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## Message from the SED

USDA will host an Arkansas Virtual Meeting on Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 10am for local producers to share information about the provisions of the **American Rescue Plan** that provides historic debt relief to Socially Disadvantaged borrowers. Dr. Dewayne Goldman, USDA Senior Advisor for Racial Equity, will give updates. Additional information is in the article entitled “Upcoming Events and Workshops”.

\$2 million in cooperative agreements is available for local governments to host Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot projects. The cooperative agreements support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans and are part of USDA's broader efforts to support urban agriculture. Learn more about the Cooperative Agreements [here](#).

FSA is inviting you to participate in the #Plant2021 online campaign. Using this hashtag, many farmers and agricultural operations post photos and videos to their social media channels that document their planting work. It's a great way to share the story of agriculture in America with audiences not just nationwide, but worldwide. For information on how to participate in the campaign with us, read our blog, and submit your photos and videos to [SM.FP.Social@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.Social@usda.gov).

FSA announced that signup has reopened for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. The initial CFAP 2 signup ended on Dec. 11, 2020, but USDA has reopened sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning April 5, 2021, for producers to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications. Visit [www.farmers.gov/cfap/commodities](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap/commodities) for a full list of eligible commodities for each category.

For Service Center contact information, visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

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. USDA 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.

**May 27<sup>th</sup> – American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update** USDA and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) will host a virtual meeting to share information about the provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). ARPA provides historic debt relief to Socially Disadvantaged borrowers. **Dr. Dewayne Goldmon, USDA Senior Advisor for Racial Equity**, will give updates on the program and answer questions from producers, borrowers, and other attendees. The Virtual Meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 10:00am. VIRTUAL MEETING LINK : <https://bit.ly/34i6vG4>**. For additional information, please contact Karen Lee (UAPB) at [leek@uapb.edu](mailto:leek@uapb.edu), Rhonda O’Guinn (USDA-FSA) at [rhonda.oguinn@usda.gov](mailto:rhonda.oguinn@usda.gov), or Precilla Wade (USDA-FSA) at [precilla.wade@usda.gov](mailto:precilla.wade@usda.gov).

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## American Rescue Plan Socially Disadvantaged Farmer Debt Payments

USDA recognizes that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have faced systemic discrimination with cumulative effects that have, among other consequences, led to a substantial loss in the number of socially disadvantaged producers, reduced the amount of farmland they control, and contributed to a cycle of debt that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, socially disadvantaged communities saw a disproportionate amount of COVID-19 infection rates, loss of property, hospitalizations, death, and economic hurt.

To address these systemic challenges, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides historic debt relief to socially disadvantaged producers including Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander.

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. As information becomes available, it will be provided directly to socially disadvantaged borrowers and stakeholder groups representing socially disadvantaged producers, posted here on farmers.gov, and shared through our social media channels, email newsletters, and the media.

### ***Who qualifies for this debt relief?***

Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies. The American Rescue Plan Act uses the 2501 definition of socially disadvantaged, which includes Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American or Pacific Islander. Gender is not a criterion in and of itself, but of course women are included in these categories.



***I qualify as socially disadvantaged under the American Rescue Plan definition, but I am not late on my payments. Do I still qualify?***

Yes. Any socially disadvantaged borrower with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans qualifies.

***When will qualified borrowers begin to see a loan pay-off or other payment in response to the American Rescue Plan?***

USDA is now reviewing and working to gather feedback to implement the Act, and more guidance will be forthcoming for socially disadvantaged borrowers with direct or guaranteed farm loans as well as Farm Storage Facility Loans. For borrowers in arrears, the moratorium established on January 26th to stop all debt collections, foreclosures and evictions for all borrowers, including socially disadvantaged producers, remains in effect.

Producers who have worked with USDA's Farm Service Agency previously may have their ethnicity and race on file. A borrower, including those with guaranteed loans, can contact their local their local USDA Service Center to verify, update or submit a new ethnicity and race designation using the AD-2047. Find your nearest service center at [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

To learn more about USDA's work to implement the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, visit [www.usda.gov/arp](https://www.usda.gov/arp).

