



Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

[Home](#) [Getting Assistance \(/getting-assistance\)](#) [Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers](#)

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) includes provisions that address the unique circumstances and concerns of socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource, and veteran farmers and ranchers (“historically underserved producers”).

Are you a Historically Underserved Farmer or Rancher?

Some groups of people are identified in Farm Bill legislation and in USDA policy as being Historically Underserved (HU). Members of these groups have been historically underserved by, or subject to discrimination in, Federal policies and programs. Four groups are defined by USDA as “Historically Underserved,” including farmers or ranchers who are: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; and Limited Resource.

USDA recognizes the need to be inclusive of all people and ensure equitable access to services. So, special provisions -- including specific incentives, waivers, priorities, set asides, and other flexibilities -- are

available within USDA programs for producers who meet the definition for historically underserved producers. Increased financial assistance for conservation practices, dedicated conservation funding, and access to advance payments for conservation practice implementation are offered to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners that fit into any of the four historically underserved groups below.

Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher

The term “Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher” means a participant:

- With direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, and
- Who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years.

A Self-Determination Tool is available to the public and may be completed on-line or printed and completed hardcopy at: <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov> (<https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>).

Beginning Farmer or Rancher

The term “Beginning Farmer or Rancher” means a participant who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years, and who
 - Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.
 - In the case of a contract with an individual, individually or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.

In the case of a contract made with a legal entity, all members must meet these requirements.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher

The term “Socially Disadvantaged” means an

- Individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.
- Socially disadvantaged groups consist of the following:
 - American Indians or Alaskan Natives
 - Asians
 - Blacks or African Americans

- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics.
- For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals

Note: Gender alone is not a covered group for the purposes of NRCS conservation program authorities. The term entities reflect a broad interpretation to include partnerships, couples, legal entities, etc.

Veteran Farmer or Rancher

The term "Veteran Farmer or Rancher" means a producer who

- Served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof; was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable; and:
 - Has not operated a farm or ranch, or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;
 - or
 - Who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period.

A legal entity or joint operation can be a Veteran Farmer or Rancher only if all individual members independently qualify.