

April 09, 2021



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [After Identifying Gaps in Previous Aid, USDA Announces 'Pandemic Assistance for Producers' to Distribute Resources More Equitably](#)
- [HealthCare.gov Insurance Enrollment Available through May 15](#)
- [USDA Offers Secure New Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online](#)
- [American Rescue Plan Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Payments](#)
- [USDA Announces No Actions Under Feedstock Flexibility Program](#)
- [Nursery Growers, Nursery Value Select Growers, and Pecan Tree Growers Need to Make Insurance Decisions Soon](#)
- [Communication is Key in Lending](#)
- [Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

Florida FSA Newsletter

Florida Farm Service Agency

4500 NW 27th Avenue
Bldg D-1
Gainesville, FL 32606

Phone: 352-379-4500

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/fl>

State Committee:

Michelle Williamson (Chair)
Mike Adams
Jimmy LeFils
Mack Glass
Mark Soddors

Acting State Executive

Director: Christy Marshall

After Identifying Gaps in Previous Aid, USDA Announces 'Pandemic Assistance for Producers' to Distribute Resources More Equitably

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is establishing new programs and efforts to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions. The new initiative—**USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers**—will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs.

USDA is dedicating at least \$6 billion toward the new programs. The Department will also develop rules for new programs that will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, timber harvesters, as well as provide support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable fuel, among others. Existing programs like the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will fall within the new initiative and, where statutory authority allows, will be refined to better address the needs of producers.

Division Chiefs:**Administrative Officer**

Mark Cotrell

Farm Program

Tom Hockert

Farm Loans

Christy Marshall

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers was needed, said Vilsack, after a review of previous COVID-19 assistance programs targeting farmers identified a number of gaps and disparities in how assistance was distributed as well as inadequate outreach to underserved producers and smaller and medium operations.

USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has committed at least \$2.5 million to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will establish partnerships with organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers – 4 Parts

Part 1: Investing \$6 Billion to Expand Help & Assistance to More Producers

USDA will dedicate at least \$6 billion to develop a number of new programs or modify existing proposals using discretionary funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act and other coronavirus funding that went unspent by the previous administration.

Part 2: Adding \$500 Million of New Funding to Existing Programs

USDA expects to begin investing approximately \$500 million in expedited assistance through several existing programs this spring, with most by April 30.

Part 3: Carrying Out Formula Payments under CFAP 1, CFAP 2, CFAP AA

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula. USDA is now expediting these provisions because there is no discretion involved in interpreting such directives, they are self-enacting.

- An increase in CFAP 1 payment rates for cattle. Cattle producers with approved CFAP 1 applications will automatically receive these payments beginning in April. Information on the additional payment rates for cattle can be found on farmers.gov/cfap. Eligible producers do not need to submit new applications, since payments are based on previously approved CFAP 1 application. USDA estimates additional payments of more than \$1.1 billion to more than 410,000 producers, according to the mandated formula.
- Additional CFAP assistance of \$20 per acre for producers of eligible crops identified as CFAP 2 flat-rate or price-trigger crops beginning in April. This includes alfalfa, corn, cotton, hemp, peanuts, rice, sorghum, soybeans, sugar beets and wheat, among other crops. FSA will automatically issue payments to eligible price trigger and flat-rate crop producers based on the eligible acres included on their CFAP 2 applications. Eligible producers do not need to submit a new CFAP 2 application. For a list

of all eligible row-crops, visit farmers.gov/cfap. USDA estimates additional payments of more than \$4.5 billion to more than 560,000 producers, according to the mandated formula.

- USDA will finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance program in the following categories:
 - Applications filed for pullets and turfgrass sod;
 - A formula correction for row-crop producer applications to allow producers with a non-Actual Production History (APH) insurance policy to use 100% of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield in the calculation;
 - Sales commodity applications revised to include insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments, and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus payments, as required by statute; and
 - Additional payments for swine producers and contract growers under CFAP Additional Assistance remain on hold and are likely to require modifications to the regulation as part of the broader evaluation and future assistance; however, FSA will continue to accept applications from interested producers.

Part 4: Reopening CFAP 2 Sign-Up to Improve Access & Outreach to Underserved Producers

As noted above, USDA will re-open sign-up for of CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021.

- FSA has committed at least \$2.5 million to establish partnerships and direct outreach efforts intended to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will cooperate with grassroots organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

Please visit www.farmers.gov for additional information and announcements under the **USDA Pandemic Assistance to Producers** initiative, which will help to expand and more equitably distribute financial assistance to producers and farming operations during the COVID-19 national emergency.

HealthCare.gov Insurance Enrollment Available through May 15

HealthCare.gov has opened a Special Enrollment Period from now through May 15 for people seeking health insurance. You may be eligible for financial assistance or have access to plans of \$50 or less. [Learn more at HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov).

USDA Offers Secure New Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers working with USDA's Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.

OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer's personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you're interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

Visit farmers.gov/mydocs to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

To learn more about program flexibilities and Service Center status during the coronavirus pandemic, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

American Rescue Plan Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Payments

USDA recognizes that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have faced systemic discrimination with cumulative effects that have, among other consequences, led to a substantial loss in the number of socially disadvantaged producers, reduced the amount of farmland they control, and contributed to a cycle of debt that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, socially disadvantaged communities saw a disproportionate amount of COVID-19 infection rates, loss of property, hospitalizations, death, and economic hurt.

