

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

**Pandemic Disaster Assistance Program
1-PDAP**

Amendment 8

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



Amendment Transmittal

A Reason for Amendment

Part 6 has been added for the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program.

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Exhibits

1	Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority
2	Definitions of Terms Used in This Handbook

263 Processing FSA-883 (Continued)**D Letter Notifying Applicant of Incomplete Application Package**

The following is an example of a letter to an applicant notifying them that their application package was incomplete and additional information is needed to process their application. A Microsoft Word version of this letter is available as a template at <https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/program-areas/dafp/special-programs/otecp/index>.

[Date]

Mr. Organic Farmer
1400 Independence Avenue
Anytown, USA 12345-9876

Dear Mr. Farmer:

This letter is in response to your application for the Organic & Transitional Education & Certification Program (OTECP) for the [insert year] program year.

FSA has received form FSA-883; however, we have determined that your application package is incomplete. Please submit the following information and/or documentation to FSA so that we may process your application:

- [List additional documentation needed]

Please submit the requested information by [insert program year deadline]. If the requested information is not received by [insert program year deadline], your application will be disapproved. Please contact us at your earliest convenience if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sharina Farmer
County Executive Director

264-275 (Reserved)

--Part 6 Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC)*Section 1 Basic FSCSC Provisions****276 General Information****A Purpose**

This part provides instructions for administering FSCSC.

FSCSC provides assistance to specialty crop operations that incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023.

Specialty crops intended for human consumption are subject to concerns about safety, particularly since specialty crops sold as raw agricultural commodities do not undergo a “kill step” like cooking, canning, or pasteurizing used for other agricultural commodities, such as meat or dairy products. As a result, specialty crop operations face increasing demand from grocery stores, schools, and other institutional buyers and retailers to obtain certification through programs that address the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of their crops. The need to develop, implement, and maintain on-farm food safety programs has resulted in additional costs for many specialty crop operations that seek alternate markets for their products because of changes in demand from traditional markets, such as restaurants and food service. As they identify new markets, many specialty crop operations also find they need to undergo food safety audits and absorb the additional costs to achieve food safety certification through a private or government-based certification program to meet buyers’ requirements to sell their products.

B Sources of Authority

Following are the sources of authority for FSCSC:

- CCC Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714c(e))
- NOFA.

C Authority and Responsibility

DAFP has the authority and responsibility for FSCSC.--*

*--276 General Information (Continued)

D FSCSC Websites

The following websites provide information used to administer FSCSC.

Website Content	Website Address
FSCSC Application	https://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/applications.asp
FSCSC Information	www.farmers.gov/food-safety
FSCSC Intranet	https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/program-areas/dafp/special-programs/fscsc/index
FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online Website	http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/forms.html
Notices	https://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/notices?area=home&subject=land&topic=not&setflag=FROMURL&getData=NONE
eAuthentication	https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/b/usda/home

277 Responsibilities**A STC Responsibilities**

Within the authorities and limitations in this handbook and NOFA, STC's will:

- direct the administration of FSCSC
- ensure that State and County Offices follow FSCSC provisions
- thoroughly document all actions taken in the STC meeting minutes
- handle appeals according to 1-APP and 7 CFR Parts 11 and 780
- require reviews be conducted by STC representative according to paragraph 303 to ensure that County Offices comply with FSCSC provisions

Note: STC's may establish additional reviews to ensure that FSCSC is administered according to FSCSC provisions.

- take any oversight actions necessary to prevent County Offices from issuing any improper payments
- approve or disapprove any FSA-888 except those in which an STC member has a monetary interest
- comply with all FSCSC provisions.--*

--277 Responsibilities (Continued)*B SED Responsibilities**

Within the authorities and limitations in this handbook and NOFA, SED's will:

- ensure that County Offices follow FSCSC provisions
- ensure that County Office employees and COC's are adequately trained
- thoroughly document all actions taken in the STC minutes
- handle appeals according to 1-APP
- handle requests for equitable relief according to 7-CP
- ensure that STC representatives conduct reviews according to paragraph 303

Note: SED may establish additional reviews to ensure that FSCSC is administered according to FSCSC provisions.

- ensure that FSCSC provisions are publicized
- immediately notify the National Office of problems, incomplete or incorrect procedures, specific problems, or findings
- take any oversight actions necessary to ensure that IPIA provisions are met to prevent County Offices from issuing any improper payments
- comply with all FSCSC provisions.

C DD Responsibilities

Within the authorities and limitations in this handbook and NOFA, DD's will:

- ensure that COC's and CED's follow FSCSC provisions
- ensure that CED's review the first 5 completed FSA-888's and other required documents for completeness and accuracy from each county to confirm:
 - signatures are included
 - values on FSA-888 are correct in the software based on the producer's certification
 - eligibility requirements are understood and met--*

--277 Responsibilities (Continued)*C DD Responsibilities (Continued)**

- based on the review documentation received, provide COC or CED authority to complete approvals and actions in the software upon completing review of the first five FSA-888's

Note: If the initial documentation received contains evidence of misunderstood policy, DD will provide clarification of that policy to the County Office employees and withhold authority until authorization to approve FSA-888's is warranted.

- conduct reviews as determined by SED according to paragraph 303

Note: DD may establish additional reviews to ensure that FSCSC is administered according to these provisions.

- load the results of FSCSC reviews on the SharePoint site, according to paragraph 303, no later than 30 workdays after FSA-888 is reviewed for FSCSC
- ensure that all County Offices publicize FSCSC provisions
- immediately notify the State Office specialist responsible for FSCSC of software problems, incomplete or incorrect procedures, specific problems, or findings
- take any oversight actions necessary to ensure that IPIA provisions are met to prevent County Offices from issuing any improper payments.

D COC Responsibilities

Within the authorities and limitations in this handbook and NOFA, COC's will:

- fully comply with all FSCSC provisions
- ensure that CED's direct the County Office to follow all FSCSC provisions
- handle appeals according to 1-APP--*

--277 Responsibilities (Continued)*D COC Responsibilities (Continued)**

- review and take action on FSA-888's

Note: COC may redelegate authority to CED to review and approve routine FSA-888's. Redlegation of authority must be documented in the COC minutes. All adverse actions must go to COC for review.

- thoroughly document all actions taken in the COC minutes
- ensure that the County Office publicizes FSCSC provisions
- take any oversight actions necessary to ensure that IPIA provisions are met to prevent County Offices from issuing any improper payments
- ensure that FSA assists persons by providing program information as it becomes available, using a variety of methods.

Note: Because of the limits of FSA resources, publication of program information may or may not be direct mail or on an individual basis. FSA meets its publication responsibilities by making broad program announcements in press releases, print and electronic media, Federal Register documents, radio and television announcements, and through posting program information in USDA Service Centers.

The reality of limited resources has increased the participant's responsibility for being aware of program provisions. FSA cannot be responsible for reaching out to every potential program participant with all program information. Participants must seek information on program details and not wait for FSA to individually contact them about program provisions. As resources permit, COC will ensure that program provisions are publicized and that the County Office maintains a record of all publicity efforts, including postings in Service Centers.

The FSCSC Fact Sheet:

- may be used to provide general program information
- is available at www.farmers.gov/food-safety.--*

--277 Responsibilities (Continued)*E CED Responsibilities**

CED's will:

- fully comply with all FSCSC provisions
- ensure that County Office employees are adequately trained and fully comply with all FSCSC provisions
- follow procedure in subparagraph 304 B for redelegation of authority
- review the first 5 completed FSA-888's and other required documents for completeness and accuracy and send to DD to obtain authority for approval
- if so delegated, promptly review and approve routine FSA-888's

Notes: All adverse actions **must** go to COC for review.

CED **may not** redelegate authority to review and approve routine FSA-888's for any other County Office employees.

- handle appeals according to 1-APP
- thoroughly document all actions taken in the COC minutes
- ensure that producers receive complete and accurate FSCSC information
- immediately notify SED, through DD, of problems and incomplete or incorrect procedures
- take any oversight actions necessary to ensure that IPIA provisions are met to prevent County Offices from issuing any improper payments.

