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USDA Updates Pandemic Assistance for Livestock, Poultry Contract Producers and Specialty Crop Growers: CFAP2 Deadline

USDA Sets October 12 Deadline for CFAP 2

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) for contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry and producers of specialty crops and other sales-based commodities. CFAP 2, which assists producers who faced market disruptions in 2020 due to COVID-19, is part of USDA’s broader Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Additionally, USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) has set an Oct. 12 deadline for all eligible producers to apply for or modify applications for CFAP 2.

“We listened to feedback and concerns from producers and stakeholders about the gaps in pandemic assistance, and these adjustments to CFAP 2 help address unique
circumstances, provide flexibility and make the program more equitable for all producers,” said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. “The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on agricultural producers, and we have made significant progress since announcing our plans in March. While additional pandemic assistance remains to be announced in the coming weeks, USDA is also ramping up its efforts to make investments in the food supply chain to Build Back Better.”

**Assistance for Contract Producers**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provides up to $1 billion for payments to contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry for revenue losses from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 27, 2020. Contract producers of broilers, pullets, layers, chicken eggs, turkeys, hogs and pigs, ducks, geese, pheasants and quail may be eligible for assistance. This update includes eligible breeding stock and eggs of all eligible poultry types produced under contract.

Payments for contract producers were to be based on a comparison of eligible revenue for the periods of Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 27, 2019, and Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 27, 2020. Today’s changes mean contract producers can now elect to use eligible revenue from the period of Jan. 1, 2018, through Dec. 27, 2018, instead of that date range in 2019 if it is more representative. This change is intended to provide flexibility and make the program more equitable for contract producers who had reduced revenue in 2019 compared to a normal production year. The difference in revenue is then multiplied by 80% to determine a final payment. Payments to contract producers may be factored if total calculated payments exceed the available funding and will be made after the application period closes.

Additional flexibilities have been added to account for increases to operation size in 2020 and situations where a contract producer did not have a full period of revenue from Jan. 1 to Dec. 27 for either 2018 or 2019. Assistance is also available to new contract producers who began their farming operation in 2020.

**Updates for Sales-Based Commodities**

USDA is amending the CFAP 2 payment calculation for sales-based commodities, which are primarily comprised of by specialty crops, to allow producers to substitute 2018 sales for 2019 sales. Previously, payments for producers of sales-based commodities were based only on 2019 sales, with 2019 used as an approximation of the amount the producer would have expected to market in 2020. Giving producers the option to substitute 2018 sales for this approximation, including 2018 crop insurance indemnities and 2018 crop year Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) payments, provides additional flexibility to producers of sales-based commodities who had reduced sales in 2019.

Grass seed has also been added as an eligible sales commodity for CFAP 2. A complete list of all eligible sales-based commodities can be found at [farmers.gov/cfap2/commodities](http://farmers.gov/cfap2/commodities). Producers of sales-based commodities can modify existing applications.

**Applying for Assistance**

Sign-up for CFAP 2 was re-opened in March and remains open to address inadequate initial outreach efforts to reach underserved producers and particularly those who produce sales commodities. Newly eligible producers who need to submit a CFAP 2 application or producers who need to modify an existing one can do so by contacting their local FSA
office. Producers can find their local FSA office by visiting farmers.gov/service-locator. Producers can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364. All new and modified CFAP 2 applications are due by the Oct. 12 deadline.

As USDA looks to long-term solutions to build back a better food system as announced in June, the Department is committed to delivery of financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers and businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions. Since USDA rolled out the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative in March, the Department has announced approximately $7 billion in assistance to producers and agriculture entities. Previously announced pandemic assistance has included:

- Additional dairy assistance related to market volatility
- Depopulated livestock and poultry
- Timber harvesting and hauling
- $1 billion to purchase healthy food for food insecure Americans and build food bank capacity
- Pandemic Cover Crop Program
- $500 million deployed through existing USDA programs

For more details, please visit www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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**USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to California Farmers and Livestock Producers Impacted by Wildfires and Drought**

California agricultural operations have been significantly impacted by the wildfires and ongoing, severe drought. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover. Impacted producers 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.

“Production agriculture is vital to the California economy, and USDA stands ready to assist in the recovery from these wildfires and extreme drought conditions,” said Gloria Montaño
Greene as Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). “I assure you that USDA employees are working diligently to deliver FPAC’s extensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs and services to all impacted agricultural producers.”

