

Why GAO Did This Study

Agricultural producers have received USDA financial assistance through commodity, conservation, crop insurance, and disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2018 farm bill. In addition, Congress may provide additional support through supplemental assistance programs. These programs, designed to provide additional and temporary forms of financial assistance, address specific agricultural losses or needs. Financial assistance—in the form of direct payments or as payments on behalf of the producers to crop insurance companies—can go to individual producers directly, or to legal entities that producers operate.

GAO was asked to review the total distribution of USDA financial assistance across the department's programs serving agricultural producers. This report provides information on USDA's distribution of financial assistance to agricultural producers by type of program and producer (including historically underserved producers), among other factors, from fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

GAO analyzed USDA data on financial assistance to agricultural producers for 27 selected programs from fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

USDA provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-25-107174](#). For more information contact Steve D. Morris at (202) 512-3841 or Morriss@gao.gov

FARM PROGRAMS

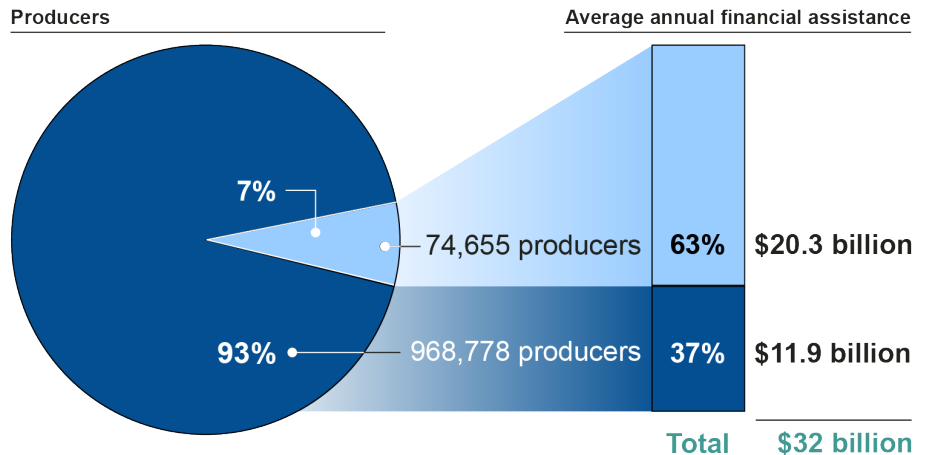
USDA Financial Assistance to Agricultural Producers for Fiscal Years 2019–2023

What GAO Found

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided \$161 billion in financial assistance to agricultural producers from fiscal years (FY) 2019 through 2023, the last year for which data were available. Supplemental assistance programs during this time span—distributed financial assistance to producers affected by international trade disruptions, the COVID-19 pandemic, and natural disasters—accounted for about 42 percent of all financial assistance distributed. USDA's crop insurance program provided 33 percent of the total financial assistance.

From FYs 2019 through 2023, USDA provided financial assistance to an average of about 1 million agricultural producers each year. More than 90 percent of producers received a combined annual average of about \$11.9 billion (or about \$12,000 per producer) in financial assistance (see figure). However, less than 10 percent of producers received a combined annual average of \$20.3 billion (or about \$272,000 per producer) in financial assistance. In addition, the top 10 producers receiving the most financial assistance received about \$18.0 million per year on average. Overall, USDA financial assistance ranged from a few dollars per year to \$215.2 million to a single producer in 2022.

Average Annual USDA Financial Assistance to Agricultural Producers, Fiscal Years 2019–2023



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data. | GAO-25-107174

The number of historically underserved producers, along with livestock and poultry producers, participating in USDA financial assistance programs increased from about 84,000 to 183,000 and from about 76,000 to 243,000 producers respectively, over the 5-year period. According to agency officials, several factors contributed to the increase in participation for both groups of producers, including the expansion of programs in the 2018 farm bill that broadened the type of producers eligible to participate in programs, and an increase in the number of supplemental programs in recent years for which they were eligible.