop producers to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements, which is part of USDA's broader effort to transform the food system to create a more level playing field for small and medium producers and a more balanced, equitable economy for everyone working in food and agriculture.

Specialty crop operations can apply for assistance for eligible expenses related to a 2022 food safety certificate issued on or after June 21, 2022, beginning June 27, 2022. USDA is delivering FSCSC to provide critical assistance for specialty crop operations, with an emphasis on equity in program delivery while building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions. Vilsack made the announcement from Hollis, N.H., where he toured a local, family-owned farm and highlighted USDA's efforts to help reduce costs for farmers and support local economies by providing significant funding to cut regulatory costs and increase market opportunities for farmers in New Hampshire and across the nation.

Program Details

FSCSC will assist specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and related expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023. For each year, FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing their certification, as well as a portion of their related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small business or very small business; and have paid eligible expenses related to the 2022 (issued on or after June 21, 2022) or 2023 certification.

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
- Training.

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each category of eligible costs. A higher payment rate has been set for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning

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USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can now apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program (OTECP) and Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses. Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022.

OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).
- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per cate-



gory of certification costs in 2022.

This cost share for certification is available for each of these categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and State organic program fees.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. Producers have until October 31, 2022 to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center. As part of completing the OCCSP applications, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses. Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating State agencies.

Additional details can be found on the OTECP and OCCSP webpages.



Producers in Montrose, Gunnison & Ouray Counties are eligible to apply for 2022 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on non-irrigated long and short season small grains, full season improved pasture and native pasture.

Apply for Livestock Forage Losses

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. The eligible livestock producer must, as of the date of the qualifying drought, have risk in the pastureland or grazing land for covered livestock. To be considered eligible covered livestock, livestock must:

- be weaned grazing animals such as adult and non-adult beef cattle, adult and nonadult beefalo, adult and nonadult buffalo/bison, adult and nonadult dairy cattle, alpacas, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, reindeer, or sheep

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Food Plots Bring a Variety of Wildlife to Farms

Food for wildlife can be scarce during the winter. And many landowners are using food plots to provide food for them during the colder months. A food plot adds plant diversity, food and cover to the landscape. It can be particularly useful for providing a winter or early spring food source. Where fall plowing buries the majority of crop residue, food plots are an excellent choice to encourage wildlife survival. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service works with many landowners to provide technical assistance, and in some cases financial assistance, to establish food plots on their land.

Legume-based, perennial food plots, for instance, may supplement the energy needs for big game species, such as white-tail deer, during times of the year when there are few available sources to eat. In most cases, food plots are also tied to planting pollinator habitat, native warm-season grasses and tree planting for cover.

The different components of a wildlife management plan help tie all the missing pieces of the puzzle together for a landowner, helping to meet their individual farm goals for wildlife management. As an added benefit, these new habitat acres have a ripple effect, bringing more and more wildlife to the surrounding areas.

For more information, contact your Montrose County service center at 970-249-8407 ext. 3 or visit nrns.usda.gov.

USDA Announces Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers

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and veteran farmers and ranchers. Details about the payment rates and limitations can be found at farmers.gov/food-safety.

Applying for Assistance

The FSCSC application period for 2022 is June 27, 2022, through January 31, 2023, and the application period for 2023 will be announced at a later date. FSA will issue payments at the time of application approval for 2022 and after the application period ends for 2023. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application. The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means.

Producers can visit farmers.gov/food-safety for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

INVASIVE SPECIES WATCH

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY

Learn how to identify and report this invasive species at ag.colorado.gov/slf

COLORADO
Department of Agriculture



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

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

Eligible losses include:

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

If you've suffered eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses during calendar year 2022, you must file:

- A notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent (15 days for honeybee losses)
- An application for payment by Jan. 30, 2023

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Apply for Livestock Forage Losses

- be livestock that would normally have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland in the eligible county
- be livestock that the eligible livestock producer:
 - during the 60 days before the beginning date of a qualifying drought or fire, owned, leased, purchased, entered into a contract to purchase, or was a contract grower.

The eligible livestock producer must, as of the date of the qualifying drought, have risk in the pastureland or grazing land for covered livestock. To ensure the eligibility requirements have been met the livestock producer must

provide signed copies of the following as applicable; written acreage lease or rental agreement

Note: If the land is subleased, then the original lease and sublease must be provided.

BLM grazing permit and/or lease and final bill or invoice
 FS grazing permit and/or lease and final bill or invoice
 State land lease and/or State land subleases.

You must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than January 30, 2023, for 2022 losses.

