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**COVID-19 Impacts on Arkansas’ Agricultural and Rural Economies**

**UPDATE:**

**Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Payments in Arkansas**

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Over $128 million in direct payments have been approved for Arkansas farmers and ranchers through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) as of Monday, August 24th according to USDA reporting.

**Table 1** provides details of the over 16,800 applications that have been made through August 24th , with $128,378,083 in payments approved. Payments to livestock producers comprise roughly 71 percent of the approved CFAP payments for Arkansas. Non-specialty crops account for slightly over 25 percent of the total to date. Non-specialty crops eligible for CFAP payments include malting barley, canola, corn, upland cotton, millet, oats, soybeans, sorghum, sunflowers, durum wheat, and hard red spring wheat. Rice and soft red winter wheat were excluded from the CFAP program. The remaining 4 percent of CFAP payments is split among Specialty crop (2.5 percent), Dairy (.8 percent) and the blended category of Aquanursery (.2 percent).

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| **Table 1. Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Payments, Arkansas (as of August 24, 2020)** |
|  | **Payments** | **Payments** **(% of Total)** | **Applications** |
| Livestock | $91,503,034  | 71 percent | 13,504 |
| Non-specialty | $32,696,304  | 25.5 percent | 3,616 |
| Specialty | $3,159,927  | 2.5 percent | 58 |
| Dairy | $1,013,753  | .8 percent | 39 |
| Aquanursery | $5,065 | .2 percent | 1 |
| **Total** | **$128,378,083**  |  | **16,803** |
| Source: USDA, Farm Service Agency. |

**Table 2**. below provides a comparison of cumulative CFAP payments to U.S and Arkansas producers. USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has already approved over $9.2 billion in payments to U.S. producers who have applied for the program. FSA began taking applications May 26, and the agency has received 557,592 applications for this program. Arkansas’ share of CFAP payments is relatively small at 1.4 percent of the total. Iowa, for example, leads all states in payments for both non-specialty crops (17 percent of U.S. total) and livestock (10 percent). California leads in specialty crop payments (35 percent). Wisconsin is the top recipient of dairy payments (20 percent). Louisiana accounts for 80% of the payments to date in the newly added “aquanursery” category. USDA recently expanded eligibility of CFAP direct assistance to 41 more specialty crops, in addition to the 42 added in July, and has added sheep, frozen and liquid eggs, aquaculture, nursery crops and cut flowers.

Producers of certain aquaculture are now eligible for CFAP assistance. Commodities under this category include: catfish, crawfish, largemouth bass and carp sold live as foodfish, hybrid striped bass, red drum, salmon, sturgeon, tilapia, trout, ornamental/tropical fish, and recreational sportfish.

In addition, producers of nursery crops and cut flowers have been extended eligibility for CFAP. Nursery crops are considered decorative or non-decorative plants grown in a container or controlled environment for commercial sale. Cut flowers includes cut flowers and cut greenery from annual and perennial flowering plants grown in a container or controlled environment for commercial sale.

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| **Table 2. Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Payments, U.S. and Arkansas (as of August 24, 2020).** |
| **Commodity** | **U.S. Payments ($)** | **Arkansas Payments ($)** | **Arkansas percent of U.S. Total** | **Arkansas Ranking** |
| Livestock | $4,607,350,439 | $91,503,034  | 2 percent | 14 |
| Non-specialty | $2,424,527,822 | $32,696,304  | 1.3 percent | 18 |
| Specialty | $479,269,769 | $3,159,927  | .7 percent | 19 |
| Dairy | $1,699,299,990 | $1,013,753  | .1 percent | 45 |
| Aquanursery | $11,726,388 | $5,065 | <.1 percent | 17 |
| **Total** | **$9,222,174,407** | **$128,378,083** | **1.4 percent** | **23** |
| Source: USDA, Farm Service Agency. |

Created through the Coronavirus Assistance, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) and coordinated by the USDA Farm Service Agency, CFAP direct payments are designed to provide relief to eligible farmers and ranchers facing financial losses due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through CFAP, USDA is making available $16 billion in financial assistance to farmers.

Producers who have already been approved for CFAP payments initially received 80% of the total payment. Starting August 11, 2020, FSA will automatically issue the remaining 20% of the total calculated payment to producers and, going forward, will pay the full 100% of the total payment, not to exceed the payment limit, to producers when their applications are approved.

USDA will begin accepting applications for the expanded CFAP commodities on August 17 and producers can apply until September 11, 2020. Eligible farmers and ranchers may apply for CFAP direct payments through county USDA Farm Service Agency offices. More information on the CFAP program and the application process may be found at [farmers.gov/cfap](https://www.farmers.gov/cfap). CFAP payment data will be updated and released by the USDA each Monday at 1 p.m. central time at [CFAP Payment Report](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CFAP-PaymentReportData-06152020.pdf).

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