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| |  | | --- | | September 2020 NL Masthead  Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFSA/bulletins/2ebfca6).   * [USDA to Provide Additional Direct Assistance to Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by the Coronavirus](#link_1) * [USDA Supports U.S. Seafood Industry Impacted by Retaliatory Tariffs](#link_2) * [FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#link_3) * [USDA Offers Annual Installment Deferral Option for Farm Storage Facility Loan Borrowers](#link_6) * [FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup](#link_8) * [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#link_7) * [Borrower Training for Farm Loan Customers](#link_4) * [Applying for Youth Loans](#link_5)  Maine FSA Newsletter | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Maine State Farm Service Agency**  967 Illinois Ave, Suite 2  Bangor, ME  04401  207-990-9140  [www.fsa.usda.gov/me](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fme%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0a56cfbb8aa2409d34f908d95b62cdc3%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637641302185050529%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=4%2BD3Sd8N%2ByHam0gPpwJL8WG3SaD%2BUELhDiyrMeo6ISw%3D&reserved=0)  **State Executive Director:**  David R. Lavway, SED  **State Committee:**  Sue McCrum  Heath Miller  Nancy Ricker  Dave Tuttle  Fred Flewelling  To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/me](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fme%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0a56cfbb8aa2409d34f908d95b62cdc3%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637641302185050529%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=4%2BD3Sd8N%2ByHam0gPpwJL8WG3SaD%2BUELhDiyrMeo6ISw%3D&reserved=0) | USDA to Provide Additional Direct Assistance to Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by the Coronavirus USDA announced up to an additional $14 billion for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 2) will begin September 21 and run through December 11, 2020.  **Background:**  The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will use funds being made available from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act and CARES Act to support row crops, livestock, specialty crops, dairy, aquaculture and many additional commodities. USDA has incorporated improvements in CFAP 2 based from stakeholder engagement and public feedback to better meet the needs of impacted farmers and ranchers.  Producers can apply for CFAP 2 at USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices. This program provides financial assistance that gives producers the ability to absorb increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Producers will be compensated for ongoing market disruptions and assisted with the associated marketing costs.  CFAP 2 payments will be made for three categories of commodities – Price Trigger Commodities, Flat-rate Crops and Sales Commodities.  **Price Trigger Commodities** Price trigger commodities are major commodities that meet a minimum 5-percent price decline over a specified period of time. Eligible price trigger crops include barley, corn, sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers, upland cotton, and all classes of wheat. Payments will be based on 2020 planted acres of the crop, excluding prevented planting and experimental acres. Payments for price trigger crops will be the greater of: 1) the eligible acres multiplied by a payment rate of $15 per acre; or 2) the eligible acres multiplied by a nationwide crop marketing percentage, multiplied by a crop-specific payment rate, and then by the producer’s weighted 2020 Actual Production History (APH) approved yield. If the APH is not available, 85 percent of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield for that crop will be used.  For broilers and eggs, payments will be based on 75 percent of the producers’ 2019 production.  Dairy (cow’s milk) payments will be based on actual milk production from April 1 to Aug. 31, 2020. The milk production for Sept. 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2020, will be estimated by FSA.  Eligible beef cattle, hogs and pigs, and lambs and sheep payments will be based on the maximum owned inventory of eligible livestock, excluding breeding stock, on a date selected by the producer, between Apr. 16, 2020, and Aug. 31, 2020.  **Flat-rate Crops** Crops that either do not meet the 5-percent price decline trigger or do not have data available to calculate a price change will have payments calculated based on eligible 2020 acres multiplied by $15 per acre. These crops include alfalfa, extra long staple (ELS) cotton, oats, peanuts, rice, hemp, millet, mustard, safflower, sesame, triticale, rapeseed, and several others.  **Sales Commodities** Sales commodities include specialty crops; aquaculture; nursery crops and floriculture; other commodities not included in the price trigger and flat-rate categories, including tobacco; goat milk; mink (including pelts); mohair; wool; and other livestock (excluding breeding stock) not included under the price trigger category that were grown for food, fiber, fur, or feathers. Payment calculations will use a sales-based approach, where producers are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales.  Additional commodities are eligible in CFAP 2 that weren’t eligible in the first iteration of the program. If your agricultural operation has been impacted by the pandemic since April 2020, we encourage you to apply for CFAP 2. A complete list of eligible commodities, payment rates and calculations can be found on [farmers.gov/cfap](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).  **Eligibility** There is a payment limitation of $250,000 per person or entity for all commodities combined. Applicants who are corporations, limited liability companies, limited partnerships may qualify for additional payment limits when members actively provide personal labor or personal management for the farming operation. In addition, this special payment limitation provision has been expanded to include trusts and estates for both CFAP 1 and 2.  Producers will also have to certify they meet the Adjusted Gross Income limitation of $900,000 unless at least 75 percent or more of their income is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities. Producers must also be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions.    **Applying for Assistance** Producers can apply for assistance beginning Sept. 21, 2020. Applications will be accepted through Dec. 11, 2020.  Additional information and application forms can be found at [farmers.gov/cfap](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). Documentation to support the producer’s application and certification may be requested. All other eligibility forms, such as those related to adjusted gross income and payment information, can be downloaded from [farmers.gov/cfap/apply](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap/apply?