**USDA Disaster Assistance for Wildfire and Drought Recovery**

Producers who experience livestock deaths due to wildfires may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP).

Meanwhile, for both wildfire and drought recovery, the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed losses as well as water hauling expenses associated with transportation of water to livestock. For ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days.

Livestock producers may also be eligible for the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)](#) for 2021 grazing losses due to drought. LFP benefits may be available for loss of grazing acres due to wildfires on federally managed lands on which a producer is prohibited, by a federal agency, from grazing normally permitted livestock. FSA maintains a list of [counties eligible for LFP](#) and makes updates each Thursday.

Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the [Tree Assistance Program (TAP)](#) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost during the drought. This complements [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days.

“Once you are able to safely evaluate the wildfire or drought impact on your operation, be sure to contact your local FSA office to timely report all crop, livestock and farm infrastructure damages and losses,” said Jacque Johnson, Acting State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in California. “To expedite FSA disaster assistance, you will likely need to provide documents, such as farm records, herd inventory, receipts and pictures of damages or losses”

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](#), including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers 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. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs.

**Risk Management**

Producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or FSA’s [NAP](#) should report crop damage to their crop insurance agent or FSA office. If they have crop insurance, producers should report crop damage to their agent within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days. For NAP covered crops, a [Notice of Loss](#) (CCC-576) must be filed within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

“Crop insurance and other USDA risk management options are there to help producers manage risk because we never know what nature has in store for the future,” said Jeff
Yasui, Director of RMA’s Regional Office that covers California. “The Approved Insurance Providers, loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well trained in handling these types of events.”

**Conservation**

Outside of the primary nesting season, emergency and non-emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought or similar natural disasters. Producers interested in haying or grazing of CRP acres should contact their county FSA office to determine eligibility.

The Emergency Conservation Program and Emergency Forest Restoration Program can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore fencing, damaged farmland or forests.

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is always available to provide technical assistance in the recovery process by assisting producers to plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters.

Long-term damage from wildfires and drought includes forage production loss in pastures and fields and increased wind erosion on crop fields not protected with soil health practices. Visit your local USDA Service Center to learn more about these impacts, potential recovery tactics, and how to take steps to make your land more resilient to drought in the future.

“USDA can be a very valuable partner to help landowners with their recovery and resiliency efforts,” said Carlos Suarez, NRCS State Conservationist in California. “Our staff will work one-on-one with landowners to make assessments of the damages and develop approaches that focus on effective recovery of the land.”

**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 damaged upland sites stripped of vegetation by wildfire, debris removal and streambank stabilization.

Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, or any federally recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization. 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 your local NRCS office.

“EWP provides immediate assistance to communities to mitigate potential hazards to life and property resulting from the fires and particularly the severe erosion and flooding that can occur after the fire,” Suarez said. “We can work with a local sponsor to help a damaged watershed so that lives and property are protected while preventing further devastation in the community.”

In addition to EWP, Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) is another valuable service that NRCS can provide following a wildfire. NRCS technical assistance can help fire victims with planning cost-effective post fire restoration practices.
More Information

On farmers.gov, the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet, and Farm Loan Discovery Tool can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their crop insurance agent. For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local USDA Service Center.

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Understanding the U.S. Drought Monitor

Are drought conditions affecting your agricultural operation? The U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) is a resource producers can use to help determine how to best respond and react to a drought as it develops or lingers.

The USDM is an online, weekly map showing the location, extent, and severity of drought across the United States. It categorizes the entire country as being in one of six levels of drought. The map is released on Thursdays and depicts conditions for the week.

The USDM provides producers with the latest information about drought conditions where they live, enabling producers to best respond and react to a drought as it develops or lingers. In some cases, the USDM may help a producer make specific decisions about their operation, such as reducing the stocking rate because forage is not growing. For others, it may provide a convenient big-picture snapshot of broader environmental conditions.

The USDM incorporates varying data – rain, snow, temperature, streamflow, reservoir levels, soil moisture, and more – as well as first-hand information submitted from on-the-ground sources such as photos, descriptions, and experiences. The levels of drought are connected to the frequency of occurrence across several different drought indicators. What makes the USDM unique is that it is not a strictly numeric product. The mapmakers rely on their judgment and a nationwide network of 450-plus experts to interpret conditions for each region. They synthesize their discussion and analysis into a single depiction of drought for the entire country.

