

June 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Washington State FSA Newsletter

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### Washington State Farm Service Agency

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### Farmers and Ranchers in Washington State Can Now Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

*Online Tools and Toll-Free Number Available to Assist Producers*

Spokane Valley, WA, May 26, 2020 – Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator

[www.fsa.usda.gov/wa](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa)

**State Executive Director:**  
Jon Wyss

**State Committee:**  
Katlenia Vejraska, Chair  
Maureen Harkcom, Member  
Jesus Limon, Member  
Robyn Meenach, Member  
Bruce Nelson, Member

To find contact information for  
your local office go to  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/wa](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa)

are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

"We know Washington producers are facing a tough time now, and we are making every effort to provide much needed support as quickly as possible," said Jon Wyss, state executive director for FSA in Washington. "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 FSA, or if you know us quite well."

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital 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.

"We also want to remind producers that the program is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply," Wyss said.

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.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap). Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments.

Additionally, producers in search of one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a good first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

### **Applying for Assistance**

Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print off a pre-filled CFAP application, sign, and submit to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at [farmers.gov/cfap](http://farmers.gov/cfap).

Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested after the application is filed. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at

the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

### **Additional Commodities**

USDA is also establishing a process for the public 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 the public believes 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.

More information about this process is available on [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap).

### **More Information**

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap) or call 877-508-8364.

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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## **IMPORTANT DEADLINE: DON'T MISS OUT ON ARCPLC**

The ARCPLC deadline is quickly approaching. Failure to enroll for the 2020 program year by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 will result in ineligibility for the 2020 crop year payment(s). To complete enrollment, **all signatures must be submitted by the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.**

While USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices are not open to the public at this time, program delivery staff continue to come into the office and continue to work with producers by phone, online tools, and mail 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 local Service Center to schedule a phone

appointment. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

REMEMBER, the financial health of your farming operation for 2020 may be greatly affected by failure to enroll in ARCPLC by the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

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## Conducting Business with FSA During the Pandemic

As you know, FSA offices are closed at this time and producers can only do business with FSA by phone, fax, email and mail. This arrangement is a challenge for producers and staff. FSA staff is doing everything they can to continue providing service and meeting your needs. But program deadlines have not been extended. As indicated in articles below, June 30 is the deadline to complete enrollment in the 2020 ARCPLC program and July 15 is the deadline to report crop acreages for spring planted crops, perennial forage crops, and CRP. Please do not put off accomplishing these tasks in hope of being able to meet personally with FSA staff. We simply do not know when that will be allowed and cannot guarantee we can process all applications if too many producers wait until the last moment. **If you need to meet any of the deadlines listed in this notice, we strongly encourage you to contact FSA staff today to start the process.** We don't want any customers to miss their opportunity to enroll in programs they are interested in.

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## Tree Assistance Program

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) to provide financial assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines lost by natural disaster.

Eligible trees, bushes, and vines are those which an annual crop is produced for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas Trees produced for commercial sale.

To be considered an eligible loss:

- Eligible trees, bushes, and vines must suffer more than a 15% mortality loss in a stand (adjusted for normal mortality) due to an eligible disaster.
- Mortality loss on a stand of eligible trees, bushes, or vines is based on
  - Each eligible disaster events
  - For approved plant disease, the time period as determined by the FSA for which the stand is infected. (2 Years)
- The loss must be visible and obvious to FSA.

Many producers are experiencing signs and symptoms of Little Cherry Disease and/or the effects of the Western X phytoplasma. The presence of these diseases in your orchard does not automatically qualify you for assistance. FSA must determine that the infected or affected trees are no longer economically viable, or that they have died as a result of the disease.

As we quickly approach the period in which FSA can make the best assessment of your losses due to these diseases, it is extremely important that producer make application upon first indications of the disease's presences in the stand/block. Applications must be filed within 90 of when loss of

trees, bushes, or vines are apparent to the producer. You must also provide pathogenic test results from an approved lab, that identifies the presence of Little Cherry Disease, or the Western X Phytoplasma. You do not need the test results prior to application but the County committee must have the results of the test prior to application approval.

Since most indication will occur just prior to and/or during harvest, this is FSA's best opportunity to assess the extent of damage to your orchard, it is imperative you act promptly in filing your claim for assistance. Any trees or evidence removed prior to our loss assessment will not be eligible for assistance. Also, before any disturbance is performed as part of the restoration of the orchard, (removal of trees and/or stumps by cutting, digging or excavation, leveling, etc.) an environmental evaluation must be performed by FSA. Failure to allow FSA to properly evaluate the environmental conditions prior to work taking place will jeopardize FSA's ability to provide financial assistance and your application may be denied.

