

November 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Topics for November

South Carolina Farm Service Agency

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State Executive Director:
Boone Peeler

State Committee:
Anthony Grant, Chairperson
Robert Battle

Apply Now for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the deadline to apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) is Dec. 11, 2020. This program provides direct relief to producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19.

CFAP 2 will provide up to \$14 billion to eligible producers of certain row crops, livestock, dairy, specialty crops, aquaculture and more. All eligible commodities, payment rates and calculations can be found on farmers.gov/cfap. CFAP 2 is a separate program from the first iteration of the program (CFAP 1) and interested producers

Bill Sarratt
Landy Weathers
Beth White

Administrative Officer:
Kenn Jameson

Farm Programs Chief:
Evelyn Whitesides

Farm Loan Programs Chief:
William Shelley

Producers can contact their [local FSA office](#) for more information or schedule an appointment.

Important Dates and Deadlines:

Dec. 7: COC Election Ballot Return Deadline

Dec. 11: CFAP 2 Deadline

Dec. 11: DMC Deadline

Dec. 14: STRP Deadline

must complete a new application to be eligible for payment for CFAP 2.

Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office.

Application Options

Producers have several options for applying to the CFAP 2 program by the Dec. 11 deadline:

- Using an online portal at gov/cfap. This allows producers with secure USDA login credentials, known as eAuthentication, to certify eligible commodities online, digitally sign applications and submit directly to the local USDA Service Center.
- Completing the application form using our CFAP 2 Application Generator and Payment Calculator found at farmers.gov/cfap. This Excel workbook allows customers to input information specific to their operation to determine estimated payments and populate the application form, which can be printed, then signed and submitted to their local USDA Service Center.
- Downloading the AD-3117 application form from gov/cfap and manually completing the form to submit to the local USDA Service Center by mail, electronically, or by hand delivery to an office drop box.

In some limited cases, the office may be open for in-person business by appointment. Visit farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status to check the status of your local office.

USDA Service Centers can also work with producers to complete and securely transmit digitally-signed applications through two commercially available tools: Box and OneSpan. Producers who are interested in digitally signing their applications should notify their local FSA office when calling to discuss the CFAP 2 application process. You can learn more about these solutions at farmers.gov/mydocs.

Producers of commodities with payments based on acreage will use acreage and yield information provided by FSA through the annual acreage reporting process. Producers have the option to complete their application by working directly with their local FSA office or online through the CFAP 2 Application Portal.

All other eligibility forms, such as those related to adjusted gross income and payment information, can be downloaded from farmers.gov/cfap/apply. For existing FSA customers, including those who participated in CFAP 1, these documents are likely already on file.

Both CFAP 1 and CFAP 2 are self-certification programs, which means the applicant certifies the information submitted is correct. FSA will soon begin an important step in the internal controls

portion of CFAP 1 by conducting spot checks. Producers have been randomly selected using a statistically sound methodology. These CFAP 1 applicants will be contacted by FSA staff and asked to provide supporting documentation to verify the information certified by the producer on their CFAP 1 application.

As of Nov. 9, FSA has paid more than \$9.5 billion with more than 576,000 applications for CFAP 2. This builds upon more than \$10.3 billion paid through CFAP 1.

More Information

To find the latest information on CFAP 2, visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364.

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 commercially licensed 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).

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.

USDA Service Centers are Here to Help!

At USDA, we are committed to helping farmers complete loan applications, environmental reviews, and other paperwork free of charge. One-on-one support is available at more than 2,300 USDA Service Centers nationwide. USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff are usually co-located at these Service Centers, and can help guide farmers to the best USDA assistance based on their unique goals, whether it is loans, conservation programs, or insurance.

Service Center staff can guide farmers through the process of preparing and submitting required paperwork on their own, with no need to hire a paid preparer. Language translation service is available in all USDA Service Centers, so one-on-one assistance with a Service Center employee can be translated in real time for farmers requiring it. And while some program and loan applications do have an administrative fee for filing, there is never a charge for preparation services provided by USDA staff.

Farmers who come to the USDA Service Center can:

- Establish their farm by registering for a farm number, which is required for USDA programs and assistance.
- Learn how to meet conservation compliance provisions.
- Verify eligibility for USDA programs.
- Discuss their business and conservation goals.
- Create a conservation plan.
- Fill out and file loan and program applications.

To find the nearest USDA Service Center, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator>.

Dairy Margin Coverage Program Enrollment for 2021 Opens Oct. 13

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin accepting applications for the [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 for 2021 enrollment.

Signup runs through Dec. 11, 2020. DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. DMC payments triggered for seven months in 2019 and three months so far in 2020. More than 23,000 operations enrolled in DMC in 2019, and more than 13,000 in 2020.

To determine the appropriate level of coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can utilize the recently updated online dairy decision tool. The decision tool is designed to assist producers with calculating total premium costs and administrative fees associated with participation in DMC. An informational video is available, too.

Improvements to the decision tool, made in cooperation with representatives from the University of Minnesota and University of Wisconsin, include historical analysis that illustrates what DMC indemnity payments might have been had the program been available over the previous two decades. The analysis indicates that over the course of time, DMC payments made to producers

exceed premiums paid. These decision tool enhancements provide a more comprehensive decision support experience for producers considering DMC.

In addition to DMC, USDA offers a variety of programs that have helped dairy producers, including insurance, disaster assistance, and conservation programs. Most recently, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 1 provided \$1.75 billion in direct relief to dairy producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19 in early 2020. Now, signup is underway for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2, which provides another round of assistance for dairy producers and many other eligible producers.

For more information, visit [farmers.gov DMC webpage](https://farmers.gov/dmc), or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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 the 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 required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone, and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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.

Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can also 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 USDA Service Center](#) at or visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2020 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on Nov. 2, 2020, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 7, 2020.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs, conservation programs, incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities, emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their [local USDA Service Center](#).

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2021.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2020 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a [local USDA Service Center](#).

Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

CRP contract holders are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the landowner or operator for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires.

CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants must agree to sell, have a contract to sell, or agree to lease long term (at least five years) land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who is not a family member.

Beginning, veteran or social disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning two years before the expiration date of the CRP contract. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands. New landowners or renters that return the land to production must use sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Applying for Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

For help preparing the application forms, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Wrapping up #Harvest2020 and Preparing for the Next Crop Year

USDA followed the #Plant2020 and #Harvest2020 progress across the country as farmers like you shared photos and videos, giving us a glimpse into planting and harvesting on your operation. From preparing the ground to harvesting the last acre, we know it's been a busy and unusual year.

#Harvest2020

So far, we've received photo and video submissions from 32 states. Our [#Harvest2020 campaign](#) is still running, so there's still time to put your operation on the map. You can share your harvest progress by sending an email to sharingoursuccesses@usda.gov with landscape-orientation photos or videos under 10 seconds, a short description of your photo or video, your city and state, and your Twitter handle, if you have one.

Preparing for the Next Crop Year

With #Harvest2020 wrapping up across the country, it's time to think ahead about the approaching 2021 crop year. We agree that you should definitely celebrate the end of harvest and enjoy the holidays, but going into the next crop year with a plan is always a good idea.

To read USDA's five things to consider to help you plan for the next crop year visit farmers.gov/connect/blog/conservation/wrapping-harvest2020-and-preparing-next-crop-year.

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).