F PT Responsibilities

Within the authorities and limitations in this handbook and NOFA, PT's will:

- fully comply with all FSCSC provisions
- immediately notify CED of problems, including incomplete or incorrect procedures
- ensure that all program eligibility requirements have been met by producers and completeness of FSA-888's for accuracy before submitting to CED
- ensure that producers receive complete and accurate FSCSC information.--*

--277 Responsibilities (Continued)*G Applicant Responsibilities**

The applicant is responsible for being aware of program provisions and accurately reporting all required information, as applicable, on FSA-888.

Applicants who are approved for participation in FSCSC are required to retain documentation in support of their FSA-888 for 3 years after the date of approval. Applicants receiving FSCSC payments or any other person who provides this information to USDA must permit authorized representatives of USDA or GAO, during regular business hours, to enter the agricultural operation and inspect, examine, and allow representatives to make copies of books, records, or other items for the purpose of confirming the accuracy of the information provided by the applicant.

Programs administered by DAFP require accurate information from the applicant. Participants must understand that failure to provide complete and accurate information and records could result in any or all the following:

- FSA-888 for FSCSC assistance being disapproved, COC adjusted, or approved but ineligible for payment
- participant or participants being determined ineligible for FSA programs for the applicable program year or multiple years
- participant or participants being liable under any civil or criminal fraud statute or any statute or provision of law.

278 FSCSC General Provisions and Policies**A Definitions**

Beginning farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and who materially and substantially participates in the operation. For a legal entity to be considered a beginning farmer or rancher, at least 50 percent of the interest must be beginning farmers or ranchers.

Certification upload fee means the fee paid by a specialty crop operation to upload reports and other documentation to a commercial database.

Certifier means either a private entity accredited for the purpose of providing food safety certification or a government-based certifier.

Food safety certification means certification that a specialty crop operation meets regulatory or market-driven food safety standards.--*

*--278 FSCSC General Provisions and Policies (Continued)

A Definitions (Continued)

Food safety management system means a documented system developed by a group of specialty crop operations to obtain food safety certification, also referred to as a “quality management system”.

Food Safety Plan means a documented plan implemented by a specialty crop operation to obtain food safety certification.

FSMA means the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (Pub. L. 111-353).

Historically underserved farmer or rancher means a beginning farmer or rancher, limited resource farmer or rancher, socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, or veteran farmer or rancher.

Limited resource farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is **both** of the following:

- a person whose direct or indirect gross farm sales did not exceed either of the following:
 - for the 2022 program year, \$189,200 in each of the 2019 and 2020 calendar years
 - for the 2023 program year, the amount identified through the Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool in each of the 2020 and 2021 calendar years
- a person whose total household income was at or below the national poverty level for a family of 4 in each of the same 2 previous years referenced in the first bullet of this definition.

For an entity to be considered a limited resource farmer or rancher, all members who hold an ownership interest in the entity must meet the criteria in both bullets of this definition.

Note: Limited resource farmer or rancher status can be determined using a website available through the Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool through NRCS at <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov>.--*

--278 FSCSC General Provisions and Policies (Continued)*A Definitions (Continued)**

Monetary Value means the amount that would be paid in cash for a specialty crop if it were to be sold to a third party. In the annual calculation of total produce sales, include the following:

All produce sold, not just produce covered by the Produce Safety Rule:

- produce that was purchased or otherwise obtained and then resold
- produce sold directly to consumers or online
- produce sold at farmers' markets or to grocery stores
- produce sold by a third-party on the applicant's behalf, such as through a cooperative that takes possession, but not ownership, of applicants produce
- retail sales, wholesale sales, intrastate sales, and interstate sales (including produce offered for import to the U.S. or exported from the U.S.).

Do not include the following in the calculation:

- produce for which no payment was received (i.e., produce held without sale, or produce donated)
- the value of produce from other entities when a third-party is selling produce on the applicant's behalf along with produce from other entities.

Example: When produce is sold by a cooperative, along with produce from other growers, the applicant should only consider the value from the produce sales.

Produce Safety Rule means the final rule titled "Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption" published on November 27, 2015 (80 FR 74353-74668).--*

--278 FSCSC General Provisions and Policies (Continued)*A Definitions (Continued)**

Program year means the calendar year in which the applicant's food safety certification is issued; that is, 2022 or 2023.

Raw agricultural commodity means any food in its raw or natural state, including all fruits that are washed, colored, or otherwise treated in their unpeeled natural form before marketing.

Small business means an applicant that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of more than \$250,000, but not more than \$500,000.

Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. For entities, at least 50 percent of the ownership interest must be held by individuals who are members of such a group. Socially disadvantaged groups include the following and no others, unless approved in writing by DAFP:

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives
- Asians or Asian-Americans
- Blacks or African Americans
- Hispanics or Hispanic Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Women.

Specialty crop means any fruit or vegetable (including mixes of intact fruits and vegetables) and includes mushrooms, sprouts (irrespective of seed source), tree nuts, and herbs. A fruit is the edible reproductive body of a seed plant or tree nut (such as apple, orange, and almond), such that fruit means the harvestable or harvested part of a plant developed from a flower. A vegetable is the edible part of an herbaceous plant (such as cabbage or potato) or fleshy fruiting body of a fungus (such as white button or shiitake) grown for an edible part, such that vegetable means the harvestable or harvested part of any plant or fungus whose fruit, fleshy fruiting bodies, seeds, roots, tubers, bulbs, stems, leaves, or flower parts are used as food and includes mushrooms, sprouts, and herbs (such as basil or cilantro). "Specialty crop" does not include peanuts or food grains, meaning the small, hard fruits or seeds of arable crops, or the crops bearing these fruits or seeds, that are primarily grown and processed for use as meal, flour, baked goods, cereals, and oils rather than for direct consumption as small, hard fruits or seeds (including cereal grains, pseudo cereals, oilseeds, and other plants used in the same fashion). Examples of food grains include barley, dent- or flint-corn, sorghum, oats, rice, rye, wheat, amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat, and oilseeds (for example, cotton seed, flax seed, rapeseed, soybean, and sunflower seed).--*

--278 FSCSC General Provisions and Policies (Continued)*A Definitions (Continued)**

Specialty crop operation means a farming operation that produces specialty crops that are raw agricultural commodities. It includes both individuals and legal entities.

Very small business means an applicant that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$250,000.

Veteran farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who has served in the Armed Forces (as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(10)) and either of the following:

- has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years
- has obtained status as a veteran (as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(2)) during the most recent 10-year period.

For an entity to be considered a veteran farmer or rancher, at least 50 percent of the ownership interest must be held by members who have served in the Armed Forces and meet the criteria in both bullets of this definition.

B AGI Requirements

AGI requirements do not apply to FSCSC payments.

C Direct Attribution and Common Attribution

Direct attribution and common attribution do not apply to FSCSC payments.

D Payment Limitation

FSCSC does not have an overall maximum payment limitation. Payments are calculated separately by category. For 2022 and 2023 calendar years, assistance will be reimbursed as follows.

Category of Eligible Expenses	Payment Amount of Eligible Costs	
	Historically Underserved Farmer or Rancher	All Other Applicants
Food safety certification	75 percent, up to a maximum of \$2,000	50 percent, up to a maximum of \$2,000
Development of a Food Safety Plan for first-time certification	75 percent (no maximum)	50 percent (no maximum)

--*

--278 FSCSC General Provisions and Policies (Continued)*D Payment Limitation (Continued)**

Category of Eligible Expenses	Payment Amount of Eligible Costs	
	Historically Underserved Farmer or Rancher	All Other Applicants
Maintaining or updating a Food Safety Plan	75 percent, up to a maximum of \$375	50 percent, up to a maximum of \$250
Certification upload fees	75 percent, up to a maximum of \$375	50 percent, up to a maximum of \$250
Microbiological testing – products	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Microbiological testing – soil amendments	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Microbiological testing – water	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Training	100 percent, up to a maximum of \$300	100 percent, up to a maximum of \$200

Note: 5-PL substantive change requirements do **not** apply to FSCSC.

E Administrative Offset

FSCSC payments issued by FSA are subject to administrative offsets.

