

March 2021



Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

# NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [USDA Announces 'Pandemic Assistance for Producers'](#)
- [USDA Offers Resources for New Jersey Maple Producers](#)
- [USDA Encourages Completion of Cash Rents and Leases Survey](#)
- [Communication is Key in Lending](#)

## New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

### New Jersey Farm Service Agency

300 Clocktower Drive  
Suite 202  
Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

Phone: 609-587-0104

#### State Committee:

Linda A. DuBois, Chair  
Samuel G. Conard  
Sean Gertner

State Executive Director:  
[Lindsay Caragher \(Acting\)](#)

Farm Loan Chief:  
[Shannon Barton](#)

Visit our website at  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/nj](http://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](#).

### USDA Announces 'Pandemic Assistance for Producers'

**USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021.**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is establishing new programs and efforts to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions. The new initiative—**USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers**—will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs. USDA is dedicating at least \$6 billion toward the new programs. The Department will also develop rules for new programs that will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, timber harvesters, as well as provide support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable fuel, among others. Existing programs like the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will fall within the new initiative and, where statutory authority allows, will be refined to better address the needs of producers.

**USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers** was needed, said Vilsack, after a review of previous COVID-19 assistance programs targeting farmers identified a number of gaps and disparities in how assistance was distributed as well as inadequate outreach to underserved producers and smaller and medium operations.

USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has committed at least \$2.5 million to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will establish partnerships with organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

The payments announced today (under Part 3, below) will go out under the existing CFAP rules; however, future opportunities for **USDA Pandemic Assistance** will be reviewed for verified need and during the rulemaking process, USDA will look to make eligibility more consistent with the Farm Bill. Moving forward, **USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers** will utilize existing programs, such as the Local Agricultural Marketing Program, Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach, and Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and others to enhance educational and market opportunities for agricultural producers.

#### USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers – 4 Parts Announced Today

##### Part 1: Investing \$6 Billion to Expand Help & Assistance to More Producers

USDA will dedicate at least \$6 billion to develop a number of new programs or modify existing proposals using discretionary funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act and other coronavirus funding that went unspent by the previous administration. Where rulemaking is required, it will commence this spring. These efforts will include assistance for:

- Dairy farmers through the Dairy Donation Program or other means;
- Euthanized livestock and poultry;
- Biofuels;
- Specialty crops, beginning farmers, local, urban and organic farms;
- Costs for organic certification or to continue or add conservation activities
- Other possible expansion and corrections to CFAP that were not part of today's announcement such as to support dairy or other livestock producers;
- Timber harvesting and hauling;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other protective measures for food and farm workers and specialty crop and seafood producers, processors and distributors;
- Improving the resilience of the food supply chain, including assistance to meat and poultry operations to facilitate interstate shipment;
- Developing infrastructure to support donation and distribution of perishable commodities, including food donation and distribution through farm-to-school, restaurants or other community organizations; and
- Reducing food waste.

##### Part 2: Adding \$500 Million of New Funding to Existing Programs

USDA expects to begin investing approximately \$500 million in expedited assistance through several existing programs this spring, with most by April 30. This new assistance includes:

- \$100 million in additional funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which enhances the competitiveness of fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops.
- \$75 million in additional funding for the Farmers Opportunities Training and Outreach program, administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, which encourages and assists socially disadvantaged, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers in the ownership and operation of farms and ranches.
- \$100 million in additional funding for the Local Agricultural Marketing Program, administered by the AMS and Rural Development, which supports the development, coordination and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises and value-added agricultural products.
- \$75 million in additional funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program, administered by the NIFA, which provides funding opportunities to conduct and evaluate projects providing incentives to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by low-income consumers
- \$20 million for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to improve and maintain animal disease prevention and response capacity, including the National Animal Health Laboratory Network.

- \$20 million for the Agricultural Research Service to work collaboratively with Texas A&M on the critical intersection between responsive agriculture, food production, and human nutrition and health.
- \$28 million for NIFA to provide grants to state departments of agriculture to expand or sustain existing farm stress assistance programs.
- Approximately \$80 million in additional payments to domestic users of upland and extra-long staple cotton based on a formula set in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 that USDA plans to deliver through the Economic Adjustment Assistance for Textile Mills program.

### **Part 3: Carrying Out Formula Payments under CFAP 1, CFAP 2, CFAP AA**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula. USDA is now expediting these provisions because there is no discretion involved in interpreting such directives, they are self-enacting.