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). For existing FSA customers, including those who participated in CFAP 1, many documents are likely already on file. Producers should check with FSA county office to see if any of the forms need to be updated.  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 assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages with the team at the FSA county office.  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 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 also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in the office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](http://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). 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](https://www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). The application can be found at [www.farmers.gov/seafood](https://www.farmers.gov/seafood?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).  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 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 also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in the office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). | | | FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans The USDA Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Ffarm-loan-programs%2Ffarm-ownership-loans%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0a56cfbb8aa2409d34f908d95b62cdc3%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637641302185060484%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=8LWK2FM%2BSyhmujLTuOTkI1CFgEMeP2qjBPI%2FB5v8bgw%3D&reserved=0) can help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.  There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2Fprograms-and-services%2Ffarm-loan-programs%2Fmicroloans%2Findex%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0a56cfbb8aa2409d34f908d95b62cdc3%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637641302185060484%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=npbtT4JMmB9%2FtYSyRg%2BUVVYP5hFumTdzRgndA10VqiU%3D&reserved=0) option for smaller financial needs up to $50,000.  Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is $600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.  The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.  For more information about farm loans visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0a56cfbb8aa2409d34f908d95b62cdc3%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637641302185070441%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=3%2F2i9YPrIQDGbgCv6ncr06qZ6AGC8%2BScZRYLFdzfbG8%3D&reserved=0). 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.  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](http://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).  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](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.farmers.govcoronavirus%2F&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0a56cfbb8aa2409d34f908d95b62cdc3%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637641302185070441%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=ATyc9Zmf6CeyfcVqpMCRgctyxDFKa52LU3kMB3XmsGc%3D&reserved=0).  For more information, contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).   FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup USDA has started making payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) to agricultural producers who suffered eligible losses because of drought or excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Signup for these causes of loss opened March 23, and producers who suffered losses from drought (in counties designated D3 or above), excess moisture, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires can still apply for assistance through WHIP+.  To be eligible for WHIP+, producers must have suffered losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary county may be eligible if a producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event.  For losses due to drought, a producer is eligible if any area of the county in which the loss occurred was rated D3, or extreme drought, or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor during calendar years 2018 or 2019. Producers who suffered losses should contact their FSA county office.  In addition to the recently added eligible losses of drought and excess moisture, FSA will implement a WHIP+ provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops were damaged by eligible disaster events. To ensure an effective program for all impacted farmers, the Agency is currently gathering information on the extent of quality loss from producers and stakeholder organizations.  USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information on Service Centers can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](http://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery), and more information on WHIP+ can be found at [farmers.gov/whip-plus](http://www.farmers.gov/whip-plus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.  For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies, it’s important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.  Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans. Contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely. Borrower Training for Farm Loan Customers Borrower training is available for all Farm Service Agency (FSA) customers. This training is required for all direct loan applicants, unless the applicant has a waiver issued by the agency.  Borrower training includes instruction in production and financial management. The purpose is to help the applicants develop and improve skills that are necessary to successfully operate a farm and build equity in the operation. It aims to help the producer become financially successful. Borrower training is provided, for a fee, by agency approved vendors. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager for a list of approved vendors. 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,  visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsa.usda.gov%2F%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery&data=04%7C01%7C%7C0a56cfbb8aa2409d34f908d95b62cdc3%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637641302185080399%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=hCdYJre7oP1Alp4Bxy4FpY3yKQov48jeEyKaYNVoHOE%3D&reserved=0).  Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting/event/function should contact Mary Anne Coffin at 207-990-9140 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.  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 Farm Service Agency, 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 also 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](http://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).  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). | |