

November 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Louisiana FSA Newsletter

Louisiana Farm Service Agency

3737 Government Street
Alexandria, LA 71302

State Executive Director:
Craig A. McCain

State Committee:
Ray Young, Chairperson
John Earles
Kristy Jones
Julie Richard
Donna Winters

Message from Craig A. McCain, FSA State Executive Director

What a year!!

As 2020 draws to a close, we certainly hope for many fewer challenges in 2021. November is traditionally the month for thanksgiving, we have set aside the last Thursday in November as a Day of Thanksgiving. The earliest settlers of our Country began a tradition of giving thanks for the abundant natural resources available to them along with the harvest provided by these resources. While the challenges faced by today's farmers and ranchers are real and immediate, in many ways those challenges are similar to those faced by our forefathers throughout the ages.

Next State Committee Meeting:

To be determined

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

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

Yet even in their difficulties, somehow, our ancestors found a way and a reason to give thanks.

As you prepare to celebrate this season of thanksgiving in your own manner, the Farm Service Agency would like to recognize and thank you for your contributions of food and fiber, as well as for your many sacrifices. FSA is here to provide you with support, financial and otherwise, which is designed to mitigate the many risks that you face. We are thankful for you and for the opportunity to serve you. Wishing you the best in this season of Thanksgiving!

Do Right and Feed Everyone!

Upcoming Important Dates

- **Nov. 11** USDA Service Centers will be closed for the Veterans Day holiday
- **Nov. 26** USDA Service Centers will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday
- **Dec. 7** County Committee election ballots must be postmarked or returned to your local FSA Office
- **Dec. 7** Deadline to sign up for assistance for ECP and /or EFRP
- **Dec. 11** CFAP2 signup deadline
- **Dec. 11** Dairy Margin Coverage 2021 enrollment deadline
- **Dec. 14** Seafood Trade Relief Program signup deadline
- **March 15, 2021** election and enrollment for ARC/PLC for 2021 deadline

Louisiana FSA now offers SMS texting; receive text message alerts on your cell phone regarding important deadlines, reporting requirements and updates. Contact your local FSA Office for more information.

More information on the CFAP process is available on farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364.

USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Farmers and Livestock Producers in Louisiana, Mississippi and Surrounding States Impacted by Hurricane Zeta

Hurricane Zeta's flooding and high winds impacted agricultural operations in Louisiana, Mississippi and surrounding states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover. As agricultural producers move into recovery mode and assess damages, they should contact their local USDA Service Center to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to contact the FSA county office at the local USDA Service Center to learn which documents should be provided to help the local office expedite assistance, such as farm records, receipts and pictures of damages or losses.

Depending on the operation, FSA offers a number of disaster assistance programs to help offset eligible losses, including the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#), [Emergency Assistance for Livestock](#),

[Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#), [Emergency Conservation Program](#), [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#), [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) and [Tree Assistance Program](#).

Additionally, producers located in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](#) to help them recover from production and physical losses.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also offers programs to help in the recovery process. The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) can help producers plan and implement conservation practices on land impacted by natural disasters.

Producers with Federal crop insurance coverage should contact their [crop insurance agent for assistance](#). Producers should report crop damage to their agent within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days.

Assistance for Communities

Additional NRCS programs include the [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#) program, which provides assistance to local government sponsors with the cost of addressing watershed impairments or hazards such as debris removal and streambank stabilization. Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, conservation districts or any federally recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization. When a watershed impairment occurs due to a natural disaster event, the district conservationist serves as the local facilitator for EWP activities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the lead federal agency for Presidentially declared natural disasters. All NRCS emergency work is coordinated with FEMA or its designee. Sponsors must submit a formal request (via mail or email) to the state conservationist for assistance within 60 days of the natural disaster occurrence or 60 days from the date when access to the sites become available. For more information, please contact Britt Paul, Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources, at britt.paul@usda.gov.

More Information

Producers and landowners can use the online [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [answering five questions](#) to identify USDA programs that will help meet disaster recovery needs.

For more information on all USDA disaster assistance programs, visit farmers.gov/recover, or contact your local USDA Service Center, which can be found at farmers.gov/service-center-locator. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, please contact your [crop insurance agent](#).

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.

More than \$7 Billion Paid in Second Round of USDA Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

USDA announced that in the first month of the application period, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) approved more than \$7 billion in payments to producers in the second round of the Coronavirus

Food Assistance Program. CFAP 2 provides agricultural producers with financial assistance to help absorb some of the increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since CFAP 2 enrollment began on September 21, FSA has approved more than 443,000 applications. The top five states for payments are Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois and Kansas. USDA has released a [data dashboard](#) on application progress and program payments and will release further updates each Monday at 2:00 p.m. ET. The report can be viewed at farmers.gov/cfap.

Through CFAP 2, USDA is making available up to \$14 billion for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. CFAP 2 is a separate program from the first iteration of CFAP (CFAP 1). Farmers and ranchers who participated in CFAP 1 will not be automatically enrolled and must complete a new application for CFAP 2. FSA will accept CFAP 2 applications through December 11, 2020.

Eligible Commodities

CFAP 2 supports eligible producers of row crops, livestock, specialty crops, dairy, aquaculture, and many other commodities, including many that were ineligible for CFAP 1. FSA's [CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder](#) makes finding eligible commodities and payment rates simple. Access this tool and other resources at farmers.gov/cfap.

Getting Help from FSA

New 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 at their local USDA Service Center.

FSA offers multiple options for producers to apply for CFAP 2. Producers with an eAuthentication account can apply online through the CFAP 2 Application Portal. Also available is a payment calculator and application generator that is an Excel workbook that allows producers to input information specific to their operation to determine estimated payments and populate the application form, which can be printed, signed, and submitted to the local FSA office. Producers can also download the CFAP 2 application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap.

Producers of acreage-based commodities 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 staff or online through the CFAP 2 Application Portal.

CFAP 2 is not a loan program, and there is no cost to apply.

More Information

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

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>.

Several Parishes in Louisiana are Eligible for Emergency Loans Following Presidential Disaster Declaration

There are several parishes in Louisiana that have been declared a primary/contiguous disaster due to the recent hurricanes. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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 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).

Background:

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.

Dairy Margin Coverage Program Enrollment for 2021 Opened Oct. 13

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began 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](#), or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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 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.

Supervised Credit from FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loans are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Our goal is to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. FSA staff will advise borrowers on developing strategies and a plan to meet your goals and graduate to commercial credit. FSA borrowers are responsible for the success of their farming operation, but FSA staff will help in an advisory role, providing the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

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

Every Season is #scamseason

Remember to discuss your USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) account information only with people you recognize and trust.

If you have questions about your FSA accounts, including your farm loans, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Current Interest Rates for November

- Farm Operating Loans — Direct 1.250%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 2.375%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher — 1.50%
- Emergency Loans — 2.250%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years) — 0.125%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years) — 0.250%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) — 0.500%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) — 0.750%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) — 0.875%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans (15 year term) — 1.000%
- Commodity Loans — 1.125%

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).