



**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

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# NEWS RELEASE

## **USDA Continues Conservation Planning and Programs for Tennessee Farmers**

### *NRCS Services Available by Phone Appointment Only*

**NASHVILLE, March 26, 2020** – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices in Tennessee are open by phone appointment only until further notice, and NRCS staff are available to continue to provide one-on-one, customer-specific service to producers to help them meet their unique conservation and business goals.

All USDA Service Centers, including those with NRCS field offices, are not currently accessible to customers in person.

NRCS staff are working with customers through phone, mail and online communications, and field work continues with appropriate social distancing to help producers with conservation planning and financial assistance through Farm Bill programs.

*“Our team is here to work with you, and we are looking at every possible option and flexibility to support the conservation needs of Tennessee farmers,”* said Tennessee NRCS State Conservationist Sheldon Hightower. *“We want to continue our customer assistance while also taking precautionary measures to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.”*

NRCS offers year-round continuous signup for its Farm Bill programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Call respective NRCS field offices about sign up and application submission options.

Additionally, NRCS continues projects with partners, including universities, local and state governments, tribes, nonprofits, and others. NRCS will continue to award projects and to call for proposals for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Conservation Innovation Grants and the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program.

Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and payments and view and track certain USDA program applications and payments.

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Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in). Online NRCS services are available to customers through the [Conservation Client Gateway link which can be found at \[www.nrcs.usda.gov\]\(http://www.nrcs.usda.gov\)](#). Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents.

For the most current updates on available services and Service Center contact information, visit [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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