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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Alabama FSA Newsletter

Alabama Farm Service Agency

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To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/al

Take Steps Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Assistance

Details and Signup for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Announced Soon

In April, USDA announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). CFAP will provide direct support based on losses for agriculture producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted and will assist eligible producers facing additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

CFAP will provide assistance to most farms that have experienced at least a five percent loss and will be available to farms regardless of size. We are still working on the final details of the actual payment rates and those details will be determined and included as part of the rulemaking process. Once the rule making process is complete, the application period will be open and subject to the eligibility and payment limit criteria described in the rule.

As part of applying for the program, you'll need to contact the Farm Service Agency county office to schedule an appointment. Your local FSA staff will work with you to apply for the program, and through forms asking for this type of information:

- Contact
- Personal, including your Tax Identification Number
- Farming operating structure

- Adjusted Gross Income to ensure eligibility
- Direct deposit to enable payment

Please do not send any personal information to USDA without first initiating contact through a phone call. We take your privacy and security of your information very seriously.

If you are an existing customer, this information is likely on file at your local Service Center.

What Can You Do Now?

While the application process has not started, you can start gathering/understanding your farm's recent sales and inventory.

FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

How Will USDA Accept Applications?

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only. Once the application period opens, please call your FSA county office to schedule an appointment.

Our staff is working with our agricultural producers by phone and using email, fax, mail, and online tools like Box to accept applications.

Information on CFAP can be found at farmers.gov/CFAP.

USDA Reminds Alabama Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices in Alabama are currently open to phone appointments only but can still work with producers on timely filing crop acreage reports. FSA staff can provide assistance over the phone or by email.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable in Alabama:

May 15, 2020 -Sweet Corn, Potatoes (planted Mar. 2-Apr. 15), Tobacco, Tomatoes

May 31, 2020 – Nursery Crops

July 15, 2020 – PRF/Perennial Forage, CRP and All Other Crops

September 30, 2020 - Value loss and controlled environment crops, with the exception of Nursery

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your local FSA office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline. FSA staff is still able to assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps.

FSA county offices in Alabama will provide maps to producers through mail or email with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete, producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet by email or mail as soon as possible after planting to complete the process.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and mail or email producers the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail or email by July 15.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

If you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary documentation to FSA immediately upon receipt from the certifying agent.

For questions, please contact your local FSA office. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA Announces Loan Maturity for Marketing Assistance Loans Now Extended to 12 Months

Agricultural producers now have more time to repay Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020. The loans now mature at 12 months rather than nine, and this flexibility is available for most commodities.

Effective immediately, producers of eligible commodities now have up to 12 months to repay their commodity loans. The maturity extension applies to nonrecourse loans for crop years 2018, 2019 and 2020. Eligible open loans must in good standing with a maturity date of March 31, 2020, or later or new

crop year (2019 or 2020) loans requested by September 30, 2020. All new loans requested by September 30, 2020, will have a maturity date 12 months following the date of approval.

The maturity extension for current, active loans will be automatically extended an additional 3 months. Loans that matured March 31 have already been automatically extended by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Producers who prefer a nine-month loan will need to contact their local FSA county office. Loans requested after September 30, 2020, will have a term of nine months.

Eligible commodities include barley, chickpeas (small and large), corn, cotton (upland and extra-long staple), dry peas, grain sorghum, honey, lentils, mohair, oats, peanuts, rice (long and medium grain), soybeans, unshorn pelts, wheat, wool (graded and nongraded); and other oilseeds, including canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sunflower seed, and sesame seed. Seed cotton and sugar are not eligible.

About MALs

Placing commodities under loan provides producers interim financing to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low and allows producers to store production for more orderly marketing of commodities throughout the year.

These loans are considered nonrecourse because the commodity is pledged as loan collateral, and producers have the option of delivering the pledged collateral to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for repayment of the outstanding loan at maturity.

MAL Repayment

Under the new maturity provisions, producers can still repay the loan as they would have before the extension:

- repay the MAL on or before the maturity date;
- upon maturity by delivering or forfeiting the commodity to CCC as loan repayment; or
- after maturity and before CCC acquires the farm-stored commodity by repaying the outstanding MAL principle and interest.

Marketing Loan Gains

A Marketing Loan Gain occurs when a MAL is repaid at less than the loan principal. If market gain is applicable during the now-extended loan period, producers can receive a gain on the repayment made before the loan matures.

For more information on MALs, contact the nearest FSA county office. USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA's Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup

Farmers and ranchers may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands signup. The signup runs through May 15.

Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds.

Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is either 10 or 15 years. FSA will rank applications using a number of factors including existence of expiring CRP land, threat of conversion or development, existing grassland, and predominance of native species cover, and cost.

The 2018 Farm Bill set aside 2 million acres for CRP Grassland enrollment. CRP is one of the largest conservation programs at USDA. CRP marks its 35-year anniversary in 2020 with 22 million acres currently enrolled.

