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## USDA Announces Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to \$200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

### Program Details



To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business where 50% or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant's gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80%. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or \$2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.

The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is \$125,000.

### **Applying for Assistance**

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH beginning on July 22 by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying to their gross revenue for 2019 and 2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit [farmers.gov/pathh](https://farmers.gov/pathh) for more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery, or via electronic means. To find a local FSA office, loggers and truckers can visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). They can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

## **USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators**

*Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit*

Producers can apply for a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers EZ Guarantee Loans use a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved, and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to \$100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

A new category of lenders will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to \$50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-

approved lenders, can offer customers up to \$100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

For more information about the available types of FSA farm loans, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#), or visit [fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](https://fsa.usda.gov/farmloans).

## Educational Opportunities for Beekeepers



Bees are an important part of agriculture, because they provide the pollination required to produce many crops.

Beekeeping not only helps ensure that your crops get pollinated, but it can be a very rewarding experience, not to mention producing some very tasty honey. The Kentucky State Beekeepers Association has many upcoming educational programs to help you learn more about beekeeping and improve the health of your hives.

With funding from Kentucky State University, Phil Craft is offering an online series called "Intermediate Beekeeping." Craft is a retired Kentucky state apiarist and former beekeeping specialist for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

This series is designed to help beekeepers better manage their honeybee colonies. The program consists of eight live virtual classes and a question and answer portion. Sessions occur on various Tuesday nights throughout 2021 at 7 p.m.

Upcoming sessions include:

- May 4: Varroa overview, integrated pest management and monitoring for varroa mites
- June 1: Controlling varroa
- June 22: Mid-summer hive management, honey dearth issues, robbing precautions, waxing moths and varroa summer treatment
- July 6: Removing honey from the hive, processing the honey and selling it in Kentucky
- July 27: Developing and following a varroa management plan
- Aug. 24: Fall hive management, helping your bees prepare for winter
- Sept. 21: Other IPM techniques to control varroa mites
- Oct. 12: Phil Craft and other guest panelists TBA

To participate in the series, you must be a member of the Kentucky State Beekeepers Association. The cost to join is \$15 per year, and you do not have to reside in Kentucky to be a member of the organization.

On May 8, the association will hold their virtual spring beekeeping conference and the guest speaker will be Mike Hood, entomology professor emeritus at Clemson University. Hood was a Clemson researcher when the small hive beetle was first found in South Carolina bee colonies in 1996.

He will discuss the history and lifecycle of the pest and ways to control it.

More information about these educational programs of the Kentucky State Beekeepers Association is available online at <https://bit.ly/2QoJ4qE>. Source: Phil Craft, Kentucky State Beekeepers Association

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

## USDA Program Works to Control Rabies in Wildlife

*Summer weather and emerging young wildlife bring increased animal movement and greater potential for rabies exposure.*

The scope of rabies in the United States has changed. In the early 1900s, more than 100 people died from rabies yearly but today, only one or two human deaths are recorded annually. Prior to 1960, most exposure to the rabies virus occurred from contact with infected dogs. Mandatory vaccination helped change that. Today, 90% of reported animal cases occur in wildlife, primarily raccoons in the eastern states and bats.

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Agriculture created the National Rabies Management Program (NRMP) as part of Wildlife Services to prevent further spread of terrestrial wildlife rabies and eventually eliminate it.

Annually, the NRMP distributes roughly 8-9 million oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baits targeting wildlife. In Texas and the southwest this has eliminated the canine and fox variants of rabies. Every fall, ORV bait distribution programs from Maine to Alabama seek to establish a rabies-free zone for the raccoon variant.

Wildlife Services rabies biologists and specialists trap, sample, and release wildlife, primarily raccoons, in the baited areas to determine vaccination rates. Trapping and surveillance occur before and after the bait drops.

You can help prevent rabies by:

- Following recommendations for vaccinating companion animals and stock.
- Not handling wildlife including feral cats or dogs.

- Reporting sick or strange-acting wildlife for possible rabies testing.

Without medical intervention, this viral disease is fatal. However, it is also 100% preventable. Annually, rabies prevention costs the United States \$245-510 million.

For more information about this Wildlife Services program and wildlife disease, contact your state Wildlife Services office at 1-866-487-3297 or visit [aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies](https://aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies). For more information about rabies and cases in wildlife, domestic animals and people, visit [cdc.gov/rabies/location/usa/surveillance/index.html](https://cdc.gov/rabies/location/usa/surveillance/index.html).