- An increase in CFAP 1 payment rates for cattle. Cattle producers with approved CFAP 1 applications will automatically receive these payments beginning in April. Information on the additional payment rates for cattle can be found on [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap). Eligible producers do not need to submit new applications, since payments are based on previously approved CFAP 1 applications. USDA estimates additional payments of more than \$1.1 billion to more than 410,000 producers, according to the mandated formula.
- Additional CFAP assistance of \$20 per acre for producers of eligible crops identified as CFAP 2 flat-rate or price-trigger crops beginning in April. This includes alfalfa, corn, cotton, hemp, peanuts, rice, sorghum, soybeans, sugar beets and wheat, among other crops. FSA will automatically issue payments to eligible price trigger and flat-rate crop producers based on the eligible acres included on their CFAP 2 applications. Eligible producers do not need to submit a new CFAP 2 application. For a list of all eligible row-crops, visit [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap). USDA estimates additional payments of more than \$4.5 billion to more than 560,000 producers, according to the mandated formula.
- USDA will finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance program in the following categories:
  - Applications filed for pullets and turfgrass sod;
  - A formula correction for row-crop producer applications to allow producers with a non-Actual Production History (APH) insurance policy to use 100% of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield in the calculation;
  - Sales commodity applications revised to include insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments, and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus payments, as required by statute; and
  - Additional payments for swine producers and contract growers under CFAP Additional Assistance remain on hold and are likely to require modifications to the regulation as part of the broader evaluation and future assistance; however, FSA will continue to accept applications from interested producers.

### **Part 4: Reopening CFAP 2 Sign-Up to Improve Access & Outreach to Underserved Producers**

As noted above, USDA will re-open sign-up for of CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021.

- FSA has committed at least \$2.5 million to establish partnerships and direct outreach efforts intended to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will cooperate with grassroots organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

Please stay tuned for additional information and announcements under the **USDA Pandemic Assistance to Producers** initiative, which will help to expand and more equitably distribute financial assistance to producers and farming operations during the COVID-19 national emergency. Please visit [www.farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov) for more information on the details of today's announcement.

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, 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](https://www.usda.gov).

## **USDA Offers Resources for New Jersey Maple Producers**

*Available Resources Support Funding, Conservation and Natural Disaster Recovery for Maple Operations*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers technical expertise and financial assistance to help New Jersey maple producers fund their operations, conserve natural resources and recover from natural disasters. Maple producers are encouraged to contact their local USDA Service Center to learn about resources to support their operations both during the harvest season and throughout the year.

"We know this is a busy time for our maple producers," said Lindsay Caragher, acting State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in New Jersey. "Whether you've been a producer in our state for years or are just getting started, we encourage you to contact your local USDA Service Center to learn about programs and services to fit your business needs." Julie Hawkins, State Conservationist for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), agrees. "Maple producers provide an agricultural staple in our state," she adds. "Our local offices offer one-on-one technical assistance and financial support to help strengthen your operation."

### **Funding Opportunities for Maple Producers**

FSA offers funding opportunities to help maple producers start, expand and maintain their operations.

FSA's [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program](#) provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade facilities to store certain commodities. Maple sap and maple syrup are both eligible, and equipment and facilities such as sap tanks, certain hauling trucks and storage space for maple syrup qualify. Eligible facilities and equipment may be new or used, permanently affixed or portable.

Additionally, there are several types of farm loans available to help maple producers finance their businesses. These loans are administered through FSA and offer access to funding for a wide range of agricultural needs, from securing land and constructing buildings to financing the purchase of equipment.

Maple producers are encouraged to visit [farmers.gov/fund](https://farmers.gov/fund) or contact the FSA office at their [local USDA Service Center](#) to learn more about USDA funding opportunities. Through our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#), you can answer five quick questions to learn about farm loans that might be right for you.

### **Conservation Resources for Maple Producers**

NRCS offers programs and services that benefit New Jersey maple producers while conserving natural resources. Maple producers are encouraged to contact the NRCS office at their [local USDA Service Center](#) for free, one-on-one technical support. Visit [farmers.gov/conserv](https://farmers.gov/conserv) to learn more about conservation at USDA and working with your local conservationists.

Producers in New Jersey may also qualify for NRCS programs that support conservation efforts across maple operations. The

### **Recovery Support for Maple Producers**

FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) offer programs to help maple producers prepare for and recover from the impacts of natural disasters.

Federal crop insurance is administered through RMA to provide a robust and reliable farm safety net, regardless of the size and scope of natural disasters. RMA's [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection](#) covers all commodities on the farm, including maple, under one insurance policy.

FSA's [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) helps producers manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters. The eligible or "noninsured" crops cover agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance, including specialty crops such as maple sap.

Through the [Tree Assistance Program](#), FSA offers financial assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines lost due to natural disasters. This includes eligible maple trees from which an annual crop is produced for commercial purposes.

Maple producers are encouraged to visit [farmers.gov/recover](https://farmers.gov/recover) or contact their [local USDA Service Center](#) to learn more about USDA resources to manage risk and recover from natural disasters. Use our [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#) to learn about USDA disaster assistance programs that might be right for you in five simple steps. For an overview of available disaster assistance, view or download the [USDA Disaster Assistance Programs At A Glance](#) brochure.

#### More Information

While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

---

## 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).

---

## 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.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.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).