

October 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Arkansas FSA Newsletter

### Arkansas Farm Service Agency

700 West Capitol, Room 3416  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201  
Phone: 501-301-3000  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/ar](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ar)

#### State Committee:

**Chairman:** Gary Churchill

**Members:** Ron Chastain,  
Sarah Dunklin, Nathan Reed,  
& Vivian Wright

#### State Committee Meeting:

2nd Wednesday and  
Thursday of each Quarter

#### State Executive Director:

David Curtis

### Message from the SED

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on the final planting date for specific crops. The final planting dates vary by crop, planting period and county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific planting deadlines. The timely planting of a crop, by the final planting date, may prevent loss of program benefits.

Signup for the CFAP 2 began on Sept. 21, 2020 and will continue through Dec. 11, 2020. CFAP 2 is a separate program from CFAP (now referred to as CFAP 1). More commodities are eligible for CFAP 2. Details on how to apply can be found on [farmers.gov/cfap/apply](http://farmers.gov/cfap/apply). A call center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support (877-508-8364).

The deadline to submit applications for the WHIP+ for 2018 and 2019 losses is Friday, Oct. 30, 2020. A deadline was not originally specified when the program was announced.

FSA is accepting applications for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program for 2021 enrollment. Signup will run through Dec. 11, 2020.

**Executive Officer:**  
James Culpepper

**Administrative Officer:**  
Sharon Baker

**Farm Programs:**  
Terri McManus

**Farm Loan Programs:**  
Lori Lavender

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county. To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/ar](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ar).

Please mark your calendars! COC Election ballots will be mailed to eligible producers on November 2nd. Completed ballots should be returned to County Offices or postmarked by December 7th.

FSA County Offices are still available to customers. Please contact your local office to determine whether in-person or phone appointments are available. Our Staff is available to continue helping Producers with program signups, loan servicing and other important actions. Our Staff will also continue to work with our customers by phone, email and by using online tools whenever possible. For Service Center contact information, visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>,

For more information, contact your local USDA service center or visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

Stay Safe and continue to practice Social Distancing.

Until next time...

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## Upcoming Events and Workshops

The USDA Arkansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to educating producers on available programs and loans. FSA representatives will be available at the following workshops and conferences. Producers interested in attending these conferences/workshops should follow the registration or RSVP instructions listed below.

### **Jul 16th – CEP Civil Equality for Minority Farmers Virtual Conference**

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) and Prairie View A&M University are hosting this VIRTUAL conference on **Monday, November 2, 2020, from 9:00am - 12:30pm**. FSA will be represented by and presenting on the following: **Rod Woods, Jefferson County Executive Director, will present on obtaining a Farm Number; Precilla Wade, Farm Loan Officer, will present on Farm Loan Programs; and Rhonda O'Guinn, Outreach Coordinator, will present on Information Resources.** For Additional Information, please contact the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Small Farm Program, at 870.575.7225.

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## FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2020 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 2, 2020, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 7, 2020.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs, conservation programs, incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities, emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A

person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters in any local administrative area (LAA), who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2020 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) or at a local USDA Service Center.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2021.

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## **USDA NASS October Surveys and Data Releases: Be Counted**

*USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.*

As the harvest season for Arkansas row crops moves into full swing, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be surveying farmers and ranchers across the state during the month of October to provide the agricultural industry with the most up to date information available. For October, NASS will release 32 reports that span the range of the agricultural sector.

In order to provide these reports, NASS will survey farmers and ranchers on various surveys during the month. These surveys are sample based; meaning that a representative sample of farmers and ranchers are selected, not the entire population, so each selected representative farmer accounts for multiple farmers like themselves. It is extremely critical; given these surveys are a sample, that each farmer complete their report.

For the first few days of October, NASS will survey farmers for the Agricultural Yield survey, which will be used to update expected yields along with harvested acres for the major row crops in the October Crop Production Report to be released October 9 at 11:00 a.m. local time.

In addition, beginning in October, NASS will begin to survey farmers for the Row Crop County Agricultural Production Survey, which will be used in conjunction with our year-end production survey to produce acreages, yields, and production of the major row crops at the county level. Those county level reports will be released starting in mid-February of 2021.

NASS encourages all farmers and ranchers to take advantage of the secure internet reporting to facilitate your data response; or we also provide the option to return your survey by mail. NASS will attempt to contact farmers who do not return their surveys with one of these two options by phone and complete the survey with one of our NASDA enumerators.

The results of all NASS surveys is kept confidential and will be available in aggregate form only, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified, as required by federal law.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified. NASS data is available online and through the searchable Quick Stats database. Watch this video to learn how NASS data is used.

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## **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](https://farmers.gov/cfap).

**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](https://farmers.gov/cfap). 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](https://farmers.gov/cfap/apply). 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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## **FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19**

### *Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers*

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the

farmers.gov portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment 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 can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## Keeping Livestock Inventory Records

*Livestock inventory records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster, so remember to keep them updated.*

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can help you if you've suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, you'll be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. For grazing or feed losses, you must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

You should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;

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

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## Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

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.

To receive payment, you had to purchase NAP coverage for 2020 crops and file a notice of loss the earlier of 15 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.

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 County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap).

## FSA Offers Safety Net Programs for Honeybee Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers two programs that have specific safety net benefits for producers of honeybees and honey. The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) assist producers when disasters impact honey production or damage or destroy colonies, hives or honeybee feed.

NAP is designed to reduce financial losses when natural disasters result in lower yields or crop losses, including honey. NAP coverage is equivalent to catastrophic insurance, meaning it covers up to 50 percent of a producer's normal yield (must have at least a 50 percent loss) at 55 percent of the average market price. The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

You must apply for NAP coverage by Dec. 1 prior to the year for which you're seeking coverage.

ELAP covers colony losses, honeybee hive losses (the physical structure) and honeybee feed losses in instances where the colony, hive or feed has been destroyed by a natural disaster or, in the case of colony losses, because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony losses must be in excess of normal mortality.

Both the NAP and ELAP programs require you to report the number of colonies you have in production to FSA by Jan. 2, 2021. You must notify FSA within 30 calendar days of changes in the total number of colonies or when honeybees are moved to another county.

For both programs, you must notify FSA within 15 calendar days of when a loss occurs or from when the loss is apparent.

To learn more about programs for honey and honeybee producers, contact your local County USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

## Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre-authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful if you use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at [rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines](https://rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines). Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a “filter” on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three-month period, the preauthorized debit agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

For more information about PAD, contact the FSA county office at your local USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

## Rates and Dates

Selected Interest Rates for October 2020		Dates to Remember	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125	11/02/2020	Election Ballots mailed to Eligible Voters
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.250	11/15/2020	2021 NAP forage application deadline
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	2.250	11/20/2020	2021 NAP application deadline for asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, grapes and most fruit bearing trees
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500	12/07/2020	Last day to return Election Ballots
Emergency Loans	2.250	12/11/2020	CFAP-2 application deadline
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	0.500	12/15/2020	Acreage reporting deadline for wheat, oats and small grain crops.
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	0.625	12/15/2020	Final date to file prevented planted acreage for wheat & oats.
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125	01/01/2021	Newly Elected COC Members take Office
		01/02/2021	Last day to report honey.

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).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting/function/event should contact their local County Executive Director or Rhonda O’Guinn at 501-301-3018, (TDD# or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, and [rhonda.oguinn@usda.gov](mailto:rhonda.oguinn@usda.gov)).