



# News Release

## USDA Improves Crop Insurance to Better Support Conservation, Climate-Smart Practices

**WASHINGTON, Dec. 6, 2023** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating the Federal crop insurance program to affirm the use of USDA conservation practices as Good Farming Practices for crop insurance. Recently, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) recently updated the [Good Farming Practices Handbook](#), as part of the agency's broader efforts to support conservation and climate-smart activities as well as to improve crop insurance for agricultural producers.

"RMA wants to encourage America's farmers and ranchers to integrate conservation and climate-smart practices into their operations. These practices are both good for the environment and good for production and yield," RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger said. "This update affirms producers can have peace of mind that using conservation practices will not impact their crop insurance. We are supporting stewardship-minded producers as well as the crop insurance agents selling insurance with clearer, simpler policy around conservation practices."

The updated handbook recognizes all [conservation practices](#) offered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as Good Farming Practices for crop insurance. Essentially, appropriate use of NRCS conservation practices will have no impact on crop insurance coverage, which affirms how the rules have worked on the ground for years.

Additionally, in the handbook, NRCS is recognized as an agricultural expert resource for cover crop management systems.

This updated handbook builds on similar efforts, including RMA's [designation of planting cover crops](#) as a Good Farming Practice in 2019.

### Conservation and Crop Insurance

In recent years, RMA has increased its support of conservation by encouraging producers to use conservation and climate-smart practices. In November, RMA announced improvements to its [Hybrid Seed Rice coverage](#) to support producers using irrigation practices that conserve water. Also in recent years, RMA has offered premium benefits to producers to plant cover crops through the Pandemic Cover Crop Program and provided coverage for producers who [split apply nutrients](#). Learn more on RMA's [Conservation and Crop Insurance webpage](#).

### More Information

Across USDA, agencies like RMA and NRCS are working to improve programs to better support the needs of producers. For example, NRCS is streamlining its Regional Conservation Partnership Program and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, part of its efforts to strengthen implementation of the [Inflation Reduction Act](#). The Inflation Reduction Act – part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda – provided \$19.5 billion of additional funding for NRCS conservation programs.

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

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](#).

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