

May 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

BULLETIN

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Crook County FSA Updates

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County Office Notes

Hi, Everyone!

I know that almost everyone reading this is here for news on CFAP (Coronavirus Food Assistance Program). However, I am going to start by mentioning some of the other very important things that can cause future you some problems if you do not remember them.

Our office is still restricting access by the public. Appointments are still only being conducted by phone and email. As a result, I ask you to please be patient with us if you reach our voicemail, or get a busy signal. We are experiencing extremely high call volume associated with both new and existing programs, in addition to conducting appointments by telephone. If you leave your name and number, we will call you back as quickly as we can. You may also reach us by email, and I have added each of our emails to the staff information block, for your reference.

2020 Acreage Reporting must be completed by July 15, 2020. Please let us know when you have completed your spring planting.

- This deadline applies to your spring planted crops, CRP, perennial hay, and grazing.
- Not completing an acreage report can impact your eligibility for other programs.

Jeanne Habeck
Alan Ista
Colter Ellsbury

Next County Committee Meeting:

August 18, 2020 @ 11:00 AM

- The office will ensure you have current copy of your maps by mail or email. We will also provide an instruction guide to assist in gathering the necessary information.
- We are also utilizing Microsoft Teams software when possible to better replicate an in person appointment.
- Once acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make the updates and mail or email producers the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578) to sign.
- **Producers must sign and return the form to the FSA office through mail or email by July 15th.**

Remember to report any livestock, crop, feed, or honeybee losses as soon as possible! NAP and Honeybee losses must be reported within 15 days of the loss being apparent. Other programs require the notice of loss to be reported within 30 days of the loss being apparent.

Now onto the subject that you likely opened your email for:

Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)

We are still awaiting our official policy, so for most of the explanation, please see the article below and visit www.farmers.gov/cfap to learn more. You may want to start gathering things that will help you determine what items are applicable, as well of the inventory for each category.

I also want to emphasize is that this is **not** a "first come first serve" program. **We will be taking applications starting Tuesday, May 26, 2020 going through August 26, 2020.** For those of you already on our wait list for appointments, we will begin scheduling these on Wednesday when we have better idea how much time to allot to each appointment. If you have friends and neighbors that have not worked with us before, but have eligible livestock or commodities, they can participate, too. So, please share the info.

We will be having a Virtual CFAP Wednesday Workshop.

The event will be live streamed on the [Crook County Natural Resource District Facebook Page](#), on **Wednesday, May 27, 2020 @ 5:00 PM.**

If you watch it live, you will be able to ask questions during the presentation. If you are not able to watch it live, the video will be on their page for viewing later. You do not need to have a Facebook account to watch it, and you can [contact us starting Thursday to get a direct link to the video.](#)

Thank you all,

Sarah

USDA Announces Details of Direct Assistance to Farmers through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced details of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which will provide up to \$16 billion in direct payments to deliver relief to America's farmers and ranchers impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to this direct support to farmers and ranchers, USDA's [Farmers to Families Food Box](#) program is partnering with regional and local distributors, whose workforces have been significantly impacted by the closure of many restaurants, hotels, and other food service entities, to purchase \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy, and meat and deliver boxes to Americans in need.

Beginning May 26, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), will be accepting applications from agricultural producers who have suffered losses.

Background:

CFAP provides 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.

Farmers and ranchers will receive direct support, drawn from two possible funding sources. The first source of funding is \$9.5 billion in appropriated funding provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stability (CARES) Act to compensate farmers for losses due to price declines that occurred between mid-January 2020, and mid-April 2020 and provides support for specialty crops for product that had been shipped from the farm between the same time period but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channels. The second funding source uses the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act to compensate producers for \$6.5 billion in losses due to on-going market disruptions.

Non-Specialty Crops and Wool

Non-specialty crops eligible for CFAP payments include malting barley, canola, corn, upland cotton, millet, oats, soybeans, sorghum, sunflowers, durum wheat, and hard red spring wheat. Wool is also eligible. Producers will be paid based on inventory subject to price risk held as of January 15, 2020. A payment will be made based 50 percent of a producer's 2019 total production or the 2019 inventory as of January 15, 2020, whichever is smaller, multiplied by the commodity's applicable payment rates.

Livestock

Livestock eligible for CFAP include cattle, lambs, yearlings and hogs. The total payment will be calculated using the sum of the producer's number of livestock sold between January 15 and April 15, 2020, multiplied by the payment rates per head, and the highest inventory number of livestock between April 16 and May 14, 2020, multiplied by the payment rate per head.

Dairy

For dairy, the total payment will be calculated based on a producer's certification of milk production for the first quarter of calendar year 2020 multiplied by a national price decline during the same quarter. The second part of the payment is based a national adjustment to each producer's production in the first quarter.

Specialty Crops

For eligible specialty crops, the total payment will be based on the volume of production sold between January 15 and April 15, 2020; the volume of production shipped, but unpaid; and the number of acres for which harvested production did not leave the farm or mature product destroyed or not harvested during that same time period, and which have not and will not be sold. Specialty crops include, but are not limited to, almonds, beans, broccoli, sweet corn, lemons, iceberg lettuce, spinach, squash, strawberries and tomatoes. A full list of eligible crops can be found on farmers.gov/cfap. Additional crops may be deemed eligible at a later date.

Eligibility

There is a payment limitation of \$250,000 per person or entity for all commodities combined. Applicants who are corporations, limited liability companies or limited partnerships may qualify for additional payment limits where members actively provide personal labor or personal management for the farming operation. Producers will also have to certify they meet the Adjusted Gross Income limitation of \$900,000 unless at least 75 percent or more of their income is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities. Producers must also be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions.

Applying for Assistance

Producers can apply for assistance beginning on May 26, 2020. Additional information and application forms can be found at farmers.gov/cfap. Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested. 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. Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020.

Payment Structure

To ensure the availability of funding throughout the application period, 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 as funds remain available.

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.

Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. 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

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot 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.

Crook County is Eligible for Emergency Loans

Crook County was given a contiguous county disaster designation, due to excessive moisture and flooding that occurred in Butte, Harding and Perkins Counties May 1, 2020. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Sarah Hanlon](mailto:Sarah.Hanlon@usda.gov) at [307-283-2870](tel:307-283-2870), extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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).