By making your application ASAP, FSA can be completing our necessary reviews while you tend to harvest, and then when you are ready make the necessary decision on the infected stand, we will have the information necessary to assist you.

The Washington State FSA Committee has been approved the authority to provide a 2-year loss period before making a final eligibility determination for LCD and Western X, however this loss period begins when it is first detected, and not when you make application. We may still be able to provide assistance, but FSA will make adjustments for the trees lost prior to your application period.

Producers also need to be very aware that the program requires you to replant lost trees within one calendar year of application approval. We have little room for adjustment here, as the program also allows the planting of different types and varieties of fruit trees or in a different location. Again, if you are planning to plant trees in a location other than where they were lost, this also requires that new planting area receive an environmental evaluation before ground disturbance.

If you are experiencing losses due to Little Cherry Disease, or the Western X phytoplasma, contact your local FSA office for an appointment to file an application.

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## **Acreage Reporting Deadlines Approaching**

As the spring planting season begins to wind down, producers are encouraged to make an appointment with the local FSA office to report your planted acreages. Almost every program administered by FSA requires an acreage report as a part of the application process. Acreage reports must be filed by indicating the location of the crop. The type or variety planted, whether the crop is irrigated or not, and the intended use of the crops' products and the date planted.

The final reporting date for spring planted crops, perennial forage crops, and CRP is July 15, 2020. Acreage reports for crops that had a previous reporting date, may still be accepted, but may also require the payment of a fee to cover the costs for an FSA representative to visit your farm to verify the accuracy of your report. Crop reports cannot be accepted beyond 1 year of the previous year's acreage reporting date.

The U S Drought monitor is showing indications that portions of Washington State may trigger for Livestock Feed Program benefits soon. The Livestock Feed Program requires you to have a timely filed report of your grazing acreage. July 15, is the deadline, so if you have not filed your grazing report, you too should be considering an appointment with your local office.

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## Report Damage or Loss of NAP Covered Crops Immediately

Weather can be unpredictable and harmful to crops. If weather events cause damage to or loss of your NAP covered crops, remember that you must report this to your local FSA county office timely in order to be eligible for a NAP benefit.

NAP notices of loss can be initiated by phone, email, or fax, but must be submitted in writing, to your local FSA county office for weather related events or adverse natural occurrences that cause damage to or loss of the NAP covered crop. To report crop damage or loss you must complete, sign, and file the loss portion of form CCC-576 with your FSA office by the earlier of either of the following:

- **15 calendar days** after the disaster occurrence or date of loss or damage to the crop or commodity first becomes apparent or
- **15 calendar days** after the normal harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA **within 72 hours** of when a loss becomes apparent in order to be considered timely.

While FSA county offices are closed to the public as a health and safety precaution against the spread of COVID-19, offices will take initial NAP notice of loss notifications via phone, email, or fax. Offices will assist producers in completing the official CCC-576 Notice of Loss form, sending the form to producers via email, fax, or mail for final review and signature. The completed and signed CCC-576 should then be returned to the county office as soon as possible via email, fax, or mail.

As the 2020 crop year progresses, it is imperative that a notice of loss is filed (for all affected NAP covered crops) within the timeframe noted above for each weather-related event or adverse natural occurrence. If the loss event is approved, remember to provide your crop production to your local FSA county office within 60 days after harvest or, if the crop won't be harvested, request an appraisal immediately so that the payment portion of form CCC-576 can be filed timely.

When a covered crop is lost or damage is significant, replanting is required if feasible and the final planting date has not passed. When you determine that the crop will be destroyed, abandoned, or not taken to harvest as intended, you must report this to your local FSA office so a field visit can be conducted by a certified loss adjuster. Once the crop appraisal has been completed, the loss adjuster will release the field and you can destroy the covered crop acres and replant to a different crop or harvest the acres for a different use.

**Remember, failure to timely notify your FSA county office of NAP covered crop damage or loss will result in denial of NAP payment benefits.** Destroying NAP covered crop acres or harvesting for a different use without a loss adjuster appraisal will result in those acres being determined ineligible for NAP payment benefits.

If you have any questions about NAP policy requirements, contact your [local county FSA office](#) for more information.

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## Marketing Assistance Loan Maturity Extended to 12 Months

Agricultural producers now have more time to repay Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic

Security (CARES) Act of 2020. From now until September 30, 2020, nonrecourse commodity loans in good standing will mature 12 months after loan approval instead of at nine months.