F Assignments and Joint Payments

An applicant entitled to an FSCSC payment may:

- assign the payment according to 63-FI
- use joint payment authorizations according to 63-FI.

The code for FSCSC is “**XXFSCSC**”.

G Obtaining FSA-325 for Deceased, Disappeared, or Incompetent Producers

Follow 1-CM provisions for persons who have died, disappeared, or been declared incompetent.

H Sequestering FSCSC Payments

Sequestration does not apply.--*

***--279 Customer Records for FSCSC Applicants**

A Overview

All applicants seeking FSCSC benefits must have a customer record established in Business Partner that includes a valid taxpayer identification number.

B Collecting Customer Data

An applicant that is a new customer must complete AD-2047 to provide information that positively identifies the customer.

Applicants that are existing customers may update their profile by completing AD-2047, as needed.

The customer information must be recorded in Business Partner according to 11-CM.

C Farm Record

An applicant is not required to be associated with a farm to be eligible for FSCSC.--*

280-289 (Reserved)

--Section 2 FSCSC Eligibility Policy and Provisions*290 FSCSC Program Eligibility Requirements****A Program Eligibility**

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must meet all of the following:

- be a specialty crop operation
- be a small business or very small business
- have obtained or renewed either of the following:
 - 2022 food safety certification that was issued between June 21, 2022, and December 31, 2022
 - 2023 food safety certification issued during the 2023 calendar year
- have paid eligible expenses
- be located in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Note: Applicants do not have to be U.S. citizens to participate.

B Ineligible Applicants

The following applicants are ineligible for FSCSC:

- an applicant that does not meet the definition of small business or very small business
- an operation that is not located in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- an applicant that has not paid eligible expenses related to a 2022 or 2023 food safety certification.--*

--290 FSCSC Program Eligibility Requirements (Continued)*C Specialty Crop List**

The following is a list of examples of specialty crops that applicants may produce. For crops not listed, contact the National Office to verify eligibility.

- Abui
- Acerola (Barbados Cherry)
- Achachairu
- Alalfa Sprouts
- Almonds
- Aloe Leaves
- Aloe Vera
- Anise
- Antidesma
- Apples
- Apricots
- Aronia (Chokeberry)
- Artichokes
- Arugula (Greens)
- Asparagus
- Atemoya (Custard Apple)
- Avacados
- Babaco Papayas
- Bamboo Shoots
- Bananas
- Basil (Herb)
- Batatas
- Bean Sprouts
- Beans (Including Dry Edible)
- Beets
- Bitter Gourd
- Bitter Melons
- Blueberries
- Bok Choy
- Boniato
- Boysenberries
- Breadfruit
- Broccoflower
- Broccoli
- Broccolini
- Broccolo-Cavalo
- Brussel Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cacao
- Cailang
- Caimito
- Calabaza Melon
- Calaboose
- Callaloo
- Canary Melon
- Canary Seed
- Caneberries
- Caneberries – Blackberries
- Caneberries – Raspberries
- Canistel
- Cantalopes
- Carambola (Star Fruit)
- Cardoon
- Carob
- Carrots
- Casaba Melon
- Cascadeberries
- Cashew
- Cassava
- Cauliflower
- Celeriac
- Celeriac (Celery Root)
- Celery
- Chayote
- Cherimoya (Sugar Apple)
- Cherries
- Chervill, French Pastry (Herb)
- Chestnuts
- Chickpea (See Beans, Barbanzo)
- Chicory
- Chinese Bitter Melon
- Chinese Cabbage
- Chinese Mustard
- Chinese Water Chestnuts
- Chives
- Chufes
- Cilantro/Coriander (Herb)
- Citron
- Citron Melon
- Coconuts
- Coffee
- Collard Greens
- Coriander
- Corn, Sweet
- Crabapples
- Cranberries
- Crenshaw Melon
- Cucumbers
- Currants
- Curry Leaves
- Cushaw
- Daikon (Radish)
- Dandelion Greens
- Dasheen (Taro Root, Malanga)
- Dates
- Dill
- Donacqua (Winter Melon)
- Dragon Fruit (Red Pitaya)
- Dunga
- Durian
- Eggplant
- Elderberries
- Elut--*

--290 FSCSC Program Eligibility Requirements (Continued)*C Specialty Crop List (Continued)**

- Endive
- Escarole
- Etou
- Feijoas
- Figs
- Frisee
- Gailon (Gai Lein, Chinese Broccoli)
- Galanga
- Garlic
- Genip
- Ginger
- Ginseng
- Gooseberries
- Gourds
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Greens
- Greens - Others Not Listed
- Ground Chery
- Guamabana (Soursop)
- Guava
- Guavaberry
- Hazel Nuts
- Honeyberries
- Honeydew
- Hops
- Horseradish
- Huckleberries
- Israel Melons
- Iychee
- Jack Fruit
- Jerusalem Artichokes (Sunchoke)
- Jicama
- Jojoba
- Jujube
- Juneberries
- Kale
- Kenya
- Kiwiberry
- Kiwifruit
- Kohlrabi
- Korean Golden Melon
- Kumquats
- Langsat
- Leeks
- Lemons
- Lentils
- Lettuce
- Limequats
- Limes
- Lobok
- Loganberries
- Longan
- Loquats
- Lotus Root
- Lychee (Litchi)
- Macadamia Nuts
- Mamey
- Mandarins
- Mangos
- Mangosteen
- Maple Sap
- Mar Bub
- Marionberries
- Marjoram (Herb)
- Mayhaw Berries
- Melongene
- Mesculin Mix
- Mesple
- Microgreens
- Mint (Herb)
- Mizuna
- Mongosteen
- Moqua
- Moringa
- Mulberries
- Murcotts
- Mushrooms
- Mustard (Greens)
- Nectarines
- Noni
- Ny Yu
- Okra
- Olallieberries
- Olives
- Onions
- Opo
- Oranges
- Oregano (Herb)
- Papaya
- Parsley, Other (Herb)
- Parsnip
- Passion Fruits
- Pawpaw
- Peaches
- Pears
- Peas (Including Dry Edible)
- Pecans
- Pejibaye (Heart of Palm)
- Peppers
- Persian Melon
- Persimmon
- Pimentos
- Pine Nuts
- Pineapple
- Pistachios
- Pitaya (Dragon Fruit)
- Plantain
- Plumcots
- Plums
- Pomegranates
- Potatoes
- Potatoes Sweet
- Prunes
- Pummelo
- Pumpkins
- Quinces
- Radicchio
- Radishes
- Raisins
- Rambutan--*

*--290 FSCSC Program Eligibility Requirements (Continued)

C Specialty Crop List (Continued)

- Rape Greens
- Rapini
- Recao
- Rhubarb
- Rosemary (Herb)
- Rutabaga
- Sage (Herb)
- Salsify (Oyster Plant)
- Santa Claus Melon
- Saodilla
- Sapote
- Savory (Herb)
- Scallions
- Schizandra Berries
- Seaweed
- Seed - Vegetable
- Shallots
- Shiso
- Snake Gourd
- Sorrel (Greens)
- Spearmint (Herb)
- Spinach
- Sprite Melon
- Squash
- Star Gooseberry
- Strawberries
- Sugarcane (Table)
- Suk Gat
- Swiss Chard
- Tangelos
- Tangerines
- Tangors
- Tangos
- Taniers
- Tapioca
- Taro
- Tau Chai
- Tea - Camellia Sinensis
- Teff
- Thyme (Herb)
- Tindora
- Tomatillos
- Tomatoes
- Truffles
- Turmeric (Herb)
- Turnip Top (Greens)
- Turnip Tops (Green)
- Turnips
- Upland/Winter Cress
- Vanilla
- Walnuts
- Wampee
- Watermelon
- Wax Jambao Fruit
- White Sapote
- Wintercress
- Wolfberry (Goji)
- Yam
- Yam Yu Choy
- Yautia (Malanga)
- Yuca (Cassava)

291 Eligible Expenses

A Program Year Expenses

FSCSC eligibility is based on the date the certification is effective, rather than on the date the expenses are paid.

Eligible expenses include **only** expenses that are **paid** related to certifications from:

- June 21, 2022, through December 31, 2022, for the 2022 program year
- January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, for the 2023 program year.

