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Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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- [Farm Service Agency County Committee Nominations End August 3.](#)
- [Additional Commodities Eligible for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#)
- [USDA selects New Jersey State Conservationist](#)
- [One-Time PLC Yield Updates – Deadline September 30](#)
- [FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\) Offers Assistance Due to Weather, Pest, and Disease Damage](#)
- [Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program \(CAMP\)](#)

New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

New Jersey Farm Service Agency

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Visit our website at

www.fsa.usda.gov/nj

Deadlines Visit our state website and click on [Program Deadlines](#) or download the latest version of our program calendar [here](#).

Farm Service Agency County Committee Nominations End August 3.

#LeadYourFSA and be the Voice of Farmers in Your Community

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin accepting nominations for county committee members on Monday, June 15, 2020. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally.

All nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 3, 2020.

"I encourage America's farmers, ranchers and forest stewards to nominate candidates to lead, serve and represent their community on their county committee," FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce said. "There's an increasing need for diverse representation, including underserved producers, which includes beginning, women and minority farmers and ranchers."

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others, and organizations, including those representing beginning, women and minority producers, also may nominate candidates.

Information for elections in your county office are available on the New Jersey FSA Website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj> and clicking on "Local Election Information" or by clicking [here](#).

Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made of three to 11 members and typically meet once a month. Members serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to find out how to get involved in their county's election. Check with your local USDA service center to see if your LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 2, 2020. Read more to learn about [important election dates](#).

Additional Commodities Eligible for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced an initial list of additional commodities that have been added to the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), and that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made other adjustments to the program based on comments received from agricultural producers and organizations and review of market data. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications for CFAP through Aug. 28, 2020. CFAP provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19 between January 15, 2020 and April 15, 2020. A range of commodities are eligible for CFAP, including corn, soybeans, greens, herbs and. You can access additional criteria and the full list of eligible non-specialty, specialty, livestock, dairy, and wool commodities by visiting farmers.gov/cfap.

USDA expects additional eligible commodities to be announced in the coming weeks.

USDA collected comments and supporting data for consideration of additional commodities through June 22, 2020.

Changes to CFAP include:

- Adding the following commodities: alfalfa sprouts, anise, arugula, basil, bean sprouts, beets, blackberries, Brussels sprouts, celeriac (celery root), chives, cilantro, coconuts, collard greens, dandelion greens, greens (others not listed separately), guava, kale greens, lettuce – including Boston, green leaf, Lolla Rossa, oak leaf green, oak leaf red and red leaf – marjoram, mint, mustard, okra, oregano, parsnips, passion fruit, peas (green), pineapple, pistachios, radicchio, rosemary, sage, savory, sorrel, fresh sugarcane, Swiss chard, thyme and turnip top greens.
- Expanding for seven currently eligible commodities – apples, blueberries, garlic, potatoes, raspberries, tangerines and taro – CARES Act funding for sales losses because USDA found these commodities had a 5 percent or greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally, these commodities were only eligible for marketing adjustments.
- Determining that peaches and rhubarb no longer qualify for payment under the CARES Act sales loss category.
- Correcting payment rates for apples, artichokes, asparagus, blueberries, cantaloupes, cucumbers, garlic, kiwifruit, mushrooms, papaya, peaches, potatoes, raspberries, rhubarb, tangerines and taro.

Additional details can be found in the Federal Register in the [Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#) and [Final Rule Correction](#) and at www.farmers.gov/cfap.

Producers have several options for applying to the CFAP program:

- Using an online portal, accessible at gov/cfap, allows producers with secure USDA login credentials—known as eAuthentication—to certify eligible commodities online, digitally sign applications and submit directly to the local USDA Service Center.
- Completing the application form using our CFAP Application Generator and Payment Calculator found at gov/cfap. This Excel workbook allows customers to input information specific to their operation to determine estimated payments and populate the application form, which can be printed, then signed and submitted to their local USDA Service Center. An updated version with the new commodities is available on the website.
- Downloading the AD-3114 application form from gov/cfap and manually completing the form to submit to the local USDA Service Center by mail, electronically or by hand delivery to an office drop box. In some limited cases, the office may be open for in-person business by appointment. Visit farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status to check the status of your local office.

USDA Service Centers can also work with producers to complete and securely transmit digitally signed applications through two commercially available tools: Box and OneSpan. Producers who are interested in digitally signing their applications should notify their local service centers when calling to discuss the CFAP application process. You can learn more about these solutions at farmers.gov/mydocs.

Getting Help from FSA

New customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

All other eligibility forms, such as those related to adjusted gross income and payment information, can be downloaded from farmers.gov/cfap. For existing FSA customers, these documents are likely already on file.

USDA selects New Jersey State Conservationist



SOMERSET, N.J., July 13, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has selected Julie Hawkins to serve as State Conservationist for New Jersey. As State Conservationist, Hawkins will oversee the federal agency’s programs, operations, and staff in the Garden State. She will begin her new position on July 19.

Julie’s first interaction with NRCS was in 1994 as an Earth Team Volunteer, while in graduate school at the University of Maryland, College Park. She was hired full-time with NRCS in 1996 as a Soil Conservationist in Maryland and later served on the East Region-IRT Team in Dover, Delaware.

