

USDA to Ensure Direct Aid

USDA is preparing to distribute \$16 billion in direct aid to producers who have experienced financial losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program are expected to be open in early May, but the program as currently designed may leave out farmers and ranchers, including producers who sell into local and regional markets and producers historically underserved by USDA, including farmers of color. Learn more on our FAQ page [here](#).

USDA has not yet released full details on their program, so now is the time to ask questions and speak up to ensure the program works for all farmers in need of aid. **Farmers and Ranchers**, USDA needs to hear directly from you. Take action by posting on social media or call your local FSA office to help make sure COVID-19 relief funds reach your farm or ranch.

Social Media:

- Post a photo on Twitter/Facebook/Instagram of something you are planting/growing/raising right now.
- Share how COVID-19 is impacting your farm business, market losses you're experiencing, ways you are innovating, etc.
- Include a question or two, like: How will the USDA use funding provided by the CARES Act to support local producers like me? How will USDA ensure the funds reach historically underserved communities? How can diversified farmers show their losses? What about farmers whose losses came after April 16th? How can organic farmers qualify at organic prices?
- Use the handle @USDA on Twitter and Facebook and @usdagov on Instagram, and hashtags #dobetterUSDA and #Plant2020. Tag your Members of Congress too!

Call your Local FSA Office:

- Look up your county office via the FSA County Office Directory: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/>
- Give them a call!
- Introduce yourself, your farm, what you do
- Let them know you're calling about the new USDA Coronavirus Food Assistance Program \$16 billion in farmer aid and that you have some questions about your eligibility.

Visit our website for more information and sample social media and questions to ask your FSA office -

<https://kansasruralcenter.org/action-alert-usda-pandemic-aid-for-farmers/>