A Message from the State Executive Director

As producers are wrapping up planting season, there's still plenty of chores to do around the farm and similarly we have a great deal of activity going on in our county offices, so please take a moment to consider whether you have business that needs to be addressed with your FSA County office as we have a number of important program deadlines on the horizon of which you should be aware. Additional program details and more in-depth information is provided in our newsletter.

Here's a couple highlights:

Acreage reporting is required to establish or maintain FSA program eligibility. Please remember to follow the acreage reporting process outlined by your county FSA office and get in touch with them as soon as you finish planting.

FSA encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the 2020 Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC)
programs. The deadline to enroll for the 2020 crop year is June 30, 2020.

Additional disaster assistance is available to agricultural producers, including producers impacted by drought and excess moisture. Through WHIP+ program, USDA is helping producers recover from losses related to 2018 and 2019 natural disasters. Signup continues for producers who want to apply for eligible losses of excess moisture.

Producers can now apply for USDA’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, which provides direct payments to farmers to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. An application form and a payment calculator are available online on farmers.gov/cfap.

CFAP is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply. In order to do this, you will receive 80 percent of your maximum total payment upon approval of your application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Didn’t see a commodity you produce on the list of eligible commodities? USDA is also establishing a process for producers to identify additional commodities for potential inclusion in CFAP. Specifically, USDA is looking for data on agricultural commodities, that are not currently eligible for CFAP, that producers believe to have either:

1. suffered a five percent-or-greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. shipped but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channel, or
3. not left the farm or remained unharvested as mature crops.

USDA may reconsider the excluded commodities if credible evidence is provided that supports a five percent price decline. USDA will consider additional commodities to be eligible for CFAP by collecting information on potentially eligible commodities. Producers of commodities not included on the original CFAP list who believe they’ve suffered a five percent-or-greater price decline between January and April 2020, and who face additional marketing costs due to COVID-19, may submit comments to provide information about additional commodities.

USDA is particularly interested in obtaining information with respect to the following specific categories of agricultural commodities:

- Nursery Products
- Aquaculture Products
- Cut Flowers

More information about this process is also available on farmers.gov/cfap or in this fact sheet. Comments may be submitted through either of the following methods by June 22, 2020:
Federal Rulemaking Portal – Go to regulations.gov and search for Docket ID FSA-2020-0004. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Mail – Director, SND, FSA, US Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 0522, Washington, DC 20250-0522.

We know producers are facing a tough time now, and we are making every effort to provide much needed support as quickly as possible. Producers of all eligible commodities can apply through your FSA County office. FSA is available over the phone and virtually to walk you through the application process, whether it’s the first time you’ve worked with us, or if you know us quite well.

Lastly, our continued operation of the State and County Offices are guided by the combination of State and Federal guidelines on direct contact. Producers can call or email staff and arrangements can be made to achieve any necessary business. Please be assured we continue to get a considerable amount of work done while like the rest of you, doing so in new and sometimes creative ways. No walk-in appointments will be scheduled in the near future and I expect this to continue through June at the most optimistic moment.

Respectfully,

Leonard Hubert

Nominations Open June 15 for the 2020 County Committee Elections

FSA encourages all farmers and FSA program participants to take part in the Name County Committee election nomination process.

FSA’s county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2020 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 3, 2020. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections.

CRP Continuous Enrollment Period

FSA is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Continuous Signup.
CRP is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”), to control soil erosion, improve the water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Continuous signup enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

Unlike CRP enrollments under general CRP signups or CRP Grasslands, offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods.

For more information, including a list of acceptable practices, visit fsa.usda.gov/crp or call your County FSA office for more details.

FSA to Host Webinars on Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

The USDA Farm Service Agency will host a series of webinars to discuss what producers should know to sign up for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). USDA is making available $16 billion in financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

In addition to hearing from CFAP National Program Specialists, webinar participants will also learn more about the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process for submitting additional commodities for consideration to USDA for CFAP eligibility.

Thursday, June 11th, at 3 p.m. EDT Dairy and Non-Specialty Crop Producers

Tuesday, June 16th, at 3 p.m. EDT Non-Specialty Crop and Livestock Producers

Thursday, June 18th, at 3 p.m. EDT FSA Programs in the Times of Coronavirus NOTE: In addition to CFAP, this webinar will discuss FSA programs with producer flexibilities during COVID-19 and also a review of targeted funding for beginning and other underserved farmers in other programs.

All webinars will be recorded and can be viewed at farmers.gov/cfap. Learn more and register for the webinar of your choice.

June 30 is Deadline to Enroll in 2020 ARC/PLC Program

USDA reminds producers that June 30 is the deadline to enroll in ARC and PLC for the 2020 crop year and should contact their FSA county office to enroll. Producers must enroll by June 30 and make their one-time update to PLC payment yields by September 30.

