

April 2021



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Rhode Island FSA Newsletter

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### Rhode Island Farm Service Agency

60 Quaker Lane Warwick, RI 02886

**Rhode Island State Office Suite 62**

**Phone:** 401-828-3120 Option 1

[www.fsa.usda.gov/ri](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ri)

**Acting State Executive Director:** Matthew Richter

**State Committee:** Ellen Puccetti, David Frerichs

The State Committee meets the second Wednesday of every month subject to change.

**Rhode Island County Office Suite 49**

### Message from Acting State Executive Director

Greetings Rhode Island Producers,

Spring is finally here and farmers are beginning to prepare themselves for this year's growing season.

It is also that time of year to remind all of you that filing a yearly acreage report is critical in maintaining current and future program eligibility and benefits. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in program ineligibility. A producer must report their crop acreage each year if they wish to have established records with FSA for use when disasters strike. It is also important that producers keep record of their production history. This allows for a timely determination of any loss claim so disaster payments can be made in a timely fashion.

Acreage reporting deadlines for Rhode Island are as follows;

- July 15, 2021, Annual crops, Grass, Mixed Forage, Alfalfa, Fruit and Nut Trees and Perennial Crops and Perennial Forage (except Apples, Cranberries and Peaches)
- September 30, 2021, Value Loss Crops such as Aquaculture, Floriculture, Turf grass sod, Christmas Trees
- January 2, 2022, Honey (beehive colonies) and Maple Sap
- January 15, 2022, Apples Cranberries and Peaches

**Phone:** 401-828-3120 Option 2.

County Executive Director:  
Sheryl Michener

**County Committee:** Kim Coulter, George Goulart Jr., Joseph Polseno, John Sousa, Gilbert Rathbun Jr.

The County Committee meets the first Thursday of every month subject to change.

**Rhode Island Farm Loan Team Suite 49**

**Phone:** 401-828-3120 Option 3.

**District Director:** Matthew Richter

**Farm Loan Analyst:** Patricia Sullivan

USDA is extending the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup period, which had previously been announced as ending on Feb. 12, 2021. USDA will continue to accept offers as it takes this opportunity for the incoming Administration to evaluate ways to increase enrollment.

The program, administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides annual rental payments for 10 to 15 years for land devoted to conservation purposes, as well as other types of payments. Before the General CRP Signup period ends, producers will have the opportunity to adjust or resubmit their offers to take advantage of planned improvements to the program.

We are here to serve and assist. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out and ask.

Best regards,

*Matthew Richter, Acting RI State Executive Director*

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## 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.

**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](https://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](https://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](http://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.

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).