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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Kentucky FSA Newsletter

Kentucky Farm Service Agency

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State Committee:
Brenda Paul, Chair
Tom Flowers
Kenney Imel
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Kerry Lyons

Was Your Operation Impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic? Apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Today.

By Brian Lacefield, State Executive Director in Kentucky, USDA Farm Service Agency

Farmers and ranchers feed our state, our nation, and in fact, our world. You work long hours to provide essential resources for us all, and in these challenging times, I want you to know that USDA is here to support you and your operation through our Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, or CFAP. Whether you farm one acre or many more, grow food for local markets or big supply chains, CFAP can help. We're accepting applications through August 28 and encouraging producers to apply now.

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

In Kentucky, we have already approved 22,074 applications and disbursed \$128,943,944 as of 7/28/2020. I know many of you have applied for CFAP already, but the numbers indicate that some who are eligible have not. If you're still unsure about CFAP and your operation, I encourage you to take five minutes today to visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364 to learn about eligibility and options to apply. Whether you've worked with FSA for years or this will be a first, we're here to help you every step of the way.

CFAP provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. You can access the full list of eligible non-specialty, specialty, livestock, dairy, and wool commodities by visiting farmers.gov/cfap.

We know you're busy, so we've outlined options to apply at the top of farmers.gov/cfap. We offer a CFAP Application Portal where those of you with eAuthentication accounts can submit your application online. Don't have an eAuthentication account? You can enroll at farmers.gov/sign-in. We also offer a manual application option, and a CFAP Application Generator and Payment Calculator that allows you to input information specific to your operation to determine estimated payments and populate the application form.

You can apply now for the commodities that are currently eligible, and if any other commodities you produce are added to the program, we will happily amend your application.

If you have questions, please let us know. You can call our CFAP Call Center for one-on-one support with the CFAP application process. Call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer personalized assistance. And, as always, the [FSA office at your local USDA Service Center](#) is also there to help you prepare your application.

Farmers and ranchers continue to be the backbone of our nation. I know Kentucky's agricultural producers are facing unprecedented challenges with the coronavirus pandemic, and I want to make sure we at USDA are doing all we can to provide critical support. We thank our farmers and ranchers, and we encourage you to apply for CFAP today.

USDA Stands Up New Team to Better Serve Beginning Farmers and Ranchers in Kentucky

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is standing up a new team that will lead a department-wide effort focused on serving beginning farmers and ranchers.

To institutionalize support for beginning farmers and ranchers and to build upon prior agency work, the 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to create a national coordinator position in the agency and state-

level coordinators for four of its agencies – Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), and Rural Development (RD).

Amanda Robertson was selected as the USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher state coordinator in Kentucky. Amanda has 14 years of service with USDA Farm Service Agency serving as a Program Technician, Farm Loan Officer, Beginning Farmer Regional Coordinator for Kentucky and Tennessee, and Kentucky State Outreach Coordinator. She and her family have a registered Angus and Hereford operation in Russell Springs, KY.

Others on the team coordinating Kentucky's beginning farmers and rancher efforts include, Michele Witt, Kentucky Civil Rights Manager with USDA Rural Development; Derrick Johnson, Risk Management Specialist with USDA Risk Management Agency. This is a collateral duty for all team members.

Each state coordinator will receive training and develop tailored beginning farmer outreach plans for their state. Coordinators will help field employees better reach and serve beginning farmers and ranchers and will also be available to assist beginning farmers who need help navigating the variety of resources USDA has to offer.

More on Beginning Farmers

Twenty-seven percent of farmers were categorized as new and beginning producers, with 10 years or less of experience in agriculture, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

USDA offers a variety of farm loan, risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs to support farmers, including beginning farmers and ranchers. Additionally, a number of these programs have provisions specifically for beginning farmers, including targeted funding for loans and conservation programs as well as waivers and exemptions.

More Information

Learn more about USDA's resources for beginning farmers as well as more information on the national and state-level coordinators at farmers.gov/newfarmers. For more information on available programs in your area, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants and beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA

guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA offers Microloans through the direct loan program. Microloans focus on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche, and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans require applicants to have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, see if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information on your credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score:

- Make sure to pay bills on time
 - Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt
- Keep your credit card balances low
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

Sign in/Sign up for an Online Account

Farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers have online options to access USDA programs. Through USDA's new streamlined process, producers doing business **as an individual** can now register, track and manage their applications for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) on the secure and convenient farmers.gov. Producers doing business as an individual 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.

- Step 1: Create an online account at eauth.usda.gov
- Step 2: Complete identity verification by either using the online self-service identity verification method or by completing the identity verification in-person at your USDA Service Center.
- Step 3: You're enrolled
- Step 4: Contact your local USDA Service Center to have your new Level 2 account linked with your USDA customer record
- Step 5: You're ready to Log In

Or go to your local USDA Service Center and our supportive staff will help you sign up for Level 2 Access right in the office! They will get you online so you can create an online account at farmers.gov/sign-in. You'll complete identity verification right on the spot. You're enrolled! 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! Visit farmers.gov/sign-in to learn more.

To locate a service center near you or use online services not requiring eAuthentication access, visit farmers.gov. For technical assistance, call the eAuthentication help desk at 1-800-457-3642.

USDA Offers Annual Installment Deferral Option for Farm Storage Facility Loan Borrowers

To assist Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) borrowers experiencing financial hardship from the pandemic and other challenges in production agriculture, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is offering a one-time annual installment payment deferral option. No fees or prepayment penalties apply for borrowers who choose this FSFL loan flexibility option.

"Farmers are facing challenging times because of the pandemic, and FSA is constantly looking for ways to offer flexibilities to our customers to help alleviate financial stressors," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. "This storage facility loan servicing option affords eligible borrowers more time to make a payment and may stop loan acceleration, foreclosure or liquidation."

Eligible borrowers can request a one-time only annual installment payment deferral for loans having terms of three, five, seven or ten years. The installment deferral option is not available for 12-year term loans.

The FSFL installment payments will remain the same, except for the last year. The original loan interest rate and annual payment due date will remain the same. However, because the installment payment deferral is a one-year loan term extension, the final payment will be higher due to additional accrued interest.

Borrowers interested in exercising the one-time annual installment deferral option should contact FSA to make the request and to obtain, complete and sign required forms.

FSFLs provide low-interest financing for producers to store, handle and transport eligible commodities.

More Information

In addition to offering flexibilities for FSFLs, FSA has also made other flexibilities to help producers impacted by the pandemic, including relaxing the loan-making process for farm operating and ownership loans and implementing the Disaster Set-Aside provision that enables an upcoming installment on a direct loan to be set aside for the year. More information on these flexibilities can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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 may also be 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.

For more information, contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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).