

November 2020



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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/al)

### Message from the SED

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](mailto: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](https://farmers.gov/connect/blog/conservation/wrapping-harvest2020-and-preparing-next-crop-year).

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## 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>.

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## USDA to Open Signup for the Conservation Reserve Program and CRP Grasslands in Early 2021

USDA announced the 2021 signup periods for general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and CRP Grasslands offers. General signup for CRP will be open from January 4, 2021 to February 12, 2021; signup for CRP Grasslands runs from March 15, 2021 to April 23, 2021. Both programs are competitive and provide annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

CRP and the many focused programs that come under it, like CRP Grasslands, are some of the most critical tools to help producers better manage their operations while conserving natural resources. CRP has proven to protect the Nation's valuable resources. Next year's signup gives farmers and ranchers an opportunity to enroll in CRP for the first time or continue their participation for another term.

Producers may apply by contacting their FSA office.

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# Apply Now for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2

*Application Deadline is December 11*

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](https://farmers.gov/cfap). CFAP 2 is a separate program from the first iteration of the program (CFAP 1) and interested producers 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 [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.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](https://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 [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://farmers.gov/cfap) or call 877-508-8364.

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## USDA Disaster Assistance Application Deadline is Nov. 20 for Certain 2017, 2018 and 2019 Crop, Milk and On-Farm Storage Loss

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that that Friday, Nov. 20 is the last day to submit applications for disaster assistance for eligible losses caused by Tropical Storm Cindy in 2017, peach and blueberry losses due to extreme cold or hurricanes in 2017 and 2018, and milk or on-farm storage loss due to qualifying natural disasters in 2018 and 2019.

The Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 (the Act) amended the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to provide assistance for additional losses under the 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (WHIP) and created new disaster programs to cover losses specifically named within the legislation for milk dumped due to adverse weather and loss of on-farm stored commodities

**2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (WHIP) Loss** The following natural disaster events or causes of loss are eligible for program benefits:

- 2017 calendar year losses from Tropical Storm Cindy;
- 2017 peach and blueberry losses because of extreme cold; and
- 2018 blueberry losses because of extreme cold and/or hurricane conditions in 2017.

2017 WHIP benefits are available for eligible producers in counties or parishes in at least nine states and territories only – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas and the Virgin Islands.

### WHIP Milk Loss

The WHIP Milk Loss Program (WHIP ML) provides payments to eligible dairy operations nationwide for milk that was dumped or removed without compensation from the commercial milk market due to qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disaster events including hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms and wildfires.

### On-Farm Storage Loss Program

Producers who suffered losses of harvested commodities stored in on-farm structures in 2018 and 2019 can receive assistance through the On-Farm Storage Loss Program (OFSLP). The program provides payments for uncompensated losses of harvested commodities, including grains, oilseeds, and hay stored in on-farm structures as a result of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms, and wildfires. Commodities stored in warehouses are not eligible for this program.

## More Information

For more information on FSA disaster assistance programs, please contact your local [USDA service center](#) or visit [farmers.gov/recover](https://farmers.gov/recover). For all available USDA disaster assistance programs, [USDA's disaster resources website](#).

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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## Ask USDA available to answer questions about FSA programs

Ask USDA is now available as a tool for FSA customers to ask questions about FSA programs and services.

Ask USDA, available at [ask.usda.gov](https://ask.usda.gov) is similar to AskFSA, which was decommissioned Sept. 21, but it also provides information for all USDA programs. Ask USDA allows 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 are able to submit questions through email, chat, and phone if they need more information. 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.

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## USDA Reminds Dairy Producers of Dec. 11 Deadline for 2021 Safety-Net Enrollment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reminds dairy producers that the deadline to enroll in [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) for calendar year 2021 is Friday, Dec. 11, 2020. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) opened DMC signup in October to help producers manage economic risk brought on by milk price and feed cost disparities.

The DMC program, created by the [2018 Farm Bill](#), offers reasonably priced protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

**Complete 2021 Enrollment/Evaluate Coverage Options** For DMC enrollment, producers must certify with FSA that the operation is commercially marketing milk, sign all required forms, and pay the \$100 administrative fee unless the dairy operation qualifies for a limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged, or military veteran farmers and ranchers waiver.

Producers interested in DMC have the option to select a \$4.00 catastrophic level of coverage with no premium fee or they can choose to buy-up coverage where the premium is based on margin triggers between \$4.50 and \$9.50 on 5 to 95 percent of established production history.

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

## 2020 Margin Payments

For producers enrolled in DMC for 2020, the fourth DMC payment of the year triggered in September at \$9.40. Including the September payment, dairy producers across the country have received 11 monthly payments for over \$472 million through DMC since the program began in January 2019.

## More Information

For more information, visit [farmers.gov DMC webpage](#), 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](#).

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## USDA Expands Farm Loans for Native Americans Farming and Ranching on Tribal Land

The Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan program (HFIL) provides revolving loan funds to qualified intermediary lenders that helps qualified tribes and individuals purchase tribal farmland that has multiple owners.

The first recipient, the Native American Community Development Corporation Financial Services, Inc. (NACDCFS) of Browning, Mont., will lend funds directly to tribal members through a \$10 million intermediary HFIL loan from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). NACDCFS addresses critical needs in Native American communities related to the growth of family assets, supports economic development, and enhances the quality of life for communities and residents located on or near Montana's seven Indian reservations. NACDCFS provides one-on-one technical assistance to Native American entrepreneurs and agricultural producers. NACDCFS is a 501(c) (3), certified Native Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), through the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Under the [1887 Dawes Act](#), Indian reservation land was divided and allotted to individual tribal members such that with the passing of each generation, title ownership was divided and parceled among heirs, while the land was not. As a result, land once owned by a single person could today be owned by hundreds or thousands of individuals, resulting in what is known as "highly fractionated Indian land." In many instances, landowners are unknown or cannot be located, which complicates the coordination of

ownership or prevents the use of the property altogether. There are more than 245,000 owners of three million fractionated land interests, spanning approximately 150 Indian reservations.

Under HFIL, tribes and tribal members can submit an application directly to an intermediary lender. To participate, intermediary lenders first must be approved by USDA. The lenders may be private and tribal nonprofit corporations, public agencies, Indian tribes or lenders subject to federal or state regulation (such as a credit union or other financial institution). FSA will lend to the intermediary, which will relend to the applicant. The intermediary lender also will administer the loan for the applicant.

For more information on the program, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](https://fsa.usda.gov/farmloans).

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## 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 County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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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).

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