

NEW FARMERS

Back to Basics
and
Working with USDA



Agenda

- Overview of BFR work at USDA
- Where and how to find information demo
- Guest Speaker: Hear how a real BFR used USDA resources



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Welcome to USDA

- There is a place for everyone
- We can help you get started
- Connect you with resources
- Provide financial and technical assistance



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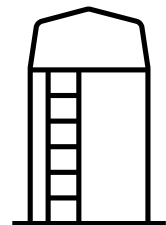
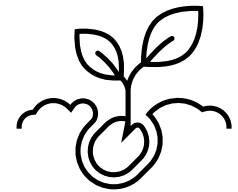
Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

- Are those who are new to farming or ranching. (Less than ten years experience)
- 30% of Farmers are Beginning Farmers
- Beginning farmers face significant barriers to entry into agriculture and unique challenges such as:
 - Land Access
 - Access to capital
 - Lack of experience
 - Less financial resilience
 - Less likely to be aware of USDA programs



Types of Producers:

- “Thinking about farming” – doesn’t have a plan, land, capital, a market etc. and calls USDA wanting to know where to start
- Early in farming career—actively farming but needs support or funding
- More experienced BFR—ready to scale or expand
- Multigenerational—taking over the family business

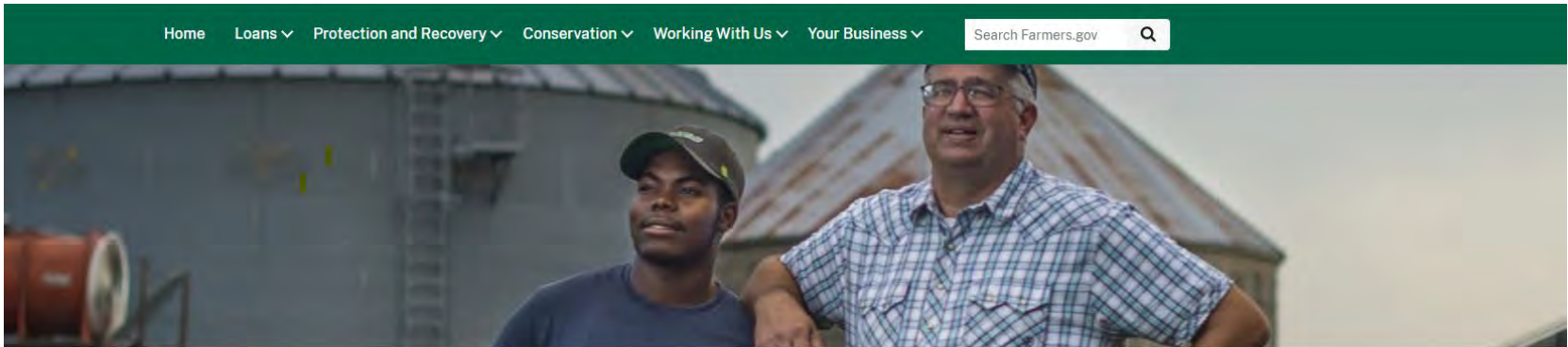


Getting Started with your Operation



- Visit USDA's Beginning Farmer & Rancher Webpage:
<https://www.farmers.gov/your-business/beginning-farmers>
- Connect with your State BFR Coordinator
- Locate your local USDA Service Center
- Develop a plan

BFR Website Demo - farmers.gov/beginning-farmers



How to Start a Farm: Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

New to farming? Want to learn how to start a farm? USDA offers dedicated help to beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA considers anyone who has operated a farm or ranch for less than ten years to be a beginning farmer or rancher.

USDA can help you get started or grow your operation through a variety of programs and services, from farm loans to crop insurance, and conservation programs to disaster assistance.



Who is supporting BFRs at the local level?



State Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinators



Outreach and Public Affairs staff



Program and Loan Technicians



Soil Conservationists



Loan Officers



Program Specialists and Managers



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Field facing agencies:



Farm Service Agency: provides disaster assistance, safety net, farm loan, and conservation programs and is the go-to agency for many USDA records.



Natural Resource Conservation Service: provides financial and technical assistance and easement programs for conservation on working lands.



Risk Management Agency: administers federal crop insurance through Approved Insurance Providers to help farmers prepare for the future.



Rural Development: provides loans, grants, loan guarantees, and technical assistance, along with support for affordable housing, infrastructure modernization, businesses, cooperatives, and other essential community services.

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Naima Dhore
National USDA Webinar: Beginning Farmer and Rancher
Minnesota, USA



Background

I wasn't born into farming, but I found my way and fell in love with it. As proud first-generation farmers from Somalia, a husband-and-wife team who have been farming side by side from the beginning. Together, we've played a vital role in shaping our journey, learning as we grow, and contributing to our local food system.



Naima + Fagas



Journey to landownership: USDA/FSA

Farm service Agency

- ❖ Grew food in our small apartment
- ❖ Transitioned to a local community garden (gained deeper connection to growing food and building a community)
- ❖ Began farmland search after 2018 season
- ❖ Inquired, toured, and explored multiple properties
- ❖ 2022-2023 made real progress
- ❖ Successfully purchased 20 acres of farmland through the FSA program

USDA Farm tour –Naima's Farm



Because of our persistence and determination, we became familiar faces to the USDA staff and have continued to build meaningful relationships. Not just with our local office, but with teams across the state. We're proud of the partnership we've developed and the trust and connection we've cultivated along the way.

Natural Resources Conservation Service USDA

- EQIP/ Application process

High tunnel

Trees, fruit trees, pollinator habitat and shrubs

Naïma's Farm 2023-2024



Naima's Farm 2025



USDA Programs & Our Experience

- Navigating challenges
- Faced barriers understanding USDA programs
- Lack of mentorship and support made it harder to navigate the system
- Overwhelmed by extensive paperwork and complex requirements for small scale vegetable farm
- Limited access to clear, culturally relevant resources
- Celebrating success
- Built strong relationships with USDA staff over time
- Found key individuals who provided reliable guidance and support
- Gained confidence in accessing resources and applying for programs
- Created a network of support that continues to help us grow and build our farm



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Questions?