For more information or to enroll in CRP Grasslands, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of \$900,000 for local governments to host a Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot project for fiscal year (FY) 2020. The cooperative agreements will support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans. The agreements are offered through USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.

USDA will accept applications on [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) until midnight June 26, 2020. Projects should span two years with a start date of October 1, 2020 and completion date of September 29, 2022.

Cooperative agreements support projects led by local governments that: 1) generate compost; 2) increase access to compost for agricultural producers; 3) reduce reliance on, and limit the use of, fertilizer; 4) improve soil quality; 5) encourage waste management and permaculture business development; 6) increase rainwater absorption; 7) reduce municipal food waste; and 8) divert food waste from landfills. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide assistance for conservation related activities.

Priority will be given to projects that anticipate or demonstrate economic benefits; incorporate plans to make compost easily accessible to farmers, including community gardeners; integrate other food waste strategies, including food recovery efforts; and collaborate with multiple partners.

A webinar, which will be held on June 4, 2020, from 2 to 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, will provide an overview of the cooperative agreements' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application. Information on [how to register and participate in the webinar](#), or listen to the recording, will be posted at farmers.gov/urban.

More Information

Comments can be sent to UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov within 90 days, with the subject line "Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction Project."

Questions about this cooperative agreement opportunity can be sent to UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov.

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It includes representatives from many USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Agricultural Marketing Service, and is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. More information is available at farmers.gov/urban.

Additional resources that may be of interest to urban agriculture entities include [AMS grants](#) to improve domestic and international opportunities for U.S. growers and producers and [FSA loans](#).

USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of \$3 million for grants through its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until midnight July 6, 2020.

Planning Projects

\$1 million is available for Planning Projects that initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access; education; business and start-up costs for new farmers; and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

Implementation Projects

\$2 million is available for Implementation Projects that accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor, and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers. Projects will improve local food access and collaborate with partner organizations and may support infrastructure needs; emerging technologies; educational endeavors; and urban farming policy development.

Webinar

A webinar will be held on June 3, 2020 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The webinar will provide an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility, and basic requirements for the submission of an application. Information on how participate in the webinar, or listen to the recording, will be posted on the farmers.gov/urban webpage.

More Information

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Technology was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on July 6, 2020. More information is available at farmers.gov/urban.

For more information or to apply for Urban Agriculture Innovative grants, contact your local FSA county office. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Small Business Administration's Agricultural Assistance

The new Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act provides additional resources for both the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. Participation in SBA's PPP or EIDL program does

not impact producer eligibility for USDA's forthcoming CFAP. There is no linkage between the two programs. Likewise, participation in SBA's PPP or EIDL program does not impact producer eligibility for any USDA farm program. The PPP duplicate benefit provision does not have an impact on FSA farm programs or farm loan programs.

Paycheck Protection Program

The PPP is a guaranteed loan program administered by the SBA. The purpose of the program is to support small businesses and help support their payroll during the coronavirus situation.

Agricultural producers, farmers, and ranchers with 500 or fewer employees whose principal place of residence is in the United States are eligible.

Farms are eligible if:

- the farm has 500 or less employees, **OR**
- it fits within the revenue-based sized standard, which is on average annual receipts of \$1M.

Additionally, farms can qualify for PPP if it meets SBA's "alternative size standard." The "alternative size standard" is currently:

- a maximum net worth of the business not more than \$15 million, **AND**
- the average net income Federal income taxes of the business for the two full fiscal years before the date of the application be not more than \$5 million.

Small agricultural cooperatives may receive PPP loans as long as other eligibility requirements are met. Other forms of cooperatives may be eligible provided they comply with all other Loan Program Requirements (as defined in 13 CFR 120.10).

In regard to H-2A or H-2B workers on payroll, only employees with a principal place of residence in the U.S. count toward eligibility and calculation of the PPP loan amount.

SBA requires sole proprietors, independent contractors, and other eligible self-employed individuals to provide documentation to its lender that the business was in operation as of February 15, 2020. This documentation may include payroll processor records, payroll tax filings, or Form 1099-MISC, or income and expenses from a sole proprietorship. For borrowers that do not have any such documentation, the borrower must provide other supporting documentation to its lender, such as bank records, sufficient to demonstrate the qualifying payroll amount.

Documentation options for payroll tax filings include the following:

- IRS Form 941 (quarterly wages);
- IRS Form 944 (calendar year wages);
- State income, payroll and unemployment insurance filings;
- QuickBooks;
- bank repository accounts; and/or
- internally generated profit and loss statements.

Some additional notes include:

- Nonprofit organizations must include IRS Form 990;

- Sole proprietors must include IRS Form 1040 Schedule C;
- Any entity that filed IRS Form 1099-MISC must include this form;
- Seasonal employers must document the period beginning February 15, 2019 through June 30, 2019

More extensive FAQs can be found at the Treasury Department's [CARES Act website](#).

Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, small business owners in all U.S. states, Washington D.C., and territories are eligible to apply for an EIDL advance of up to \$10,000 and borrow up to \$2 million. This advance will provide economic relief to businesses that are currently experiencing a temporary loss of revenue. Loan advances will not have to be repaid.

SBA's EIDL application portal reopened on May 4, 2020, as a result of funding authorized by Congress through the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act.

For the first time, agricultural enterprises are now eligible for the disaster assistance from EIDL. As a result of the unprecedented legislation, American farmers, ranchers and other agricultural businesses will now have access to emergency working capital.

These low-interest, long-term loans will help keep agricultural businesses viable while bringing stability to the nation's vitally important food supply chains.

Agricultural businesses include businesses engaged in the legal production of food and fiber, ranching, and raising of livestock, aquaculture, and all other farming and agricultural related industries (as defined by section 18(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 647(b))). Eligible agricultural businesses must have 500 or fewer employees.

In order to help facilitate this important change to EIDL Loan and EIDL Advance assistance eligibility, SBA is re-opening the Loan and Advance application portal to agricultural enterprises only. For agricultural producers that submitted an EIDL loan application through the streamlined application portal prior to the legislative change, SBA will move forward and process these applications without the need for re-applying. All other EIDL loan applications that were submitted prior to April 15 will be processed on a first-in, first-out basis.

For more information, visit sba.gov.

USDA Offers Individuals Options to Complete Business Online

Farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers have online options to access U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs, including Farm Service Agency's Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage (ARC/PLC), Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), producer farm data such as Common Land Unit data through [FSAfarm+](#), farm loan, WHIP, and WHIP+ information through the [farmers.gov portal](#), and conservation program and practice information through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's [Conservation Client Gateway](#). Online options are available to users with a secure Level 2 eAuthentication ID.

Through the [FSA website](#), you can:

- Request Loan Deficiency Payments through eLDP;
- Choose a payment option, assign crop shares, and sign and submit ARC/PLC contracts online, as well as view and print submitted contracts;
- View your FSA data on FSAfarm+, including farm records data and maps.

Through the [farmers.gov portal](#), you can:

- View farm loans information, history, and payments for USDA farm loans;
- Prepare to enroll in the 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (WHIP), and track your application;
- Prepare to enroll in the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) which helps agricultural producers affected by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019.

Through the NRCS [Conservation Client Gateway](#), you can:

- Track NRCS payments;
- Report completed practices;
- Request conservation assistance, and
- Electronically sign documents.

The functionalities of FSAfarm+ and Conservation Client Gateway are being transitioned to [farmers.gov](#), a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where customers can apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts. But for now, the portals must be accessed individually depending on the service.

Producers doing business as an individual with these agencies first need to sign up for the Level 2 eAuthentication access. Currently USDA eAuthentication does not have the mechanism to issue accounts to businesses, corporations, other entities or for anyone acting on behalf of another individual or entity.

Users with a secure Level 2 eAuthentication ID linked to their USDA customer record can apply for select USDA programs, view and print farm maps and farm records data. Enrolling is easy!

1. Contact your local service center to confirm you have a USDA customer record with a primary email address. Use our Service Center Locator to find your local office.
2. Navigate to the eAuth Account Registration page.
3. Select "Customer" on the registration page.
4. Enter your primary email address, which should match what USDA has on your customer record. You will receive an email from eAuth asking you to confirm your email address. Click the "Continue Registration" link in this email to continue the registration process.
Note: When you log in, your User ID will be your email address.
5. Next, enter your name and set a password.
6. Finally, you will need to verify your identity. You will be taken to a page where you will need to provide information such as your date of birth and residential address, and then can verify your identity online. If you are unable to verify your identity online, contact your local USDA Service Center.

For technical assistance, call the eAuthentication help desk at 1-800-457-3642

FSA Adds Farm Loan Flexibilities

Farm loans are critical for annual operating and family living expenses, emergency needs and cash flow, especially in tough times. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is providing additional flexibilities to provide producers with credit options. We encourage direct loan applicants and borrowers to contact their county office to discuss these programs and any current, and future, temporary changes to farm loan deadlines and the loan servicing options available. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. For a full list of flexibilities, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Farmers.gov Feature Enables USDA Customers to Manage Farm Loans Online

Do you have loans through USDA? If so, you can login to view loan information, history and payments through farmers.gov, USDA's self-service website available to agricultural producers. Using a desktop, tablet, or phone, the "My Financial Information" feature enables you to view:

- loan information;
- interest payments for the current calendar year (including year-to-date interest paid for the past five years);
- loan advance and payment history;
- paid-in-full and restructured loans; and
- account alerts giving borrowers important notifications regarding their loans.

Currently, access is only available for customers doing business as individuals. Entities, such as an LLC or Trust, can't access the portal at this time, but access is being planned.

Users are recommended to use Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Edge.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).
