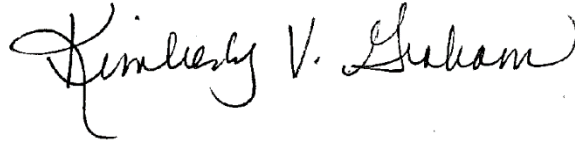


For: State and County Offices

Issuing Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crop (MASC) Payments

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

On December 9, 2024, the Secretary announced that FSA would provide assistance through MASC to:

- help specialty crop producers expand domestic markets
- develop new markets for their crops.

The deadline for producers to submit MASC applications to FSA was January 10, 2025.

Because of the higher marketing costs related to specialty crop production and to immediately assist specialty crop producers in the expansion of markets in 2025, USDA will issue an initial MASC payment based on preliminary enrollment data received by the MASC deadline. After additional analysis is complete and all applications are processed, a final payment factor will be determined and payments issued. To ensure that payments do not exceed the \$2.65 billion authorized for the MASC Program, payment factors were established according to paragraph 2.

B Purpose

This notice informs State and County Offices:

- of the initial payment factor for each range
- that an initial national payment factor of 60 percent will be applied to payments
- that a national program factor of 100 percent will be applied to payments
- that the web-based payment system will automatically initiate payments on January 17, 2025.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2026	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice MASC-2

2 MASC Payments

A National Payment Factors for Sales Ranges

As discussed in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), FSA used a statistical analysis of MASC enrollment data through January 10, 2025, to establish percent payment factors for each sales range. The initial factors were determined using the number of eligible MASC applicants, the total specialty crop sales reported by those applicants for each sales range, and the payment limitation per person or legal entity.

The national payment factors have been established as provided in the following table.

Sales Range	Percent Payment Factor
Up to \$49,999	3.8%
\$50,000 – \$99,999	3.5%
\$100,000 – \$499,999	3.4%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	3.1%
All sales over \$1,000,000	3.0%

B National Payment Factor for Payment Calculation

After reviewing the sales data provided from the application software, the National Office has designated a national payment factor of 60 percent.

C National Program Factor

To control the expenditure of funding, a program factor may be applied. The program factor will affect the payment calculation and payment limitation during the payment process. As a result, the national program factor is 100 percent.

D Payment Limitation

As announced in the MASC Federal Register Notice ([90 FR 1434](#), January 8, 2025), the payment limitation applicable to MASC is \$900,000.

E Automated Payment Process

The payment process is an automated process that determines:

- whether the producer is eligible to receive payment
- the payment amount that can be sent to NPS for disbursement
- the overpayment amount that will be updated to the Pending Overpayment Report
- the reason for a payment reduction that will be updated to the Nonpayment Report.

The web-based payment system will automatically process payments for approved applications on **January 17, 2025**.

Notice MASC-2

2 MASC Payments (Continued)

E Automated Payment Process (Continued)

County Offices are authorized to certify and sign payments in NPS. However, County Offices should review payment amounts for reasonableness. If there is a reason to question the payment amount, do not certify and sign the payment in NPS and verify the Part C - Sales information entered in the application is correct. The correct Part C - Sales information can be updated, and a new payment will process that evening.

F Frequency of Payment Processing

Payments are processed nightly for the following:

- applications that were approved during the workday
- changes made in the system that could affect the producer's payment or overpayment amount determination.

3 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices will:

- ensure that County Offices are notified of the contents of this notice
- contact the following by email:
 - Devon.Marsden@usda.gov and Jenae.Prescott@usda.gov for MASC policy questions
 - Mario.Plummer@usda.gov for software application questions
 - Tina.Nemec@usda.gov for payment software questions.

B County Office Action

County Offices will:

- review the contents of this notice
- ensure that payments are processed according to subparagraph 2 D
- contact DD or State Office, as applicable, with questions about this notice.