Effective immediately, producers of eligible commodities now have up to 12 months to repay their commodity loans. The maturity extension applies to nonrecourse loans for crop years 2018, 2019, and 2020. Eligible open loans must be in good standing with a maturity date of March 31, 2020 or later. All new nonrecourse loans requested by September 30, 2020 will have a maturity date 12 months following the date of approval. Loans requested after September 30 will have a term of nine months.

The maturity extension for current, active loans will be automatically extended an additional 3 months. Loans that were disbursed before April 30, 2020 have already been automatically extended. If you have a commodity loan and prefer a nine-month maturity date, please contact your [local county FSA office](#).

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## March Margin Triggers Dairy Margin Coverage Program Payment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced this week that the March 2020 income over feed cost margin was \$9.15 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the first payment 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](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

For more information, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) [DMC webpage](#) or contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) [service locator](#).

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## Forage Losses Due to Drought – Applications for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP)

Drought conditions continue to persist over much of our state. Eligible livestock producers who have suffered forage losses due to eligible drought conditions (D2 drought intensity level for 8 consecutive weeks or any length of time at a D3 or D4 conditions) may be eligible for payments under LFP. To be eligible, producers must provide complete acreage reports for all forage that losses are being claimed on by July 15, 2020. Additionally, verifiable beginning inventory records for eligible livestock, and complete, signed leases must also be provided if applicable. All leases and livestock records must be in the applicant's name and additional documentation may be needed if the forage ground is subleased. Further eligibility documentation may be required as part of the application process and will be determined by local service center staff.

While USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices are not open to the public at this time, program delivery staff continue to work diligently to provide services to eligible producers. All interested producers within LFP eligible counties should call their local service center to request an application and to determine the best way to provide documentation to support their request.

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## Webinars on USDA Opportunities for Urban Agriculture Grants and Cooperative Agreements

*Webinars on USDA Opportunities in Urban Agriculture and Grants and Cooperative Agreements*

USDA is hosting webinars to explain the purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for applying for recent opportunities from the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.

**June 3, 2 p.m.- 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time-** [Register and view the webinar for Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.](#) \$3 million is available for competitive grants to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **July 6, 2020** through Grants.gov.

**June 4, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time --** [Register and view the webinar for Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction.](#) \$900,000 is available for local governments to host a Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot project for fiscal year (FY) 2020. The cooperative agreements will support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **June 26, 2020** through Grants.gov.

Recordings of the webinars will be posted at [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban).

More information, including frequently asked questions, can be found at [www.farmers.gov/urban](https://www.farmers.gov/urban).

Questions about grant and cooperative agreement opportunities can be sent to [UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov](mailto:UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov)

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

### *Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers*

USDA's Farm Service Agency (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](https://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](https://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](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

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## **FSA is hiring!**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency has announced two new Program Technician positions. One is located in Okanogan, WA. and the other is in Wenatchee, WA. These positions will work in our Farm Loan division assisting the farm loan staff.

### **Farm Loan Program Technicians – Wenatchee and Okanogan**

Vacancy: FSA-20-10824871-MP-WA-JD

Opens: May 26, 2020

Closes: June 8, 2020

Series/Grade: GS-1101-5/7  
Area of consideration: Open to all U.S. Citizens

The full announcement is available in USAJOBS at the following link:

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/569258900>

The following video will allow interested parties to hear employees talk about what it is like to work for FSA in Washington state: <https://vimeo.com/182866334>

Questions can be sent to Mitzi Stephens, Admin Specialist HR at [mitzi.stephens@usda.gov](mailto:mitzi.stephens@usda.gov) or 509-323-3007.

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## Important Dates and Deadlines

**Now – July 1, 2020** – Primary Nesting Season for CRP. Activities on established CRP stands are prohibited April 1 through July 1 unless specifically authorized by FSA on a contract by contract basis. This restriction does not apply to contracts where the cover is being established at this time.

**June 15, 2020** – Nominations open for 2020 FSA County Committee Elections.

**June 30, 2020** – Deadline to enroll in 2020 ARC/PLC.

**July 3, 2020** – Friday observance of Independence Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

**July 15, 2020** – Final acreage reporting date for perennial forage, CRP, and spring-seeded crops.

**July 15, 2020** – Deadline to report actual harvested production of 2019 NAP covered grass seeds, forages, and annually planted spring crops for actual production history (APH) purposes.

**July 15, 2020** – Final date to report 2019 production for ARC-IC program.

**August 1, 2020** – County Committee election nominations due.

**August 21, 2020** – Deadline to submit completed and signed offers to re-enroll land in continuous CRP and CREP.

**August 28, 2020** – Deadline to apply for CFAP.

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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).