To address these systemic challenges, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides historic debt relief to socially disadvantaged producers including Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander.

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. As information becomes available, it will be provided directly to socially disadvantaged borrowers and stakeholder groups representing socially disadvantaged producers, posted here on farmers.gov, and shared through our social media channels, email newsletters, and the media.

Who qualifies for this debt relief?

Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies. The American Rescue Plan Act uses the 2501 definition of socially disadvantaged, which includes Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander. Gender is not a criterion in and of itself, but of course women are included in these categories.

I qualify as socially disadvantaged under the American Rescue Plan definition, but I am not late on my payments. Do I still qualify?

Yes. Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies.

When will qualified borrowers begin to see a loan pay-off or other payment in response to the American Rescue Plan?

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. For borrowers in arrears, the moratorium established on January 26th to stop all debt collections, foreclosures and evictions for all borrowers, including socially disadvantaged producers, remains in effect.

Producers who have worked with USDA's Farm Service Agency previously may have their ethnicity and race on file. A borrower, including those with guaranteed loans, can contact their local USDA Service Center to verify, update or submit a new ethnicity and race designation using the AD-2047. Find your nearest service center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

To learn more about USDA's work to implement the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, visit www.usda.gov/arp.

USDA Announces No Actions Under Feedstock Flexibility Program

The USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announced that it does not expect to purchase and sell sugar under the Feedstock Flexibility Program for crop year 2020, which runs from Oct. 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021.

The CCC is required by law to quarterly announce estimate of sugar to be purchased and sold under the Feedstock Flexibility Program based on crop and consumption forecasts.

Federal law allows sugar processors to obtain loans from USDSA with maturities of up to nine months when the sugarcane or sugar beet harvest begins. On loan maturity, the sugar processor may repay the loan in full or forfeit the collateral (sugar) to USDA to satisfy the loan.

The Feedstock Flexibility Program, initially authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, was reauthorized by Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill as an option to avoid sugar forfeitures. Under the Feedstock Flexibility Program, if USDA is faced with the likelihood of loan forfeitures, it is required to purchase surplus sugar and sell it to bioenergy producers to reduce the surplus in the food use market and support sugar prices. USDA's March 9, 2021, World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report (www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/wasde) projects that crop year 2020 U.S. ending sugar stocks are unlikely to lead to forfeitures. Therefore, currently, USDA does not expect to purchase and sell sugar under the Feedstock Flexibility Program for crop year 2020.

USDA will closely monitor domestic sugar stocks, consumption imports, and other sugar market variables on an ongoing basis and will continue to administer the sugar program as transparently as possible using the latest available data. The next quarterly estimate regarding the Feedstock Flexibility Program will occur on or before July 1, 2021.

Nursery Growers, Nursery Value Select Growers, and Pecan Tree Growers Need to Make Insurance Decisions Soon

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina nursery growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage for the 2022 crop year is May 1. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the May 1 sales closing date to do so. Growers applying for the first time may purchase coverage at any time.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy.

Coverage begins 30 days after receipt of a signed application and approval of required documents. For Nursery Field Grown and Container coverage, a Plant Inventory Value Report for each insured practice, and two copies of the grower's most recent wholesale catalog or price list are required.

More information on nursery crop insurance is available at RMA's Nursery Policy Web Page.

Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2022 crop year.

+++++

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Florida Nursery Value Select growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage for the 2022 crop year is May 1. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the May 1 sales closing date to do so. Growers applying for the first time may purchase coverage at any time.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy. Coverage is available for Nursery Value Select in select Florida counties. Please contact your insurance agent to see if your county is covered.

Coverage begins 30 days after receipt of a signed application and approval of required documents. For Nursery Value Select coverage, a Nursery Value Report, Monthly Unit Value Plan, and two copies of the grower's most recent catalog are required. More information on nursery crop insurance is available at RMA's Nursery Policy Web Page.

Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2022 crop year.

+++++

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Florida pecan tree growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage for the 2022 crop year is May 15. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the May 15 sales closing date to do so.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy. Coverage is available for pecan trees in **Alachua, Escambia, Jefferson, Suwannee, and Walton** counties.

Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2022 crop year.

RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus while continuing to support producers, working through Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) to deliver services, including processing policies, claims, and agreements. RMA staff are working with AIPs and other customers by phone, mail, and electronically to continue supporting crop insurance coverage for producers. Farmers with crop insurance questions or needs should continue to contact their insurance agents about conducting business remotely (by telephone or email). More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available online using the RMA Agent Locator. Producers can use the RMA Cost Estimator to get a premium amount estimate of their insurance needs online. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at www.rma.usda.gov.

Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be successful. FSA staff will provide guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial credit. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is

crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

If a farm loan borrower can't make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a customer receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity. Electronic receipts for acreage reports began on Aug. 1, 2016.

A service is any information, program, or loan assistance provided whether through an office visit, email, fax, or letter.

Dates to Remember

April 15 - Final date to apply for 2022 crop year insurance coverage for citrus trees and fruit

May 01 - Final date to apply for 2022 crop year insurance coverage for nursery growers

May 15 - Final date to apply for 2022 crop year insurance coverage for pecan trees

May 15 - HealthCare.gov Insurance Enrollment ends

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).