USDA SERVICE CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

970-249-8407

Direct Phone

MARK BENTLEY, District Director **970-259-3289**
NATALIE PARKER, County Exec. Dir. **964-3589**
JO TRICE, Program Technician **964-3572**
DEBBIE STEWART, Program Technician **964-3571**



MONTROSE-GUNNISON-OURAY COUNTY COMMITTEE

BRYAN DISTEL, Chairperson
ERNIE ETCHART, Vice Chairperson
CHERRI COOPER, Regular Member
SARAH MCCONNELL, Regular Member
TYLER HANSON, Regular Member



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

970-249-8407



Direct Phone

ADAM ZIMMERMAN, Soil Conservationist **964-3570**
AMANDA JAMES, Range Specialist **964-3580**
CARMA EDGELL, Program Support Specialist **964-3576**
CASEY HARRISON, Resource Conservationist **964-3577**
JAMISON JEWKES,
 Montrose/Gunnison Resource Team Lead **964-3588**
JEFF LONG, Ag Engineer Project Leader **964-3586**
JEREMY OMVIG, Cultural Resource Specialist **964-3593**
JERRY ALLEN, Shavano IWM Specialist **964-3575**
MARISSA MARKUS, Soil Conservationist **964-3581**
SARAH ERICKSON, Soil Conservationist **964-3578**



SHAVANO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Website: www.shavanocd.org

Direct Phone

KEN LIPTON, President **626-3951**
LANNY DENHAM, Vice President **323-5461**
ROXI STEWART, Secretary/Treasurer **249-0706**
EDWARD ATENCIO **303-898-5855**
SHELLY MCLAUGHLIN-MALISH **424-4451**
STEVE HALE
CARL MCKINNEY
PENNY BISHOP, Manager **964-3584**
MENDY STEWART, Education Coordinator **964-3582**

HOW TO CONTACT US

Montrose USDA Service Center
 102 Par Place, Montrose, CO 81401
PHONE (970) 249-8407

Phone Extension

Farm Service Agency.....2
 Natural Resources Conservation Service.....3
 Shavano Conservation District.....3



COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE

Web Site: csfs.colostate.edu

MONTROSE FIELD OFFICE — 970-249-9051

(Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel Counties)

New Address - 535 S Nevada Ave, Montrose Phone Extension

JODI RIST, Supervisory Forester 132
jodi.rist@colostate.edu

AUSTIN SHELBY, Forester 133
austin.shelby@colostate.edu

TANYA BANULIS, Forester 129
tanya.banulis@colostate.edu

JEFF RAINEY, Forester 130
jeffrey.rainey@colostate.edu

GUNNISON FIELD OFFICE - 970-641-6852

(Gunnison and Hinsdale Counties)

106 Maintenance Drive, Gunnison, CO 81230
SAM PANKRATZ, Supervisory Forester
MIKE TARRANTINO, Forester



WEST REGION WILDFIRE COUNCIL

Phone 970-615-7300 www.cowildfire.org

New Address - 510 S Cascade Ave, Montrose

LILIA FALK, Director of Finance & Agreements Lilia.Falk@COWildfire.org
JAMIE GOMEZ, Executive Director Jamie.Gomez@COWildfire.org
ROB MCCANN, GIS/IT Rob..Mccann@cowildfire.org
COURTNEY HAYNES Courtney.Haynes@COWildfire.org
 Wildfire Mitigation Specialist - Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray,
 and San Miguel Counties

Dates to Remember

Now	NAP Notice of Loss- within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent
	ELAP Notice of Loss- within 30 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. This applies to feed and livestock transportation applications too!
August 9, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting, 7:00pm
August 18, 2022	Gunnison-Dolores Watershed Meeting / Tour, Montrose, 9:30am-3:30pm
September 5, 2022	Labor Day—Office Closed
September 13, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting, 7:00pm
October 10, 2022	Columbus Day—Office Closed
October 11, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting, 7:00pm
October 31, 2022	Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) & Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program (OTCEP) Deadline
November 7, 2022	FSA County Committee Election Ballots mailed to eligible voters
November 8, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting 6:30 pm
November 11, 2022	Veteran’s Day—Office Closed
November 15, 2022	Acreage reporting deadline for fall-seeded crops (rye, spelt, wheat), and 2022 production reporting
November 14-18, 2022	CACD Committee Meetings, 6:30pm (held virtually)
November 20, 2022	2023 NAP Application Closing Date for Apricots, Cherries, Grapes, Hops, Nectarines, Pears, Plums and Prunes
November 24, 2022	Thanksgiving Day—Office Closed
November 28-30, 2022	CACD Annual Meeting
January 26-28, 2023	Western Colorado Soil Health, Food and Farm Forum

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Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our meetings/events/functions, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.