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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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AskFSA to Transition to Ask USDA on September 21

AskFSA, the tool for FSA customers to ask questions about FSA programs and services, will transition to Ask USDA on September 21. This is part of USDA's ongoing effort to improve and streamline customer service.

Ask USDA, available at <https://ask.usda.gov> is similar to AskFSA, but provides information for all USDA programs. Moving to Ask USDA will allow all USDA customers to search for and read answers about FSA programs and services in the same location as they read about other USDA programs and services.

Customers will still be able to submit questions if they need more information. In addition to email, Ask USDA offers the ability to ask questions through phone or online chat. This improved customer service approach further builds on Secretary Sonny Perdue's OneUSDA vision and provides the customer a one-stop shopping experience that covers all of USDA's many programs.

USDA Supports U.S. Seafood Industry Impacted by Retaliatory Tariffs

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide approximately \$530 million to support the U.S. seafood industry and fishermen impacted by retaliatory tariffs from foreign governments. The funding will be provided through the Seafood Trade Relief Program and funded through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Background:

The Seafood Trade Relief Program funding will support the following seafood types:

- [Atka mackerel](#)
- [Crab \(Dungeness, King, Snow, Southern Tanner\)](#)
- [Flounder](#)
- [Geoduck](#)
- [Goosefish](#)
- [Herrings](#)
- [Lobster](#)
- [Pacific Cod](#)
- [Pacific Ocean Perch](#)
- [Pollock](#)
- [Sablefish](#)
- [Salmon](#)
- [Sole](#)
- [Squid](#)
- [Tuna](#)
- [Turbot](#)

Fishermen can sign-up for relief through the program from September 14, 2020 to December 14, 2020. Fishermen should apply through their local USDA Service Center. To find your local Service Center, visit www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator. The application can be found at www.farmers.gov/seafood.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in the office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA Reminds Farmers of Sept. 30 Deadline to Update Safety-Net Program Crop Yields

Don't Miss This One-Time Opportunity - First Since 2014

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farm owners that they have a one-time opportunity to update Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program yields for covered commodities on the farm. The deadline is September 30, 2020, to update yields, which are used to calculate the PLC payments for 2020 through 2023. Additionally, producers who elected Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) should also consider updating their yields.

Updating yields requires the signature of one owner on a farm and not all owners. If a yield update is not made, no action is required to maintain the existing base crop yield on file with FSA.

For program payments, updated yields will apply beginning with the 2020 crop year which, should payments trigger, will be paid out in October of 2021.

Determining Yield Updates

The updated yield will be equal to 90% of the average yield per planted acre in crop years 2013-2017. That excludes any year where the applicable covered commodity was not planted and is subject to the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for the covered commodity.

The chart below provides the ratio obtained by this calculation.

Covered Commodity	National Yield Factor
Barley	0.9437
Canola	0.9643
Chickpeas, Large	1.0000
Chickpeas, Small	0.9760
Corn	0.9000
Crambe	1.0000
Flaxseed	1.0000
Grain Sorghum	0.9077
Lentils	1.0000
Mustard Seed	0.9460
Oats	0.9524
Peanuts	0.9273

Peas, Dry	0.9988
Rapeseed	1.0000
Rice, Long	0.9330
Rice, Medium	0.9887
Rice, Temp Japonica	0.9591
Safflower	1.0000
Seed Cotton	0.9000
Sesame Seed	0.9673
Soybeans	0.9000
Sunflower Seed	0.9396
Wheat	0.9545

If the reported yield in any year is less than 75 percent of the 2013-2017 average county yield, the yield will be substituted with 75 percent of the county average yield.

More information

PLC yields may be updated on a covered commodity-by-covered commodity basis by submitting FSA form CCC-867 to include a farm owner’s signature.

For more information, reference resources, and decision tools, visit farmers.gov/arc-plc. Contact your local FSA county office for assistance at farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers. For more information, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport.

Filing CCC-941 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certifications

If you have experienced delays in receiving Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Gains on Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs), it may be because you have not filed form CCC-941, *Adjusted Gross Income Certification*.

If you don't have a valid CCC-941 on file for the applicable crop year you will not receive payments. All farm operator/tenants/owners who have not filed a CCC-941 and have pending payments should IMMEDIATELY file the form with their recording county FSA office. Farm operators and tenants are encouraged to ensure that their landowners have filed the form.

FSA can accept the CCC-941 for 2017, 2018, and 2019. Unlike the past, you must have the CCC-941 certifying your AGI compliance before any payments can be issued.

USDA Announces Flexibilities for Producers Filing 'Notice of Loss' for Failed, Prevented Planted Acres

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing additional flexibilities for producers to file on acres with failed crops or crops that were prevented from planting because of extreme weather events. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is adding these flexibilities for *Notice of Loss* on both insured and uninsured crops to enable Service Centers to best assist producers.

Filing for Prevented Planted Acres

For insured crops, producers who timely filed a prevented planted claim with the reinsurance company but filed a *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) form after the deadline will be considered timely filed for FSA purposes. FSA can use data from the Risk Management Agency (RMA) for accepting the report of prevented planting with FSA. If the information is not available through RMA, the producer may also provide proper evidence to FSA that the prevented planted claim was timely filed with the reinsurance company.

For uninsured crops, producers may start a *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) by calling their FSA county office, or they may print and complete the *Notice of Loss* ([CCC-576](#)) form from home and send to their county office. For prevented planted acreage, *Notice of Loss* forms mailed to the FSA office must be postmarked by the final acreage reporting date in the county to be considered timely filed. For all prevented planted cases, the *Report of Acreage* (FSA-578) form and the completed and signed *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) **must** be filed by the applicable acreage reporting date.

Filing for Failed Acres

For failed acreage of uninsured crops, the *Notice of Loss* (CCC-576) must be completed, signed and verified before the disposition of the crop.

When to File a ‘Notice of Loss’

A *Notice of Loss* cannot be filed for a crop before the final planting date, but it can be filed before completing the crop acreage report.

More Information

Producers who miss FSA’s [July 15 acreage reporting deadline](#) will not face a late filing fee if filed within a month of the deadline.

For questions, please contact your FSA county office. To locate your FSA county office at your Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations. have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

Farm Loan Graduation Reminder for Direct Loan Borrowers

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

FSA periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower’s ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower’s financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer’s operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower’s potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower’s name, loan type, balance sheet, and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower's loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA farm loan office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, FSA's intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

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).