

# Workshop Curricula

Based on the Video Series:



## “Helping New American Farmers”

This short guide accompanies the videos, available at [youtube.com](https://youtube.com):

- Introduction to USDA Programs and Services
- Introduction to Cooperative Extension

The guide contains frequently asked questions and key concepts. It is for service providers helping new American farmers understand and access supports from USDA and/or Cooperative Extension programs and services. Curricula can be used in conjunction with screening the videos, or can be used on their own.



Videos are in slow English, Mai Mai, Kirundi, and Nepali, created by the University of Vermont Extension Across the Fence media team with University of Vermont Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture's New American Farmer Program and the New Farms for New Americans Program of the Association of Africans Living in Vermont. Funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Advocacy and Outreach, Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers program.



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# Curriculum # 1

To go with the video:



“Introduction to USDA Programs and Services”  
Found online at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



Common and Relevant USDA Programs:

- Farm Service Agency Microloan Program
- Farm Service Agency Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)
- Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program

**Key Point:** The videos are a starting point and only an introduction. Every farmer is encouraged to contact a local USDA representative to follow up and get more information. USDA has a commitment to serve every farmer.



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# Curriculum # 1

To go with the video:



## “Introduction to USDA Programs and Services” Found online at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Frequently Asked Questions From Farmers (underlined words are in glossary):

- If a farmer takes out a loan and has a bad season, how will they repay?

Answer: FSA works on a payment structure that fits the loan, and if there is an emergency or disaster, then FSA will work with a farmer to reorganize the payment structure so they can eventually pay off the loan.

- What are FSA interest rates?

Answer: They change, but always tend to be very low compared to other banks.

- Does the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) work for small parcels?

Answer: It does, but the payment on small parcels is so low that it might not justify the effort to keep records and paperwork.

- Are the videos telling me I can get a greenhouse through NRCS EQIP program?

Answer: No. It is just an example of a conservation practice that NRCS can assist with. There are many other conservation practices for which a farmer can get technical assistance and/or financial assistance to install.

- Can USDA help with drought?

Answer: Yes. FSA can provide insurance for crop loss from drought, and NRCS can help with conservation practices that improve a soil's or field's ability to



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# Curriculum # 1

To go with the video:



## “Introduction to USDA Programs and Services” Found online at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Frequently Asked Questions From Farmers (continued):

hold water.

- Why don't the videos tell me how to plant cover crops or build greenhouses?

Answer: The videos are only introductions to USDA programs. Once a farmer applies for the programs, they can get introduced to other resources that can help with implementation.

- Who do I contact first, NRCS, FSA, Cooperative Extension, other community-based farming support organization?

Answer: These organizations work in partnership to make sure farmers are getting the support that matches their situation, so it doesn't matter who you contact first as long as you end up getting assistance that meets your needs. The benefit of approaching a USDA office is that FSA and NRCS are usually located in the same building and it is easy to find the program that is needed.

- If a farmer doesn't speak good English, can they still access help?

Answer: Yes. USDA provides a phone translation service for certain languages. Local offices also have the ability to contract with an interpreter if the meeting is set up in advance. Community-based organizations and Cooperative Extension in your area might also facilitate translation or language interpretation.

This concludes Curriculum #1, “Introduction to USDA Programs and Services.”

The next pages are Curriculum #2, “Introduction to Cooperative Extension.”



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# Curriculum # 2

To go with the video:



## “Introduction to Cooperative Extension” Found online at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



### Common and Relevant Programs and Types of Assistance Offered by Extension:

- Livestock, health and nutrition, youth engaged in agriculture (4-H), vegetable, gardening, soil testing services, crops and soils, agriculture technology engineering and more.

**Key Point:** The videos are a starting point and only an introduction. Every farmer is encouraged to contact a local Cooperative Extension representative to follow up and get more information. Cooperative Extension has a commitment to serve every farmer.



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# Curriculum # 2

To go with the video:



## “Introduction to Cooperative Extension” Found online at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Frequently Asked Questions From Farmers (underlined words are in glossary):

- Why don't the videos tell me how to plant crops or take care of animals?

Answer: The videos are only introductions to Cooperative Extension educational programs. If a farmer has interest in the programs, they can visit Cooperative Extension offices or invite Extension educators to their farm to get more information.

- Who do I contact first, NRCS, FSA, Cooperative Extension, other community-based farming support organization?

Answer: These organizations work in partnership to make sure farmers are getting the support that matches their situation, so it doesn't matter who you contact first as long as you end up getting assistance that meets your needs.

- If a farmer doesn't speak good English, can they still access help?

Answer: Yes. Cooperative Extension is committed to working with everyone regardless of their first language. Extension often can facilitate translation or language interpretation or can contract the services of another local organization to provide language interpretation.

- Will Cooperative Extension help me sell my crops or livestock?

Answer: Yes and No. Cooperative Extension might help you learn about different options for marketing your products or best practices for developing relationships with buyers. However, Cooperative Extension can not handle your business transactions and can not purchase or sell products on your behalf.



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# Curriculum # 2

To go with the video:



## “Introduction to Cooperative Extension” Found online at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Frequently Asked Questions From Farmers (continued...):

- I need help with something I didn't see in the video. Can Extension help?

Answer: Yes, there are many other ways in which Cooperative Extension can help you answer your questions and get the information you need. Contact your local office to see if they can help.

- Why should I trust Cooperative Extension as a good source of information?

Answer: All of the information you get from Cooperative Extension should be research-based. Cooperative Extension provides communities with information that is timely and relevant. If a specialist provides you with suggestions that seem like personal opinions, these suggestions should always be based on facts that have been proven by credible research.

- Do I need to pay for the services of Cooperative Extension in my area?

Answer: Unless there is a special workshop or educational curricula advertised with a fee for participants to attend, the informational and educational services of Cooperative Extension are free to the general public.

This concludes curricula #2, “Introduction to Cooperative Extension.”



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# Glossary



This glossary defines technical terms used in this curricula packet.

**Best practices:** A set of recommendations related to a particular activity that has been found in research to achieve positive results.

**Conservation practice:** An activity conducted by a farmer, gardner, land manager or landowner designed to protect natural resources, such as soil or water on a farm or in a natural environment.

**Curricula:** A guide for an educational activity that includes photos, key points, educational activites or other learning aids.

**Greenhouse:** Any structure, usually covered with glass or plastic, designed to let in sunlight and retain some heat for plant growth.

**Loan:** A sum of money borrowed from a bank or other creditor with the expectation that the sum will be payed back over time. The payback amount usually contains two parts: the “principal” or the amount originally borrowed, and the “interest” or amount on top of the principal that represents the cost of taking a loan.

**Research-based:** Information based on scientific or social research.

**Technical assistance:** Help with not-so-easy-to-understand topics.

**Financial assistance:** A grant or loan associated with conducting a specific activity or practice. Financial Assistance from USDA is usually given as a percentage of the total estimated costs of certain practices or projects.

**Workshop:** A one-time educational meeting or offering.



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