Note: Expenses that have been **incurred** but **not paid** by the applicant are **not eligible** for cost share assistance.

Example: An operation is inspected by their certifying agent on December 1, 2022, and receives a bill from the certifier on December 15, 2022, indicating the amount due for certification services. The producer pays all expenses related to their certification on January 5, 2023. The producer receives their Food Safety Certification dated April 6, 2023. The producer may apply for cost share assistance for these expenses for the 2023 program year.--*

--291 Eligible Expenses (Continued)*B Eligible Expenses**

For FSCSC purposes, the following are considered eligible expenses.

- **Development of a Food Safety Plan for first-time food safety certification.** The specialty crop operation may develop its own plan, or it may hire a consultant, or a combination of both. FSCSC will cover a percentage of all approaches. For specialty crop operations that develop their own plans, FSCSC will cover a percentage of the costs of seminars and tools used to create a Food Safety Plan. For those that hire a consultant, FSCSC will cover a percentage of the consulting fees and other associated expenses. For specialty crop operations certified through a group, this category of expenses will cover a percentage of their share of the cost for developing a food safety or quality management system for the group.
- **Maintaining or updating an existing Food Safety Plan.** This is the costs of maintaining and updating existing Food Safety Plans. For specialty crop operations certified through a group, this category of expenses will cover a percentage of their share of the cost for maintaining or updating an existing food safety management system for the group.
- **Food safety certification.** This is the cost of obtaining food safety certification issued by a certifier, including application fees, inspection costs, inspection fees (including travel costs and per diem for certifiers), and user fees or certifier sales assessments.
- **Certification upload fees.** This is the cost to upload audit reports and certification documentation into commercial audit databases, which may be required by buyers of specialty crops.
- **Microbiological testing.** Microbiological testing is for products, soil amendments, and water as specified by a Food Safety Plan or food safety management system.
- **Training.** This is the cost of food safety training for the specialty crop operation.

Each expense submitted for assistance must be categorized according to the 6 categories in this subparagraph.

Note: Any associated postage is eligible and should be included with the category of expense for which it was incurred.--*

***--291 Eligible Expenses (Continued)**

C Ineligible Expenses

For FSCSC purposes, the following are considered ineligible expenses:

- infrastructure improvements, such as improvements to buildings, cold storage, flooring, restrooms, and handwashing stations
- supplies, such as sanitation and cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment
- equipment, such as grading or packing lines and sanitation equipment
- salaries and benefits of employees or other costs for labor, except for expenses for consultants described in subparagraph B
- fees or penalties for late payment.

D Group Certifications

Specialty crop operations that obtain certification through a group model are eligible to apply for assistance for their share of eligible expenses paid by the group, in addition to any eligible expenses they incur individually. The applicant should obtain an invoice or other documentation from the group that indicates the applicant's share of the expenses for each eligible category.--*

292-300 (Reserved)

--Section 3 Application Process*301 Signup****A FSCSC Signup**

Applicants can apply for FSCSC benefits at any County Office nationwide. The applicant must complete FSA-888 to receive a payment.

The signup period for FSCSC is as follows.

Program Year	Certification Date	Application Period
2022	June 21, 2022, through December 31, 2022	June 27, 2022, through January 31, 2023
2023	January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023	TBD

B Application Package

A complete application package includes the following:

- FSA-888
- CCC-860, if not previously filed

Note: An applicant who has filed CCC-860 certifying their status as a socially disadvantaged, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher for a prior program year is not required to submit a subsequent certification of their status for a later program year because their status as socially disadvantaged would not change in different years, and their certification as a beginning or veteran farmer or rancher includes the relevant date needed to determine for what program years the status would apply. Because an applicant's status as a limited resource farmer or rancher may change annually depending on their direct and indirect gross farm sales, those applicants must submit CCC-860 for each applicable program year.

- AD-2047, if not previously filed
- SF-3881, if not previously filed.

Note: The policy allowing hardship waivers of the EFT requirement applies to FSCSC. See 63-FI.--*

--301 Signup (Continued)*C Submitting FSA-888**

For each program year, applicants will submit one FSA-888 per operation nationwide to any County Office:

- in person
- by mail
- electronically by:
 - FAX
 - emailed with a scanned or photocopy of signed FSA-888 attached
 - Box or OneSpan
- online application at <https://apps.fsa.usda.gov/fscsc/index.jsp>

Note: Submitting FSA-888 online requires an active Level 2 eAuthentication account. Individual producers can register for a Level 2 eAuthentication account at www.eauth.usda.gov. A fillable format of FSA-888 will also be available to sign and submit by 1 of the methods in this subparagraph.

D Incomplete FSA-888's

COC cannot act on FSA-888 until the applicant has completed FSA-888 and signed Part C.

Note: Incomplete FSA-888's or FSA-888's that are not signed do not require action by FSA. Applicants will receive decisions by FSA only on complete FSA-888's.

County Offices will notify an applicant that their application package is incomplete and give the applicant 30 calendar days from the date of notification to submit any additional required documentation before disapproving FSA-888.--*

--301 Signup (Continued)*E Late-Filed Provisions**

DAFP has the authority to waive or modify application deadlines and other requirements or program provisions not specified in law, in cases where DAFP determines it is equitable to do so and where the lateness or failure to meet these other requirements or program provisions do not adversely affect the operation of FSCSC.

DAFP has delegated this authority to STC. COC does not have authority to approve programmatic relief for late-filed FSA-888's. However, a late-filed FSA-888 will be reviewed according to the following table.

Note: Neither COC nor STC are under any obligation to recommend relief. COC is not required to submit cases to STC that COC believes do not warrant relief, nor is STC required to approve cases that STC believes do not warrant relief. If relief is not recommended by either COC or STC, the late-filed FSA-888 will be disapproved, and the County Office will notify the participant in writing of the decision on the participant's request for programmatic relief with appropriate appeal rights according to 1-APP (based on the reviewing authority's decision that FSA-888 was late and that relief was not appropriate). Cases do not have to be submitted to STC or DAFP for disapproval of relief.

Producer Action	County Office and/or COC Action	STC Action
FSA-888 is submitted after the application deadline but is not accompanied with a written explanation as to why the deadline was not met.	Issue a letter to the participant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explaining that FSA received FSA-888 but cannot process FSA-888 because it was filed after the deadline requesting a written explanation of why the deadline was not met if the producer wishes to have FSA-888 considered. 	No actions are needed.

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*--301 Signup (Continued)

E Late-Filed Provisions (Continued)

Producer Action	County Office and/or COC Action	STC Action
FSA-888 is submitted after the application deadline and is accompanied with a written explanation as to why the deadline was not met.	Review for programmatic relief consideration.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If COC determines circumstances merit programmatic relief, complete FSA-321 and forward all documents to STC. 	<p>Review FSA-321, FSA-888, and written explanation to determine whether programmatic relief should be granted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, STC will approve and sign on behalf of DAFP. Then send it back to COC for approval or disapproval of FSA-888. If no, STC will take no action and send it back to COC to issue a letter that FSA-888 has been reviewed and FSA cannot process since FSA-888 was late-filed. COC will disapprove and notify the applicant with appeal rights included in the letter.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If COC determines circumstances do not merit programmatic relief, issue a letter to the applicant stating that FSA-888 and written explanation have been reviewed and considered late and have been disapproved with appeal rights included in the letter. 	No actions are needed.

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--302 FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC)*A Completing FSA-888**

The FSA representative will complete FSA-888, items 1, 2, 4, 10D, 10F, and 14A through 14D.

The applicant applying for FSCSC will complete FSA-888, items 3, 5 through 10C, 10E, and 11 through 13C.

