

August 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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- [Jamie L McLane, Program Technician Retires](#)
- [Message from the SED](#)
- [USDA Investigates Packages of Unsolicited Seeds from China](#)
- [FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup](#)
- [Update Your Records](#)
- [Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\) Losses](#)
- [Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation](#)
- [Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips](#)
- [Selected Interest Rates for August 2020](#)
- [Perdue's visit to Teddy Bear Fresh](#)

Maryland FSA Newsletter

Maryland Farm Service Agency

339 Busch's Frontage Rd.
Suite 104
Annapolis, MD 21409

Phone: 443-482-2760
Fax: 855-401-6639 

www.fsa.usda.gov/md

State Executive Director:
Jim Eichhorst

State Committee:
Jenny Rhodes, Chairperson

Jamie L McLane, Program Technician Retires

On July 31, 2020 Jamie L McLane retired from the St Mary's-Calvert Farm Service Agency after 38 years of dedicated service to the farming community.

During her career she has worn many different hats from Program Technician to serving on a drop team in Florida during a disaster to Acting County Executive Director.

While you all know what Jamie does in the office; for 20 years she has been an active member of the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department.

Jamie for the past 10 years has been the Secretary-Treasurer for the Maryland FSA employee association called DMASCOE. In this

Steve Ernst
Steve Issacson
Pat Langenfelder
Chris Parker

capacity she has attended multiple association rally's and national conventions all over the country for NASCOE. NASCOE is the national association for FSA employees all over the United States. This year Jamie received NASCOE's Distinguished Service Award. This prestigious award recognizes fellow NASCOE members contributions to FSA, Agriculture, NASCOE and their local communities.

To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/md

On July 31st at 4:30 pm Linda and I witnessed 38 years of knowledge and experience walk out the FSA door. Whoever is hired to be Jamie's replacement will have very "big" shoes to fill. Her dedication, dependability and pleasant manor each day is rare.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish Jamie all the best. While this is the end of Jamie's FSA career it is a new beginning and an opportunity to pursue her dreams, spend time with her mother, daughters, grandchildren and travel the open highway with her husband, Jeff.

-Tribute by: Amy Farrell, CED St. Mary's County FSA

Message from the SED

Was Your Operation Impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic? Apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Today.

By Jim Eichhorst, State Executive Director in Maryland, USDA Farm Service Agency

Farmers and ranchers feed our state, our nation, and in fact, our world. You work long hours to provide essential resources for us all, and in these challenging times, I want you to know that USDA is here to support you and your operation through our Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, or CFAP. Whether you farm one acre or many more, grow food for local markets or big supply chains, CFAP can help. We're accepting applications through **August 28** and encouraging producers to apply now.

In Maryland, we have already approved **855** applications and disbursed **\$14,707,481** as of July 24, 2020. I know many of you have applied for CFAP already, but the numbers indicate that some who are eligible have not. If you're still unsure about CFAP and your operation, I encourage you to take five minutes today to visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364  to learn about eligibility and options to apply. Whether you've worked with FSA for years or this will be a first, we're here to help you every step of the way.

CFAP provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. A range of commodities are eligible for CFAP, including Corn, Soybeans, Cattle, Milk, and Hogs. You can access the full list of eligible non-specialty, specialty, livestock, dairy, and wool commodities by visiting farmers.gov/cfap.

USDA Investigates Packages of Unsolicited Seeds from China

USDA is aware that people across the country have received suspicious, unsolicited packages of seed that appear to be coming from China. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is working closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, other federal agencies, and State departments of agriculture to investigate the situation. USDA urges anyone who receives an unsolicited package of seeds to immediately contact their [State plant regulatory official](#) or [APHIS State plant health director](#). Please hold onto the seeds and packaging, including the mailing label, until someone from your State department of agriculture or APHIS contacts you with further instructions. Do not plant seeds from unknown origins. At this time, we don't have any evidence indicating this is something other than a "brushing scam" where people receive unsolicited items from a seller who then posts false customer reviews to boost sales. USDA is currently collecting seed packages from recipients and will test their contents and determine if they contain anything that could be of concern to U.S. agriculture or the environment. USDA is committed to preventing the unlawful entry of prohibited seeds and protecting U.S. agriculture from invasive pests and noxious weeds. Visit the [APHIS' website](#) to learn more about USDA's efforts to stop agricultural smuggling and promote trade compliance.

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, and more information on WHIP+ can be found at farmers.gov/whip-plus.

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. You should also report changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase.

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their *Farm Operating Plan* on form CCC-902.

To update your records, contact your County USDA Service Center.

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 County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

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 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 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 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact your [NAME] County USDA Service Center at [XXX-XXX-XXXX] or visit farmers.gov.

Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips

USDA offers programs to help producers recover from disasters; FEMA can help you prepare ahead of time.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a free mobile app that explains what to do before, during and after emergencies. The app is available for download for Apple, Android and Blackberry mobile devices.

Download the app to:

- Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations
- Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters and customize your emergency checklist
- Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone)
- Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders.

For more information about the FEMA app, visit fema.gov/mobile-app. To download the FEMA app from the Apple Store visit itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8. To download the FEMA app on Google Play for Android visit: play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en

Selected Interest Rates for August 2020

Farm Operating Loans- Direct	1.375%
Farm Ownership- Direct	2.375%
Farm Ownership- Direct, Joint Financing	2.5%
Farm Ownership- Down Payment	1.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	0.50%

Perdue's visit to Teddy Bear Fresh



EASTON — U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and U.S. Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md.-1st, toured the Teddy Bear Fresh Produce distribution facility in Easton Friday, June 5.

Also accompanying him were Caroline County farmer and Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Joseph Bartenfelder and Teddy Bear Fresh owner Mary Salins.

Teddy Bear Fresh, located in Easton, is participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers to Families Food Box Program, which has connected producers, distributors and people in need of food nationwide.

Our very own SED, Jim Eichhorst also joined Secretary Perdue on this project in Easton, MD back in June.

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