## Applying for NAP Payments

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

In order to participate, you must obtain NAP coverage for the crop year by the applicable deadline using form CCC-471 "Application for Coverage" and pay the service fee. Application closing dates vary by crop. Producers are also required to submit an acceptable crop acreage report. Additionally, NAP participants must provide:

- The quantity of all harvested production of the crop in which the producer held an interest during the crop year
- The disposition of the harvested crop, such as whether it is marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended
- Acceptable crop production records (when requested by FSA)

Producers who fail to report acreage and production information for NAP-covered crops could see reduced or zero NAP assistance. These reports are used to calculate the approved yield.

If your NAP-covered crops are affected by a natural disaster, notify your FSA office by completing Part B of form CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment." This must be completed within 15 calendar days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date. For hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops, you must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

To receive benefits, you must also complete Parts D, E, F and G of the CCC-576 "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment" within 60 days of the last day of coverage for the crop year for any NAP covered crops. The CCC-576 requires acceptable appraisal information. Producers must provide evidence of production and note whether the crop was marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits,

vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#), or visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap).

## **USDA to Provide Pandemic Assistance to Livestock Producers for Animal Losses**

Livestock and poultry producers who suffered losses during the pandemic due to insufficient access to processing can apply for assistance for those losses and the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animals. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Vilsack announced the Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program (PLIP) in [recorded] remarks at the National Pork Industry Conference in Wisconsin Dells, WI. The announcement is part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Livestock and poultry producers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 20 through Sept. 17, 2021.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized payments to producers for losses of livestock or poultry depopulated from March 1, 2020 through December 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. PLIP payments will be based on 80% of the fair market value of the livestock and poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animal. Eligible livestock and poultry include swine, chickens and turkeys.

### **PLIP Program Details**

Eligible livestock must have been depopulated from March 1, 2020, through December 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. Livestock must have been physically located in the U.S. or a territory of the U.S. at the time of depopulation.

Eligible livestock owners include persons or legal entities who, as of the day the eligible livestock was depopulated, had legal ownership of the livestock. Packers, live poultry dealers and contract growers are not eligible for PLIP.

PLIP payments compensate participants for 80% of both the loss of the eligible livestock or poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal based on a single payment rate per head. PLIP payments will be calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible livestock or poultry by the payment rate per head, and then subtracting the amount of any payments the eligible livestock or poultry owner has received for disposal of the livestock or poultry under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or a state program. The payments will also be reduced by any Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 1 and 2) payments paid on the same inventory of swine that were depopulated.



There is no per person or legal entity payment limitation on PLIP payments. To be eligible for payments, a person or legal entity must have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) of less than \$900,000 for tax years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

### **Applying for Assistance**

Eligible livestock and poultry producers can apply for PLIP starting July 20, 2021, by completing the FSA-620, Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program application, and submitting it to any FSA county office. Additional documentation may be required. Visit [farmers.gov/plip](https://farmers.gov/plip) for a copy of the Notice of Funding Availability and more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. To find your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). Livestock and poultry producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

## **USDA Announces Dates for Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signups**



Agricultural producers and landowners in Kentucky can apply for the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Grasslands](#) signup from today until August 20. This year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated signup options to provide greater incentives for producers and increased the program's conservation and climate benefits, including setting a minimum rental rate and identifying two national priority zones.

The CRP Grassland signup is competitive, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide for annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

### **Grasslands Signup**

CRP Grasslands helps Kentucky landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as working grazing lands. Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and provides important carbon sequestration benefits.

FSA has updated the Grasslands Signup to establish a minimum rental rate of \$15 per acre, which will benefit 1,300 counties.

To focus on important wildlife corridors, FSA also identified [National Grassland Priority Zones](#), providing extra incentives to producers for enrolling grasslands in important migratory corridors and environmentally sensitive areas – the Greater Yellowstone Elk Migration Corridor and the Severe Wind Erosion – Dust Bowl Zone. Counties within these two zones get extra ranking points as well as \$5 added to their rental rate. The [CRP Grasslands Ranking Factors fact sheet](#) has additional information.

## How to Sign Up

To enroll in the CRP Grasslands signup, producers and landowners should contact USDA by the August 20 deadline. Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. Contact your [Local Service Center](#) to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

## More Information on CRP

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. The program marked its 35-year anniversary this past December.

## 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.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#), or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).



# August 2021 Selected Interest Rates

Farm Loan Programs	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans - Direct	1.750%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct	3.250%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct FO Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	2.750%

Farm Programs Farm Storage Facility Loans	
3 Year	0.500%
5 Year	0.875%
7 Year	1.125%
10 Year	1.375%
12 Year	1.500%
15 Year	1.750%
Commodity Loans	1.125%
CCC Borrowing Rate	0.125%

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