Item	Instruction
1	Enter the applicant's recording State name and code.
2	Enter the applicant's recording county name and code.
3	<p>Enter the program year for which the applicant is applying for benefits.</p> <p>The program year is based on the calendar year in which the certification is received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program year 2022: June 21, 2022, through December 31, 2022 • program year 2023: January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. <p>Note: Separate FSA-888's must be completed for each program year.</p>
4	This will be automatically populated. Leave blank if a manual form.
Part A – Applicant Information	
5	<p>Enter the applicant's name.</p> <p>Note: The applicant's name in item 5 must match the person or entity listed on the applicant's food safety certification or plan.</p>
6	Enter the applicant's address, including ZIP Code.
7	<p>Check "YES" or "NO" to indicate whether the applicant has recently participated in FSA programs.</p> <p>If "NO" is selected, the applicant must also submit a completed AD-2047 and SF-3881 to receive payment.</p>
8	Enter the applicant's telephone number, including the Area Code.
9	Enter the applicant's email address.

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*--302 FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) (Continued)

A Completing FSA-888 (Continued)

Item	Instruction
Part B – Certification Information & Expenses	
10A	<p>Check the appropriate box or boxes to indicate the category of expenses for which the applicant is applying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The food safety certification category includes the cost of obtaining the certification issued by a certifier, including application fees, inspection costs and fees, and user fees or certifier sales assessments. • The Food Safety Plan development category is only available for the first year an operation or group undergoes a formal food safety certification or plan. Costs include seminars, tools used to create a Food Safety Plan, consulting fees, and other associated expenses. • The maintaining or updating Food Safety Plan category includes costs of maintaining and updating existing Food Safety Plans. • The certification upload fees category includes costs to upload audit reports and certification documentation into commercial audit databases. • The testing categories include the cost of the tests for microbiological, soil amendments, and water. This is the total dollar amount for all tests of a specific category. • The training category includes the cost of food safety training for the applicant.
10B	<p>Enter the associated costs for each selected category.</p> <p>For costs that apply to more than 1 category, divide the amount by the number of all categories for which the cost was incurred.</p>
10C	Enter the number of tests associated for the category selected.
10D	COC Use Only – Enter the amount of expenses as determined by COC.
10E	Enter the amount received as reimbursement from other sources for each category. If zero, leave blank.
10F	COC Use Only – Enter the adjusted amount of reimbursement for expenses received as determined by COC.
11	<p>Check “YES” or “NO” to indicate if the applicant meets the definition of a small business.</p> <p>A small business is an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of more than \$250,000 but not more than \$500,000.</p>

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*--302 FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) (Continued)

A Completing FSA-888 (Continued)

Item	Instruction
12	<p>Check “YES” or “NO” to indicate if the applicant meets the definition of a very small business.</p> <p>A very small business is an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$250,000.</p>
Part C – Applicant Certification Statement	
13A	<p>Applicant will sign.</p> <p>Print FSA-888 and have the applicant manually sign. If FSA-888 is approved for electronic transmission and the applicant has established credentials with USDA to submit forms electronically, use the buttons provided on FSA-888 for transmitting FSA-888 to the USDA servicing office.</p>
13B	<p>Enter the applicant’s representative title or relationship to the entity or individual.</p> <p>Note: If the applicant is not signing in the representative capacity, this field should be left blank.</p>
13C	Enter the date FSA-888 is signed (MM-DD-YYYY).
14A	COC or designee will sign.
14B	Enter the title of representative or designee.
14C	Enter the date the representative or designee signs FSA-888.
14D	<p>COC or their representative will check either “Approved” or “Disapproved”.</p> <p>Important: FSA-888 will be approved or disapproved as certified by the producer after applicable COC adjustment fields are completed.</p>

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*--302 FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) (Continued)

B Example of FSA-888

Following is an example of FSA-888.

Form Approved - OMB No. 0560-0311 Expiration Date: 12/31/22					
FSA-888 (06-21-22) <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency (FSA) Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIALTY CROPS PROGRAM (FSCSC) </div>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">1. Recording State Name/Code</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">2. Recording County Name/Code</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">3. Program Year</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4. Application No.</td> </tr> </table>	1. Recording State Name/Code	2. Recording County Name/Code	3. Program Year	4. Application No.
1. Recording State Name/Code	2. Recording County Name/Code				
3. Program Year	4. Application No.				
<small>NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714c(e)). The information will be used to determine the applicant's ability to participate in and receive benefits under the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, and Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for USDA/FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated). Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination that the applicant is unable to participate in and receive benefits under the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program.</small>					
<small>Public Burden Statement (Paperwork Reduction Act): According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0311. The time required to complete the information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.</small>					
PART A – APPLICANT INFORMATION					
5. Applicant's Name	6. Address (City, State and Include Zip Code) <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> 7. Have you participated in FSA programs? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <small>(If "NO", please fill out AD-2047 and SF-3881)</small> </div>				
8. Phone Number (Including Area code) 9. Email Address					
PART B – CERTIFICATION INFORMATION & EXPENSES					
10. Category of Expenses (Check all that apply) and Expenses (applicant completes columns 10A, 10B, 10C, and 10E):					
10A. Category of Expenses	10B. Expenses	10C. Number of Tests	10D. COC Adjustment of Expenses	10E. Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received	10F. COC Adjustment of Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received
<input type="checkbox"/> Food Safety Certification	\$		\$	\$	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Food Safety Plan Development (1 st time)	\$		\$	\$	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining or updating Food Safety Plan	\$		\$	\$	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification Upload Fees	\$		\$	\$	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Microbiological Testing – products	\$		\$	\$	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Microbiological Testing – soil amendments	\$		\$	\$	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Microbiological Testing - water	\$		\$	\$	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Training	\$		\$	\$	\$
11. Are you a small business? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (Small business means a farm that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of more than \$250,000 but not more than \$500,000.)					
12. Are you a very small business? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (Very small business means a farm that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of no more than \$250,000.)					

DATE STAMPED

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*--302 FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) (Continued)

B Example of FSA-888 (Continued)

FSA-888 (06-21-22)

Page 2 of 2

PART C – APPLICANT CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Each applicant must submit a complete application to an FSA county office to be eligible to receive program benefits. A complete application includes this form FSA-888, and forms AD-2047, SF-3881, and CCC-860 (if applicable) if the latter were not previously filed with FSA. By signing this application, applicant:

- Has completed the food safety plan and certification process and agrees to provide FSA with any documentation required to determine eligibility, and to verify and support all information provided, including applicant's food safety certificate or plan, if requested by FSA;
- Understands the application may be disapproved if the applicant fails to provide a complete application or any information requested by FSA within 30 days of the request;
- Agrees to comply with, and acknowledges the applicant is subject to, all provisions of FSCSC as published in the applicable Notice of Funds Availability published in the Federal Register, and all applicable rules and regulations;
- Understands that FSCSC payments are subject to the availability of funding and are subject to proration if total calculated payments to all eligible applicants exceed available funds. Further understands that late-filed applications received after all funds are obligated will not be paid.
- Acknowledges that, if determined eligible and funding is available, the applicant's expenses may be adjusted, as determined by the FSA County Committee, from the amounts entered in Item 10 to reflect the eligible expenses as verified by documentation submitted to support the application, if requested by FSA.
- Acknowledges that FSA will issue payments for the 2022 program year as applications are processed and approved, but payments for the 2023 program year will not be issued until after the end of the application period for the FSA National Office to determine if payments for the 2023 program year are subject to proration.

I certify that:

- The above information provided by me, or my legal representative is true and correct.
- I understand that failure to provide true and correct information may result in the invalidation of this application, a determination of noncompliance or ineligibility, or other remedies or sanctions. By signing this form, I further acknowledge and understand that any false representation or claims are subject to civil and criminal penalties including, but not limited to, those under 18 U.S.C. 1001.
- I understand that I may not receive duplicate benefits totaling more than 100% of cost for the same eligible expenses and program year from multiple agencies, including FSA. If it is determined that I have received duplicate benefits, I have no right to retain those payments.

13A. Applicant's Signature (By)	13B. Title/Relationship of the Individual Signing in the Representative Capacity	13C. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)

PART D - COUNTY COMMITTEE (COC) DETERMINATION

14A. COC or Designee Signature	14B. Title of Representative or Designee	14C. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)	14D. Determination: <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVED

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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--303 Internal Controls*A CED Reviews**

The purpose of this review is to ensure that FSA-888's and eligibility forms are completed correctly and demonstrate that the County Office understands program policy and is implementing it correctly. CED is required to review **completed FSA-888's** from the **first 5 producers per Service Center** as part of their supervisory responsibility to ensure that program integrity and accountability requirements are met. Only one FSA-888 per producer counts towards the first five.