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## **Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation**

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### **How the Tool Works**

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](https://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

## About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1](https://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

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

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## USDA Encourages Completion of Cash Rents and Leases Survey

You may have received a *Cash Rents and Leases* survey from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). This survey provides the basis for estimates of the current year's cash rents paid for irrigated cropland, non-irrigated cropland, and permanent pasture. Please complete your Cash Rents and Leases survey by June 21. This survey can be completed and returned by mail, over the phone, or at [agcounts.usda.gov](https://agcounts.usda.gov).

Information from this survey is used in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as an alternative soil rental rate prior to finalizing new rates each year. Survey responses from as many localities as possible help calculate more accurate rental rates. Completion of the survey ensures cash rental rates accurately represent your locality. Survey results will also give you a useful tool in negotiating your rental agreements, and financial planning for your agricultural operation.

In accordance with federal law, survey responses are kept confidential. Survey results will be available in aggregate form only to ensure that no individual producer or operation can be identified. NASS will publish the survey results on August 27 at [quickstats.nass.usda.gov/](https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/).

If you have any questions about this survey, please call 888-424-7828, or visit: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide to NASS Surveys/Cash Rents by County/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide%20to%20NASS%20Surveys/Cash%20Rents%20by%20County/index.php).

## USDA Service Centers Provide Free, One-on-One Help for Farmers

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 work with 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.

re committed to delivering USDA programs and services to America's farmers and ranchers while taking safety measures in response to COVID-19. We encourage you to [check the status of your local USDA Service Center](#) and make an appointment to discuss your business needs.

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## File a Notice of Loss for Failed and Prevented Planted Acres

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds you to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

You should report crop acreage you intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

If you're unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, if you have failed acres, you should also use form CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, to report failed acres.

For hand-harvested crops and certain perishables, you must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. If you notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576, you are still required to file a CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), you must file a *Notice of Loss* within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. You must timely file a *Notice of Loss* for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

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

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## Double-Cropping

Each year, state committees review and approve or disapprove county committee recommended changes or additions to specific combinations of crops.

Double-cropping is approved when two specific crops have the capability to be planted and carried to maturity for the intended use, as reported by the producer, on the same acreage within a crop year under normal growing conditions. The specific combination of crops recommended by the county committee must be approved by the state committee.

Double-cropping is approved in ARKANSAS on a county-by-county basis. Contact your local FSA Office for a list of approved double-cropping combinations for your county.

A crop following a cover crop terminated according to termination guidelines is approved double cropping and these combinations do not have to be approved by the state committee.

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## Report Banking Changes to FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to receive timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for any reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2019 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2020. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

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## The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

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

If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

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 at [nass.usda.gov/Publications](http://nass.usda.gov/Publications) and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at [youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be).

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## Rates and Dates



Selected Interest Rates for March 2021		Dates to Remember	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125	Deadline to request MAL for 2020 corn, cotton, rice, soy- beans & grain sorghum	
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.750		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.250		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Ranch- er	1.500		
Emergency Loans	2.750		
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years)	0.375		
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	1.375		
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125		

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)).

## Arkansas State FSA Office

700 West Capitol  
Room 3416  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Phone: 501-301-3000  
Fax: 855-652-2082

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

### Acting State Director

Danny Hoots

[danny.hoots@usda.gov](mailto:danny.hoots@usda.gov)

### Administrative Officer

Sharon Baker

[sharon.baker@usda.gov](mailto:sharon.baker@usda.gov)

### Farm Loan Chief

Lori Lavender

[lori.lavender@usda.gov](mailto:lori.lavender@usda.gov)

*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)*

### State Committee Meeting:

2nd Wednesday and Thursday of each Quarter

## Farm Program Chief

Terri McManus

[terri.mcmanus@usda.gov](mailto:terri.mcmanus@usda.gov)

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).



### USDA Farm Service Agency

[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) | [contact us](#)