In 2004, Julie became the Virginia State Biologist, and following formal training through Virginia’s Natural Resource Leadership Institute, was named Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations. Most recently, Julie took on the role of Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in 2014.

“My passion for conservation developed from growing up and recreating in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed,” Hawkins said. “I took my very first soils class at the University of Maryland with Ray Weil who wrote the book “The Nature and Property of Soils.” This opened up a whole new world to me and enticed me to change my field of study and ultimately the trajectory of my career.”

Julie holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management, Soil and Water, as well as a Master of Science in Environmental Science, Wetland Emphasis, from the University of Maryland at College Park. She also completed graduate studies in the Strategic Leadership Development Program through NRCS and George Washington University in 2014.

Julie is passionate about NRCS’s ability to build long-term trusting relationships with generations of landowners through their voluntary, non-regulatory conservation programs. With over 25 years of experience with NRCS, she has been on the front lines as they have evolved to address all conservation issues.

“I plan to continue to provide the high-quality assistance NJ farmers and landowners have come to expect from NRCS and will support the staff in developing technical resources and programmatic offerings to carry on the legacy of conservation that has lasted over 85 years.”

Julie has three children, and in her free time enjoys reading, fishing, swimming, and skiing.

One-Time PLC Yield Updates – Deadline September 30

Farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC yields of covered commodities on the farm, regardless of Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program election. The deadline to request a PLC yield update is September 30, 2020.

The updated yield will be equal to 90 percent of the average yield per planted acre in crop years 2013-2017 (excluding any year where the applicable covered commodity was not planted), subject to the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for the covered commodity. If the reported yield in any year is less than 75 percent of the 2013-2017 average county yield, then the yield will be substituted with 75 percent of the county average yield.

The chart below provides the ratio obtained by dividing the 2008-2012 average national yield by the 2013-2017 average national yield for each covered commodity.

Covered Commodity	National Yield Factor
Barley	0.9437
Canola	0.9643
Chickpeas, Large	1.0000
Chickpeas, Small	0.9760
Corn	0.9000
Crambe	1.0000
Flaxseed	1.0000
Grain Sorghum	0.9077
Lentils	1.0000
Mustard Seed	0.9460
Oats	0.9524
Peanuts	0.9273
Peas, Dry	0.9988
Rapeseed	1.0000
Rice, Long	0.9330
Rice, Medium	0.9887
Rice, Temp Japonica	0.9591
Safflower	1.0000
Seed Cotton	0.9000
Sesame Seed	0.9673
Soybeans	0.9000
Sunflower Seed	0.9396
Wheat	0.9545

It is the owner’s choice whether to update or keep existing PLC yields. If a yield update is not made, then no action is required to maintain the existing PLC yield. An existing or updated PLC yield will be maintained and effective for crop years 2020 through 2023 (life of the 2018 Farm Bill).

PLC yields may be updated on a covered commodity-by-covered commodity basis using FSA form CCC-867.

For more information, reference resources and decision tools, visit farmers.gov/arc-plc. Contact your local Farm Service Agency Office for assistance – farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

HARRISBURG, PA - In July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be collecting information about colony loss in the honey industry throughout the United States. The Quarterly Colony Loss survey will be conducted over the period of June 2020 through July 2020. This survey collects information about colony inventory and loss from more than 400 producers with honey bee colonies in the Northeastern Region of the United States.

"The information from these surveys directly impacts our region's beekeepers and honey producers," said Kevin Pautler, deputy director of the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office. "Beekeepers and producers can use the survey results when making business plans and marketing decisions. Cooperative Extensions use the data to provide needed outreach and education and State Departments and Agencies of Agriculture use the information to set insurance values," added Pautler.

In this survey, NASS asks participants to answer a variety of questions about their colonies. To ensure all survey participants have an opportunity to respond, NASS interviewers will contact producers who do not respond by mail or online to conduct interviews.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

Survey results will be published in the *Honey Bee Colonies* report to be released on August 3, 2020. These and all NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/. For more information, call the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office at (800) 498-1518.

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$600,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit offices.usda.gov.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Offers Assistance Due to Weather, Pest, and Disease Damage

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2020 must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.

TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster, plus an adjustment for normal mortality. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 1,000 acres annually.

Click here to read the [TAP Fact Sheet](#)

Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP)

The Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program is a state-driven program that matches an experienced producer who is passionate about conservation with an NRCS field employee that is new to the job or new to the area.

Our goal through the program is to grow critical relationships with the producers we serve, while at the same time advancing employee knowledge of production agriculture and natural resources in their local area, ultimately enhancing our ability to provide excellent customer service.

Once matched with a producer mentor, the employee will go out on the land with them 6-12 times per year for a period of 12-18 months – always during agreed upon times that are convenient for the producer.

Producer mentors provide a safe, low-risk learning environment for employees to advance their knowledge of:

- Common agricultural practices, equipment, inputs and other topics.
- The types of daily challenges and decisions producers face.
- Local resource problems and concerns.
- How producers use conservation practices to address resource concerns.

For more information on the CAMP program, check out our [Fact Sheet](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Contact your [local CAMP Coordinator](#) to speak with someone directly or to sign-up to become a mentor.

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).