The initial review completed by CED must include all documents required to issue payments, including eligibility documents. If the eligibility documentation is not available for 1 or more of the first 5 producers, CED will select the next available completed FSA-888 until five FSA-888's are available for review.

During the initial review, CED will:

- ensure that FSA-888 is completed properly
- review all signatures obtained, including representative signature authorities
- ensure that FSA-888 is qualified to be paid without errors.

Upon completion, CED will certify to the DD/State Office designee that the first 5 completed FSA-888's have been reviewed and provide the application package for DD/State Office designee review. The County Office or COC may **not** approve any FSA-888's until written approval is received from the DD/State Office designee.

Note: CED does not have to wait until all five FSA-888's have been reviewed to submit to DD. For the first five FSA-888's, approvals can be completed upon DD review and approval of each one. Once the first five FSA-888's have been reviewed and approval has been authorized by DD, all additional FSA-888's may be processed by the County Office unless otherwise directed by DD.--*

*--303 Internal Controls (Continued)

A CED Reviews (Continued)

The following questions are for CED when reviewing the first five FSA-888's before approval.

State: _____ County: _____	
Producer Name: _____ Program Year: _____	
Application Number: _____	
Application Questions	
1. Is Recording State, Recording County, Program Year, and Application No. completed at the top of the FSA-888?	Yes or No
2. Has part A been completed on the FSA-888?	Yes or No
3. Is the FSA-888 complete with all the certifications and expenses relevant to the producer's request identified on the form? (It may be difficult to determine reasonableness of the certification values; however, if something appears unreasonable or questionable, do not ignore it.)	Yes or No
4. Did the producer certify more than 5 tests per category in item 10C? Note: If yes, ensure that COC has adjusted the expense in item 10D for that category.	Yes, No, or Not Applicable
5. Did the producer answer "yes" to item 11 or 12 of the FSA-888?	Yes or No
6. Has the FSA-888 been date stamped?	Yes or No
7. Did the producer sign the application in item 13A of the FSA-888?	Yes or No
8. Was valid signature authority on file for the producer who signed in item 13A of the FSA-888, if applicable?	Yes, No, or Not Applicable
9. For purposes of the CED review, have the following forms been received and accurately recorded in the applicable software for the producer, as required?	
FSA-888, FSCSC Application	Yes or No
AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet, if applicable	Yes, No, or Not Applicable
CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, if applicable	Yes, No, or Not Applicable
County Executive Director Review:	
County Executive Director _____	Completion Date _____
CED Notes:	

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--303 Internal Controls (Continued)*B DD/State Office Designee Reviews**

DD or other employee designated by SED will review FSA-888's from the first 5 producers filed in a Service Center to verify that:

- a signed FSA-888 was filed by the person or authorized representative of a legal entity
- categories of expenses are completed correctly
- the applicant meets the requirement of being either a small business or very small business.

Upon completing the reviews, the DD/State Office designee will provide written approval to the County Office for approvals to be completed.

Note: Review may be completed and authority to process FSA-888 provided to CED, 1 producer at a time, until at least 5 have been reviewed.

See subparagraph C for instructions for loading DD/State Office designee first reviews on the FSA Pandemic Assistance Internal Control SharePoint.--*

*--303 Internal Controls (Continued)

B DD/State Office Designee Reviews (Continued)

The following questions are to be answered by the DD/State Office designee to complete the first 5 reviews before certifying and signing payments in NPS.

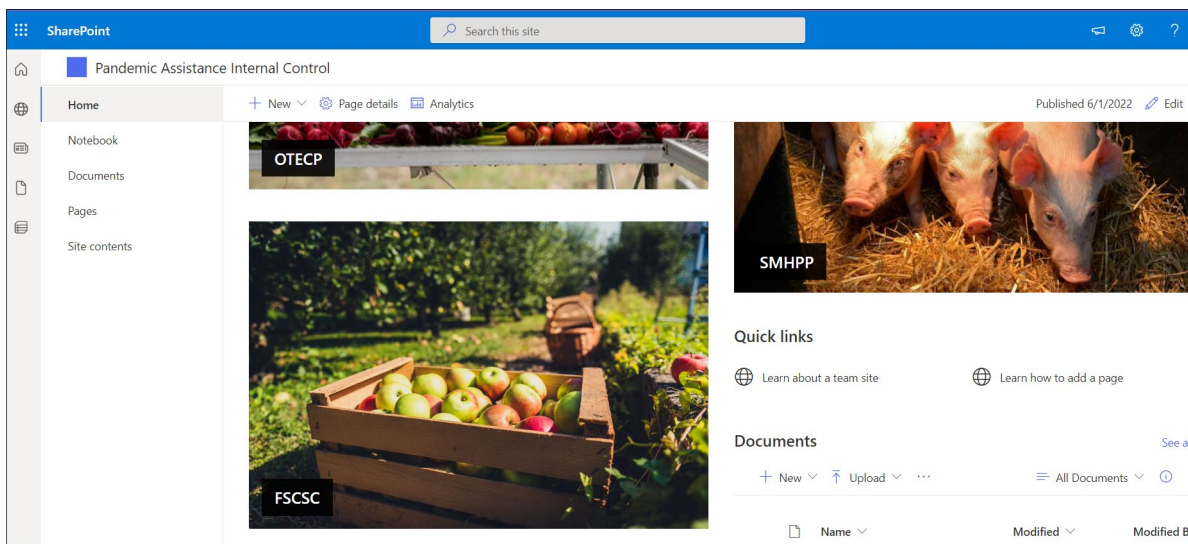
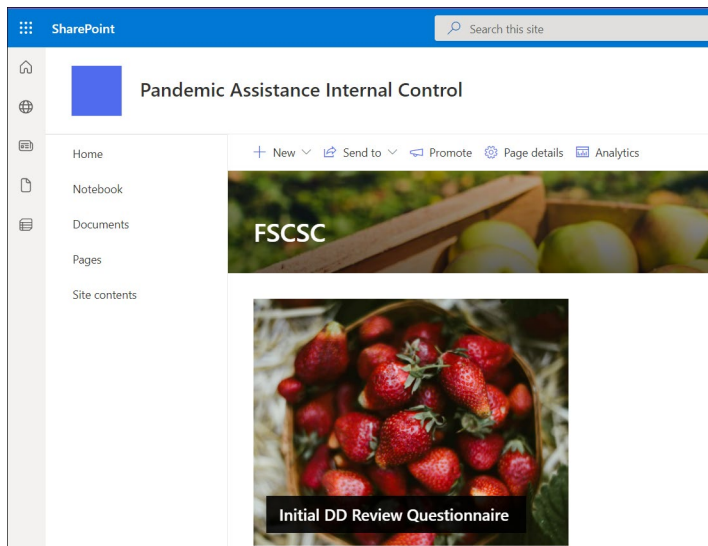
State: _____ County: _____	
Producer Name: _____ Program Year: _____	
Application Number: _____	
Application Questions	
1. Did the CED complete a review for this producer?	Yes or No
2. Is Recording State, Recording County, Program Year, and Application No. completed at the top of the FSA-888?	Yes or No
3. Is the FSA-888 complete with all the certifications relevant to the producer's request identified on the form? (It may be difficult to determine reasonableness of the certification values; however, if something appears unreasonable or questionable, do not ignore it.)	Yes or No
4. Did the producer certify more than 5 tests per category in item 10C? Note: If yes, ensure that COC adjusted the expense in item 10D for that category.	Yes, No, or Not Applicable
5. Did the producer answer "yes" to item 11 or 12 of the FSA-888?	Yes or No
6. Was the FSA-888 date stamped?	Yes or No
7. Did the producer sign the application in item 13A of the FSA-888?	Yes or No
8. Was valid signature authority on file for the producer who signed in item 13A of the FSA-888, if applicable?	Yes, No, or Not Applicable
District Director Review:	
District Director _____	Completion Date _____
DD Notes:	

--*

*--303 Internal Controls (Continued)