USDA uses the Drought Monitor to determine a producer’s eligibility for certain drought assistance programs, like the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and Emergency Haying or Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres.

Additionally, the Farm Service Agency uses the Drought Monitor to trigger and “fast track” Secretarial Disaster Designations which then provides producers impacted by drought access to emergency loans that can assist with credit needs.
USDA Accepts 2.8 Million Acres for the Conservation Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has accepted 2.8 million acres in offers from agricultural producers and private landowners for enrollment into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 2021. This year, almost 1.9 million acres in offers have been accepted through the General CRP Signup, and USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) has accepted over 897,000 acres for enrollment through the Continuous Signup. The Continuous Signup remains open and CRP Grasslands Signup closed last week, so USDA expects to enroll more acres into all of CRP than the 3 million acres that are expiring.

“Despite Congress raising the enrollment target in the 2018 Farm Bill, there have been decreases in enrollment for the past two years. The changes we made this spring have put us on the path to reverse this trend,” said FSA Acting State Executive Director Jacque Johnson. “Even with the improved direction, USDA will still be about 4 million acres below the enrollment target. The CRP benefits for producers, sportsmen, wildlife, conservation and climate are numerous and well documented. We cannot afford to let them be left on the table.”

The 4 million-acre shortfall in CRP would have had the following impacts:

- More than 359,000 acres less annual forage under CRP Grasslands;
- A loss of 1,500,000 acres of quality wildlife and pollinator less habitat for wildlife;
- 20% fewer apiaries in major production regions meeting critical forage thresholds;
- A loss of more than 4 million upland game and other grassland birds;
- About 90 million pounds of nitrogen entering waterways;
- Over 30 million tons of soil eroded, leading to increased pollution and sedimentation in streams and rivers; and
- Foregone sequestration of more than 3 million metric tons of CO2.

Like other USDA conservation programs, CRP is a voluntary program that has a variety of options that can be tailored to the specific conservation issues of a state or region and desires of the landowner. The options run the gamut from working lands such as CRP Grasslands to partnerships with states and private entities to target a specific joint concern such as water quality or quantity.

“We are grateful to the leadership and staff at the USDA, who have worked diligently over the last several months to ensure that the Conservation Reserve Program remains a viable and effective conservation tool,” says Whit Fosburgh, president and CEO of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. “Today’s announcement demonstrates that when the CRP is administered with the needs of landowners in mind, they respond by investing their lands in conservation. This course correction is needed now more than ever, as management decisions in recent years have left program acreage at a 30-year low, with an additional 4 million acres set to expire by October 2022. We look forward to continuing to work with the USDA to improve the trajectory of the CRP and guarantee that
the program benefits our natural resources, landowners, and the sporting community for years to come.”

**Continuous CRP Signup**

Continuous CRP allows USDA to target the most sensitive land like highly erodible land, the most environmentally beneficial land like wetlands and buffers along streams and rivers, or locally identified critical habitat like State Acres For Wildlife. This targeted approach also reduces the whole-farm type enrollment in CRP that was more common when it first began and helps meet the conservation goals while maintaining the majority of the land in production agriculture. FSA has accepted offers from over 37,000 producers to enroll more than 897,000 acres through the Continuous Signup. This is double the enrollment from last year and three times the enrollment from 2018 and 2019. FSA expects this process to be completed by the end of September so contracts may start on October 1, 2021.

The growth in the targeted enrollment through Continuous Signup is due to a recommitment of USDA to incentives and partnerships that brought in nearly 1.4 million acres in 2016 and 2017. These efforts have also included the expansion of the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rives Initiative 30-year (CLEAR30) from two regions to nationwide as well as moving State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) practices from the General to the Continuous signup. This year, offers for 20,000 acres have been submitted for CLEAR30 and 296,000 acres in SAFE practices.

**General CRP Signup**

FSA opened the General CRP Signup 56 in January 2021 and extended the original deadline to July 23, 2021, to enable producers to consider FSA’s new improvements to the program, which included higher rental payments and more incentivized environmental practices.

Additionally, FSA introduced a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This incentive provides a 3%, 5% or 10% incentive payment based on the predominate vegetation type for the practices enrolled – from grasses to trees to wetland restoration.

