

TAEP Beginning Farmer Option

2026-2027 TAEP Application A

Applicant Responsibility

It is the applicant's responsibility to review all TAEP program requirements prior to applying for cost share. Applicant must qualify for program selected at time of application to be considered for approval.

[Applicant Eligibility](#)

[Educational Requirements](#)

[Reimbursement Requirements](#)

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Important

If an applicant meets the minimum requirements for **any** TAEP Application A program, they are **not eligible** for the Beginning Farmer Option but may apply for the program for which they are eligible. Please review the TAEP Application A – Quick Reference Guide for overview of program minimum requirements.

TAEP Application A – Quick Reference Guide 2026-2027

To be considered a beginning farmer for the purposes of TAEP, the applicant must meet TAEP's Beginning Farmer Option requirements.

Beginning Farmer Option

This program option allows applicants, **who do not meet the current minimum requirements for any TAEP Application A program**, the opportunity to participate with reduced minimum requirements in select programs (Genetics, Livestock Equipment, or Livestock Fencing). The purpose of this option is to help the beginning farmer applicant improve their operation with the goal of meeting TAEP minimum livestock/acreage requirements in the future.

TAEP allows applicants to participate in the Beginning Farmer Option for **two consecutive** years if they meet the Beginning Farmer Option requirements except for first time TAEP applicant for the second year.

Beginning Farmer Option Requirements

To qualify for the Beginning Farmer Option, applicant must meet basic TAEP eligibility requirements along with Beginning Farmer Option requirements.

- **First time TAEP applicant** – 2026 will be the **first year** the applicant has applied for TAEP cost share funding.
- **Farming ten years of less** – applicant must be actively involved in the production of livestock at time of application and must have started their farming operation after January 1, 2016.
- **Federal IRS Schedule F (Form 1040) Filing** – applicant must have filed a Federal IRS Schedule F (Form 1040), Profit or Loss from Farming, within the last two years (2024 or 2025) unless the applicant began their operation in 2026. Applicant may be asked to submit a copy of their Schedule F prior to TAEP approval to verify their farming operation.

- **Educational Requirement** – if applicant is approved for the TAEP Beginning Farmer Option, applicant will be required to complete the **UT Farming Fundamentals** or **TSU New Farmer Academy** certification to be considered for cost share reimbursement. *Proof of UT Farming Fundamentals or TSU New Farmer Academy certification is required at time of reimbursement (not at time of application). Certificates issued 2023 or after will be accepted.*
- **Reduced Minimum Requirements** – the program minimum requirements are reduced for applicants qualifying for the TAEP Beginning Farmer Option. Eligible livestock include cattle and goats/sheep. Goats/sheep can be combined to meet minimum head requirement. Eligible programs include Genetics or Livestock Equipment.
Applicant must meet at least one (1) of the minimum livestock requirements for program applied for.
 - 5-29 head of cattle – *Genetics, Livestock Equipment, or Livestock Fencing*
 - 10-49 head of goats/sheep – *Genetics, Livestock Equipment, or Livestock Fencing*

**Beginning Farmer Option
Reduced Minimum Requirements* & Eligible Programs**

Program	Cattle	Goats/Sheep
Genetics	5-29 Head	10-49 Head
Livestock Equipment	5-29 Head	10-49 Head
Livestock Fencing	5-29 Head	10-49 Head
*Applicant must meet at least one of the minimum livestock requirements for program applied for. <i>Head of Livestock = maximum number of single type, regardless of sex or age, during the last 12 months.</i> <i>Goats/sheep can be combined to meet minimum head requirement.</i> <i>Verification of minimum requirements may be requested prior to approval.</i>		

Applying for the Beginning Farmer Option

- Review TAEP Application A – Eligibility Requirements and TAEP Beginning Farmer Option requirements.
- Qualifying applicants will choose **TAEP Application A** and select **Genetics, Livestock Equipment or Livestock Fencing**.
- If applicant is approved for the TAEP Beginning Farmer Option, applicant will be required to complete the **UT Farming Fundamentals** or **TSU New Farmer Academy** certification at time of reimbursement to be considered for cost share.

Visit www.tn.gov/taep to learn more about TAEP.