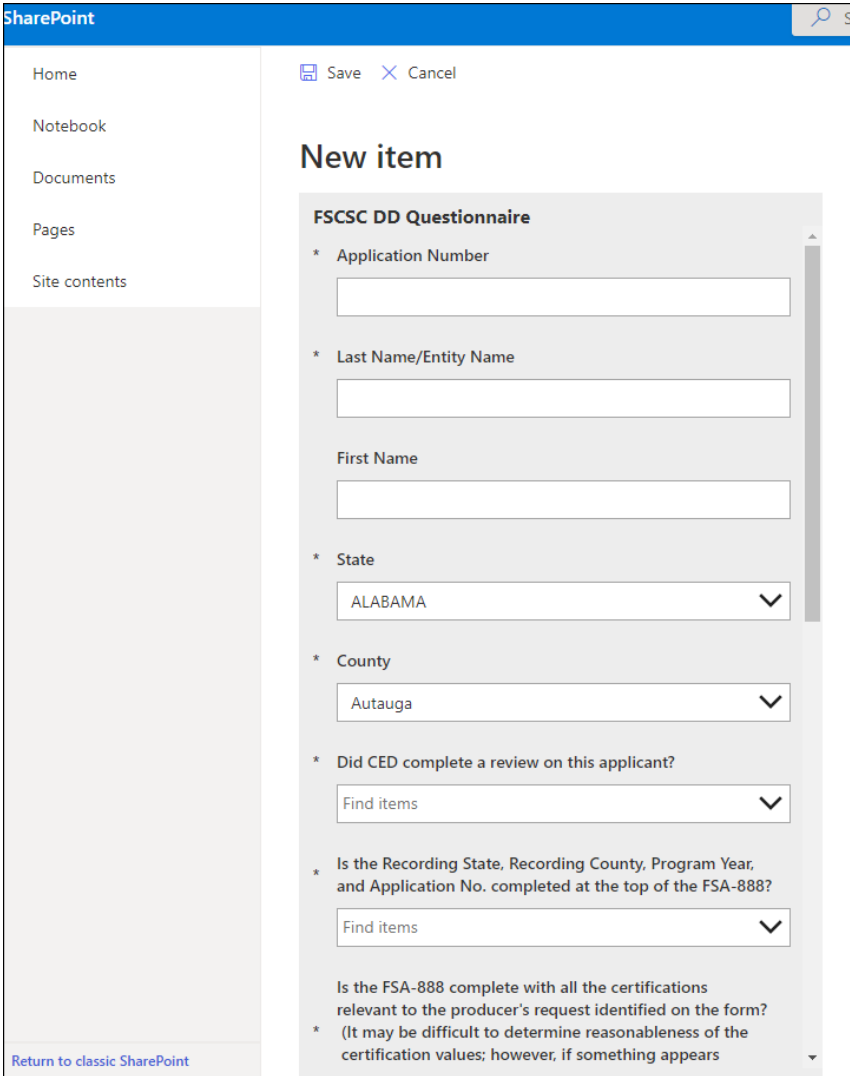
C Recording DD/State Office Designee Reviews

DD's or State Office designee must enter the results of FSCSC reviews on the Pandemic Assistance Internal Control SharePoint within 30 calendar days of completing the review according to the following table.

Step	Action
1	Access the Pandemic Assistance Internal Control SharePoint at the following link. https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fsa-dafp-disaster/Pandemic%20Assistance%20Internal%20Control
2	After accessing the link in step 1, click on the applicable program. 
3	On the Pandemic Assistance Internal Control SharePoint, click on “Initial DD Review Questionnaire”.
4	

*--303 Internal Controls (Continued)

C Recording DD/State Office Designee Reviews (Continued)

Step	Action
4	<p>The applicable program's Initial DD Review Questionnaire will be displayed. Complete the questionnaire for each of the first five FSA-888's reviewed.</p> 

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--304 Processing FSA-888*A Reviewing and Processing FSA-888**

County Offices will process FSA-888 for each eligible applicant according to the following table.

Step	Action
1	Confirm that the applicant has submitted the following, either with FSA-888 or previously on file: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD-2047 • SF-3881 • CCC-860, if applicable • CCC-901, Part A, if the applicant is an entity.
2	See 1-CM for applicant signature on FSA-888.
3	COC will determine applicant overall eligibility according to Part 6.
4	COC will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act on FSA-888 according to subparagraph 304D • sign and date Part D of the FSA-888.
5	Retain a copy of the completed FSA-888.
6	If FSA-888 has been adjusted or disapproved, provide a written determination according to subparagraph 304F.

B Delegation of Authority

The authority to approve routine FSA-888's prepared according to this handbook may be redelegated, in writing according to 16-AO, by COC to CED, except forms and documents in which CED has a monetary interest.

The following table provides the delegated authority for approval of FSA-888's.

IF the producer is...	THEN the approval authority is...
a Federal or non-Federal, State, or County Office employee	CED.
COC member	
DD	
SED	
STC member	
CED	COC.
any producer in a recording county	

Note: Questionable cases may be referred to the next higher authority for determination. Any employee serving as Acting CED is viewed as CED.--*

--304 Processing FSA-888 (Continued)*C COC Adjustments**

COC should make any adjustments to expenses or other reimbursements for expenses received before taking action on FSA-888.

Example: FSA-888 was submitted for \$1,000 for 10 water tests. The maximum number of tests per category is 5; this expense will need to be reduced by COC. The average cost per test is \$100 and COC would enter \$500 in FSA-888, item 10D.

Note: If adjustments are made on FSA-888, the applicant must be notified in writing of the adjustment with the COC determination and appeal rights included.

D FSA-888 Approval or Disapproval

COC is responsible for acting on all FSA-888's. This authority may be delegated to CED to approve FSA-888's with the delegation recorded in the COC minutes. FSA-888 will **not** be approved until a complete application package has been submitted and Internal Control reviews are completed. COC **must** act on **all** completed and signed FSA-888's.

Important: No entries will be made on FSA-888 by FSA employees, except entries designated for CCC representative use **after** the applicant signs FSA-888. Any additions or corrections **must** be initialed and dated by the applicant.

If FSA-888 is disapproved, County Offices **must** immediately notify the applicant in writing of the disapproval. See subparagraph F for an example notification letter. The letter to the applicant **must** include the following:

- notification that FSA-888 was disapproved
- the reason or reasons for disapproval
- applicable appeal rights according to 1-APP.

Notes: COC will **not** make any determinations about whether an applicant is following the requirements of the Food Safety Plan. If a County Office employee suspects that an applicant is violating Food Safety Plan requirements, they should contact their State Office for guidance.

Within 30 calendar days of FSA-888 being submitted, COC's should take action and County Offices should load the determination in the automated software.

E Amending or Withdrawing FSA-888

FSA-888's may be amended or withdrawn at any time until the end of the application period; however, copies of all submitted FSA-888's **must** be kept in the file. Applicants may, at any time during the application period, amend FSA-888 to:


- add additional categories and/or expenses
- remove categories and/or expenses from FSCSC.

Note: Any revision to a previously approved FSA-888 that would change the calculated payment amount requires a new signature and approval.--*

*--304 Processing FSA-888 (Continued)

F Letter Notifying Applicant of Disapproval

The following is an example of a letter to an applicant notifying them that their FSA-888 has been disapproved and providing appeal rights. A Microsoft Word version of this letter is available as a template at <https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/program-areas/dafp/special-programs/fscsc/index>.

	Farm Production and Conservation	Farm Service Agency
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Any County FSA Office
1235 Street Name.
City, State 11111
Voice: 123-456-7891
FAX: 444-789-4656

Insert date here

Mr. Specialty Producer
123 Tomato Lane
Pineapple, TX 77553

Dear Mr. Producer,

This letter is in response to your Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application for the [insert year] program year.

FSA has reviewed your application and has disapproved it due to [insert description of basis for disapproval].