FSA attributes the significant participation in the 2019 crop year ARC and PLC programs to increased producer interest in the programs under the 2018 Farm Bill and to an increase in eligible
farms because of the selling and buying of farms and new opportunities for beginning farmers and military veterans with farms having 10 or fewer base acres. Enrollment for 2019 ended March 16.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download the program fact sheet. Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. For more information on ARC and PLC, or to enroll, contact your County FSA office for an appointment.

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**USDA Issues First Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Payments**

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue recently announced the FSA has already approved more than $545 million in payments to producers who have applied for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. FSA began taking applications May 26, and the agency has received over 86,000 applications for this important relief program.

In the first six days of the application period, FSA has already made payments to more than 35,000 producers. Out of the gate, the top five states for CFAP payments are Illinois, Kansas, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and South Dakota. USDA has released data on application progress and program payments and will release further updates each Monday at 2:00pm ET. The report can be viewed at farmers.gov/cfap.

FSA will accept applications **through August 28, 2020**. Through CFAP, USDA is making available $16 billion in financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

**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 their FSA County office.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap. Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help producers identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments. Producers self-certify their records when applying for CFAP and that documentation is not submitted with the application. However, producers may be asked for their documentation to support the certification of eligible commodities, so producers should retain the information used to complete their application.

Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print a pre-filled CFAP application, sign it, and submit it to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery through an office drop box. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred delivery method for your local office. Team members at FSA county offices will be able to answer detailed questions and help producers apply quickly and efficiently through phone and online tools. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/cfap.

**Policy Clarifications**

FSA has been working with stakeholder groups to provide further clarification to producers on the CFAP program. For example, the agency has published a matrix of common marketing contracts
that impact eligibility for non-specialty crops and has provided a table that crosswalks common livestock terms to CFAP cattle categories. Updated information can be found in the frequently asked questions section of the CFAP website.

More Information

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/CFAP or call 877-508-8364.

March and April Margin Triggers Dairy Margin Coverage Program Payment

FSA announced the March 2020 income over feed cost margin was $9.15 per hundredweight (cwt.) and recently announced the April 2020 income over feed cost margin was $6.03 per hundredweight triggering the first two payments of 2020 for dairy producers who purchased the appropriate level of coverage under the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program.

Current projections indicate that a DMC payment is likely to trigger every month for the remainder of 2020, a different expectation from last July when some market models had forecast no program payments for 18 months.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. Over 13,000 operations enrolled in the program for the 2020 calendar year.

Although DMC enrollment for 2020 coverage has closed, dairy producers should look for FSA to open sign up for 2021 coverage in July.

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 can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

For more information, visit farmers.gov DMC webpage or contact your County FSA office.

FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19

FSA will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.
The set-aside payment’s due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This aims to improve the borrower’s cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA’s guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on farmers.gov/coronavirus.

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the farmers.gov portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at farmers.gov/sign-in.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment 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 can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

**USDA RMA Adds Flexibilities for Crop Insurance**

You can continue to work with your Approved Insurance Providers on policies, claims, and agreements. If you have crop insurance questions or other needs, you should continue to contact your insurance agents about conducting business by telephone or email.

USDA’s Risk Management Agency is working with those insurance providers to provide additional flexibilities in response to COVID-19, including:

- Enabling producers to send notifications and reports electronically
- Extending the date for production reports
- Providing additional time and deferring interest on premium and other payments
- Authorizing replant self-certification
- Waiving the witness signature requirement for approval of Assignments of Indemnity
- Allowing dumped milk to be counted as milk marketings for the Dairy Revenue Production (DRP) or actual marketings for the Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy (LGM-Dairy) programs
- Allowing phone and electronic transactions for 2021 crop year sales and reporting dates, including options and endorsements
- Extending the deadline for some perennial crop Pre-Acceptance Inspection Reports (PAIRs)
- Waiving the 2021 crop year inspection requirements for the Nursery and Nursery Value Select (NVS) programs in certain cases

For more in-depth information on these flexibilities, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.
June 2020 Loan and Interest Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Type</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Operating Loans, Direct</td>
<td>1.375%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Direct</td>
<td>2.250%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Resource Loans</td>
<td>5.000%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment</td>
<td>1.500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Loans</td>
<td>2.375%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year</td>
<td>0.250%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year</td>
<td>0.375%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year</td>
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<td>Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar Storage Facility Loans, 15 year</td>
<td>0.875%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commodity Loans</td>
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</tbody>
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Dates to Remember

June 15 -- County Committee Nomination Period begins.

June 30 --- **Deadline** for enrollment in 2020 ARCPLC.

July 3 ----- Independence Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.

July 15 ---- Final certification date to report burley tobacco; cabbage planted through May 31; corn, grain sorghum, hybrid corn seed, spring oats, potatoes, popcorn, sugar beets, tomatoes and other crops. Report perennial forage crops.

Aug. 3 ---- **Last day** to file County Committee Nomination forms.

Aug. 28 --- **Deadline** to submit application for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

Aug. 31 --- **Deadline** to obtain 2020 NAP coverage for Aquaculture, Christmas trees, Floriculture, Ginseng, Mushrooms, Turf grass Sod and Watercress.

Sept. 7 ---- Labor Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.

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).