Through CRP, producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. In addition to the other well-documented benefits, lands enrolled in CRP is playing a key role in mitigating impacts from climate change.

A full list of changes to CRP, including those to the Continuous and General Signups, can be found in our “What’s New with CRP” fact sheet.

**More Information**

In April, [USDA announced several changes](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Newsroom/2021/04/usda-announced-several-changes) to CRP to increase participation while improving climate-related and other environmental benefits. CRP sequesters carbon while preserving topsoil, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, reducing nitrogen runoff, and providing healthy habitat for wildlife.
The 2018 Farm Bill established a nationwide acreage limit for CRP, with the total number of acres that may be enrolled capped at 25 million acres in 2021 and growing to 27 million by 2023.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our nation’s lands, biodiversity, and natural resources, including our soil, air, and water. Through conservation practices, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers, and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including state, local, and tribal governments.

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**USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property**

Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can also help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to $50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, contact your local county USDA Service Center or visit [fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://fsa.usda.gov/microloans).

**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, contact your local county USDA Service Center.

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available

Small nonfarm businesses in California may be eligible to apply for low-interest federal disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration. By law, SBA makes Economic Injury Disaster Loans available when the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture designates an agricultural disaster.

SBA eligibility covers both the economic impacts on businesses dependent on farmers and ranchers that have suffered agricultural production losses caused by the disaster and businesses directly impacted by the disaster.

Small nonfarm businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of any size may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to $2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred.

Eligibility for these loans is based on the financial impact of the disaster only and not on any actual property damage. These loans have an interest rate of 3 percent for businesses and 2 percent for private nonprofit organizations, a maximum term of 30 years and are available to small businesses and most private nonprofits without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship.
Businesses primarily engaged in farming or ranching are not eligible for SBA disaster assistance. Agricultural enterprises should contact the Farm Services Agency about the U.S. Department of Agriculture assistance made available by the Secretary’s declaration. However, nurseries are eligible for SBA disaster assistance in drought disasters.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at [https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/](https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/). Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

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**California Agricultural Mediation Program (CALAMP) helps farmers and ranchers**

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in California has partnered with the California Agriculture Mediation Program to provide free mediation services. Mediation can be an effective tool for farmers and ranchers who are experiencing challenges with their farm loans, creditors, neighbors, leases, or USDA agencies.

Mediation is free to any producer for debt/credit issues, family farm transitions, leases, neighbor disputes, organic certification, adverse USDA decisions, and more. If your issue is not included in our authorized list of covered topics, we’ll work with you to find an affordable option.

Discussions and notes made during mediation cannot be shared unless everyone agrees to do so. Keeping information private helps create a safe space for difficult conversations. If you come to an agreement or plan, the parties may then decide to share it outside of the meeting.

Mediators are trained to help people talk to each other in a productive way. The mediator does not take a “side” in the conversation, but instead is there to support the conversation and move it forward to address the issue at hand. All of our mediators have agricultural backgrounds, so they understand the issues that are unique to the industry.

The mediator leads a discussion about reaching an agreement or plan. Should the parties reach an agreement, the mediator will draft a settlement document, which is a binding contract. But the parties, not the mediator, decide the outcome and course of action.

Statistically, 75 percent of mediations result in an agreement. Sometimes even if a final agreement is not reached, everyone gains a better understanding of the issue. Mediation can go hand-in-hand with other processes such as working with an estate planner or applying for a farm loan. Mediation can reopen lines of communication and help the participants continue productive conversations outside the meeting.

For more information, submit a request for mediation at [www.calamp.org](http://www.calamp.org)

Or contact:

Matt Strassberg (Director) at 916-330-4500 x101 or [matts@emcenter.org](mailto:matts@emcenter.org)
Free Farm Manager Apprentice Training

Farmers, are you searching for your future manager or supervisor? Whether you have a current employee who could use some additional training, or are seeking to hire a new team member, The Beginning Farm and Ranch Management Apprenticeship provides a structured pathway for aspiring farm managers to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful on your farm. The Center for Land-Based Learning covers all tuition for coursework and provides support for farmers and apprentices. To learn more about training an apprentice, visit https://landbasedlearning.org/apprentice-farmer-mentor

Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be successful. FSA staff will provide guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower’s graduation to commercial credit. While it is FSA’s commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower’s responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

If a farm loan borrower can’t make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.
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