If you believe we have not properly reviewed your application, you may appeal this determination to the County Committee by filing a written request no later than 30 calendar days after you receive this notice in accordance with the FSA appeal procedures found at 7 CFR Part 780. If you appeal to the County Committee, you have the right to an informal hearing which you or your representative may attend either personally or by telephone. If you appeal this determination to the County Committee, you may later appeal an adverse determination of the County Committee to the FSA State Committee or the National Appeals Division or request mediation. To appeal, write to the County Committee at the following address and explain why you believe this determination is erroneous.

Any County FSA Committee
1235 Street Name.
City, State 11111

If you do not timely file an appeal of this determination, this shall be the final administrative determination with respect to this matter in accordance with regulations at 7 CFR Part 780 and 7 CFR Part 11.

Sincerely,

Sharina Farmer
County Executive Director

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

--*

305-314 (Reserved)

7-5-22

1-PDAP Amend. 8

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(through 6-90)

--Section 4 Payment Provisions*315 FSCSC Payments****A Basis for Payments**

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each category of eligible costs based on the percentages and maximum payment amounts in the following table.

Category of Eligible Expenses	Payment Amount of Eligible Costs	
	Historically Underserved Farmer or Rancher	All Other Applicants
Food safety certification	75 percent, up to a maximum of \$2,000	50 percent, up to a maximum of \$2,000
Development of a Food Safety Plan for first-time certification	75 percent (no maximum)	50 percent (no maximum)
Maintaining or updating a Food Safety Plan	75 percent, up to a maximum of \$375	50 percent, up to a maximum of \$250
Certification upload fees	75 percent, up to a maximum of \$375	50 percent, up to a maximum of \$250
Microbiological testing – products	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Microbiological testing – soil amendments	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Microbiological testing – water	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Training	100 percent, up to a maximum of \$300	100 percent, up to a maximum of \$200

B Program Factor

FSCSC payments are subject to the availability of funds. Payments will be issued nightly after FSA-888 approval for program year 2022 and after the application period ends for program year 2023. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be factored for 2023.

C Payment Calculation

FSCSC payments are calculated by multiplying:

- the applicant's eligible expenses by
- the percentage for the applicable category in the table in subparagraph A.

Note: The amount of the applicant's FSCSC payment plus the reported additional cost share assistance cannot exceed the total amount of eligible expenses for each category.--*

--316 FSCSC Payment Examples*A Payment Example 1**

A representative of Pumpkins Inc. submits FSA-888 for expenses for certification upload fees in the amount of \$1,000. That is the only category included on FSA-888. The corporation does not meet the requirements for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher.

$\$1,000 \times 50\% = \500 (maximum payment amount for this category is \$250)

Total Payment = \$250

B Payment Example 2

Fruity Farms LLC has submitted CCC-860 certifying its status as a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, and certifies to the following expenses on FSA-888:

- \$5,000 for the food safety certification
- \$3,000 for development of a Food Safety Plan for the first time
- \$1,000 for certification upload fees
- \$500 for training.

$\$5,000 \times 75\% = \$3,750$ (maximum payment amount for this category is \$2,000)

$\$3,000 \times 75\% = \$2,250$

$\$1,000 \times 75\% = \750 (maximum payment amount for this category is \$375)

$\$500 \times 100\% = \500 (maximum payment amount for this category is \$300)

Total Payment = \$4,925

C Payment Example 3

Veggie Farms Partnership, which does not meet the definition of a socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher, certified to the following expenses:

- \$1,000 for maintaining a Food Safety Plan, with \$500 reimbursement received from another source
- \$800 for certification upload fees, with \$600 reimbursement received from another source
- \$500 for 3 water tests.

$\$1,000 \times 50\% = \500 (maximum payment for this category is \$250)

$\$800 \times 50\% = \400 (maximum payment for this category is \$250)

$\$500 \times 50\% = \250 --*

***--316 FSCSC Payment Examples (Continued)**

C Payment Example 3 (Continued)

The amount of the FSCSC payment plus the other reimbursement cannot equal more than 100 percent of the expenses for a category; therefore, the payment amount for the certification upload fees will be reduced.

Food Safety Plan = \$250

Certification upload fees = \$200 (\$800 - \$600 = \$200 maximum available for payment)

Water tests = \$250

Total Payment = \$700--*

317-326 (Reserved)

--Section 5 Spot Checks*327 FSCSC Spot Checks****A Spot Checks**

FSCSC spot checks will be conducted following the signup period. The National Office will supply a list of randomly selected FSA-888's to be reviewed. This list will be posted on the FSCSC Intranet page at <https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/program-areas/dafp/special-programs/fscsc/index>.

B Supporting Documentation

If requested by FSA, applicants are responsible for providing additional documentation to support the information on their FSA-888.

Examples of supporting documentation that may be used to support their FSA-888 include the following:

- Food Safety Certification
- Food Safety Plan
- paid invoices
- test results
- training certificates
- audit report
- proof of payment
- statement of audit charges.

If supporting documentation is requested, the information must be submitted to FSA within 30 calendar days from the date of request or FSA-888 will be disapproved by FSA.

C Spot Check Adjustments

If adjustments are determined to be needed on FSA-888 as a result of a spot check, enter adjusted expenses in FSA-888, item 10D or 10F. These adjustments must be loaded in the automated software and the payment will be recalculated. The County Office must issue a letter to the applicant with applicable appeal rights for any adjustments made.--*

328-345 (Reserved)

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority

Reports

None.

Forms

This table lists all forms referenced in this handbook.

Number	Title	Display Reference	Reference
AD-1026	Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification		Text
AD-2047	Customer Data Worksheet		Text
AD-2106	Form to Assist in Assessment of USDA Compliance With Civil Rights Laws		33, 135
AD-3114	Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) Application		122, 136
AD-3117	Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) Application		122, 136
CCC-36	Assignment of Payment		106
CCC-37	Joint Payment Authorization		106
CCC-860	Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification		301, 303, 304, 316
CCC-901	Member's Information		Text
CCC-902	Farm Operating Plan for Payment Eligibility 2009 and Subsequent Program Years		Text
CCD-902E	Farm Operating Plan for an Entity		370
CCC-902I	Farm Operating Plan for an Individual		370
CCC-903	Worksheet for Payment Eligibility and Payment Limitation Determinations		33, 106
CCC-941	Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information		Text
CCC-942	Certification of Income From Farming, Ranching and Forestry Operations		93
FSA-321	Finality Rule and Equitable Relief		301
FSA-325	Application for Payment of Amounts Due Persons Who Have Died, Disappeared, or Have Been Declared Incompetent		33, 41, 106, 235, 278, 401
FSA-620	Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program (PLIP) Application	122	Text
FSA-850	Environmental Screening Worksheet		3
FSA-883	Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP)	262	231, 232, 234, 235, 261, 263
FSA-888	Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC)	302	277, 301, 303, 304, 316, 327

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority (Continued)

Forms (Continued)

Number	Title	Display Reference	Reference
FSA-940	Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program (SMHPP) Application	388	Part 7
FSA-1118	Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers (PATHH) Program Application	50	Text
FSA-1123	Certification of 2021 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	367	Part 7
SF-3881	ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form		33, 135, 261, 262, 263, 301, 302, 304

Abbreviations Not Listed in 1-CM

The following abbreviations are not listed in 1-CM.

Approved Abbreviation	Term	Reference
CPA	certified public accountant	367, 370
DBA	Doing Business As	246
EIN	employer identification number	365
FPAC	Farm Production and Conservation	15, 47, 91
FSCSC	Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops	Part 6
ITIN	individual taxpayer identification number	365
LMR	Livestock Mandatory Reporting	383, 385
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System	30, 46-48, 50
NOFA	Notice of Funds Availability	Text
NOP	National Organic Program	230, 235, 247, 263, Ex. 2
OCCSP	Organic Certification Cost Share Program	Part 5
OTECF	Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program	Part 5
OTIS	Outreach Tracking Information System	2
PATHH	Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers	Part 2, Ex. 2
PIIA	Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019	Part 7
PLIP	Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program	Part 3
SMHPP	Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program	Part 7
SND	Safety Net Division	1, 91
VMR	value member relationship	383

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority (Continued)**Redelegations of Authority**

This table lists the redelegations of authority in this handbook by program.

Redelegation	Reference
Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops	277
Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program	263
Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers	51
Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program	121
Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program	346

