USDA Issues Final Pandemic Payments for Timber Harvesters and Haulers

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Virginia

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2, 2021- The U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin issuing final pandemic assistance payments to timber harvesters and timber hauling businesses through the Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers (PATHH) program starting next week. In total, $200 million will be provided to loggers and log trucking businesses who experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 through Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 through Dec. 1, 2019. This support is part of USDA's broader Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative.

"We know loggers and truckers felt the financial burden of the pandemic," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "This included lack of access to wood processing mills, which caused major disruptions to the logging industry. We made initial payments as we enrolled customers in PATHH and are happy to now finalize payments to provide this much needed assistance."

"We are grateful for the partnerships with other USDA agencies to recognize the tremendous need and to mobilize quickly to assist loggers and log truckers adversely impacted by the pandemic," said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. "The American Loggers Council, Intertribal Timber Council, National Association of State Foresters, and Forest Resources Association were critical to helping us better understand the impacts and tailor a program that best serves these two sectors that are critical to forest management across the country."

Eligible PATHH applicants must have derived at least 50 percent of total gross revenue from timber harvesting and/or timber hauling. Specifically, eligible activities included cutting timber, transporting timber and/or the processing of wood on-site on the forest land, such as chipping, grinding, converting to biochar or cutting to smaller lengths.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized up to $200 million for PATHH. FSA issued initial payments up to $2,000 as applications were approved. Now that signup has ended and FSA has evaluated remaining funds, FSA has started to issue second payments to those applicants whose calculated payment amount was over $2,000.

Based on the number of actual PATHH applications filed, FSA will be required to lower the payment limitation for PATHH from $125,000 to $75,000 and apply a payment factor of 70.5% across all calculated payments to ensure program outlays do not exceed the available funding. These provisions

were previously outlined in the Notice of Funding Availability in the event the revenue loss reported exceeded available funding.

Pandemic Assistance for Producers Delivered in 2021

As USDA looks for long-term solutions to build back a better food system, the Department is committed to delivery of financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers and businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions. In addition to the funding USDA is issuing today, the Department has provided a broad range of support to America's farmers and ranchers as part of its Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, including:

- More than $19 billion in Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2(CFAP 2) payments, including a fourfold increase in participation by historically underserved producers since the program reopened in April 2021.
- Approximately $270 million in payments to contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry.
- Over $43 million in assistance for those who had to depopulate livestock and poultry due to insufficient processing access (Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program).
- $1 billion to purchase healthy food for food insecure Americans and build food bank capacity.
- $350 million in additional dairy assistance related to market volatility.
- $500 million deployed through existing USDA programs.

A full list of Pandemic Assistance is available at farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance. USDA expects further Pandemic Assistance to continue to fill remaining gaps later this year.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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