



United States Department of Agriculture

## Agricultural Marketing Service

Creating Opportunities for Farmers and Businesses

### **After Identifying Gaps in Previous Aid, USDA Announces ‘Pandemic Assistance for Producers’ to Distribute Resources More Equitably**

*USDA Reopens Program Sign-Up to a Larger Share of Producers with Plans to Expand Outreach and New Programming*

**WASHINGTON, March 24, 2021** — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today that USDA is establishing new programs and efforts to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions. The new initiative—**USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers**—will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs. USDA is dedicating at least \$6 billion toward the new programs. The Department will also develop rules for new programs that will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, timber harvesters, as well as provide support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable fuel, among others. Existing programs like the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will fall within the new initiative and, where statutory authority allows, will be refined to better address the needs of producers.

**USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers** was needed, said Vilsack, after a review of previous COVID-19 assistance programs targeting farmers identified a number of gaps and disparities in how assistance was distributed as well as inadequate outreach to underserved producers and smaller and medium operations.

“The pandemic affected all of agriculture, but many farmers did not benefit from previous rounds of pandemic-related assistance. The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to helping as many producers as possible, as equitably as possible,” said Vilsack. “Our new **USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers** initiative will help get financial assistance to a

broader set of producers, including to socially disadvantaged communities, small and medium sized producers, and farmers and producers of less traditional crops.”

USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has committed at least \$2.5 million to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will establish partnerships with organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

The payments announced today under Part 3 will go out under the existing CFAP rules; however, future opportunities for **USDA Pandemic Assistance** will be reviewed for verified need and during the rulemaking process, USDA will look to make eligibility more consistent with the Farm Bill. Moving forward, **USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers** will utilize existing programs, such as the Local Agricultural Marketing Program, Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach, and Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and others to enhance educational and market opportunities for agricultural producers.

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