

USDA Pandemic Aid for Farmers: Action Toolkit

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Social Media Samples, Hashtags, and Handles

The most effective thing you can do is share your own story in your own voice - with photos. Most importantly – speak up about the impacts you are seeing, the market losses you are experiencing, the innovating you are doing, and why it’s important that USDA supports farmers like you. You don’t need to have all the answers – just be willing to speak up in your own words! Your own stories, photos, and questions are most important - as is tagging USDA! Here’s a guide to get you started:

Hashtag to use: **#dobetterUSDA**, **#plant2020** (it’s planting season, and USDA is closely following spring planting across the country with the hashtag #plant2020. Has your planting been affected by the pandemic? Use this hashtag too!)

Handles to tag: USDA is @USDA on Facebook and Twitter. Tag your Congressional representative and Senators too! You can look them up here: <https://www.govtrack.us>

- Twitter sample -

Hey @USDA - [your farm] needs #coronavirus aid - I’m worried you will leave us out. This is a photo of [your fields, your crops, etc - what does the photo illustrate?]. [Sample Qs you can use: How can diversified farmers show their losses? How can organic farmers qualify at organic prices? What about farmers whose losses came after April 16? How will you ensure equitable aid to farmers of color? etc] We need you to #dobetterUSDA!

- Facebook sample -

Hey @USDA - my farm has experienced major financial losses due to #coronavirus, but I’m looking for information and your farmer aid program doesn’t seem to include funds for farmers like me. This is a photo of [your fields, your crops, etc] - [share your story here - how has your farm been impacted and what does the photo illustrate?]. [Sample Qs you can use: How can diversified farmers show their losses? How can organic farmers qualify at organic prices? What about farmers whose losses came after April 16? How will you ensure equitable aid to farmers of color? How can this program help me? etc]. We need you to #dobetterUSDA!

Example questions to consider when you call your FSA county office –

- I hear there is aid money available for small farmers who sell at farmers markets and directly to schools and local restaurants which have been impacted by the pandemic. Do you have any information about how to apply for that?

- Do I need to have any sort of documentation of my sales or losses? How do I show the pandemic's impact on my business? [If you are a diversified grower - I grow and sell X varieties of crops and am able to capture a price premium for them. How can I ensure this is reflected in my aid?]
- Is there a way to get support if I am still able to sell my crops but my costs of production, marketing, and delivery have increased because of changing protocols? (Increasing home delivery, paying staff for added time sanitizing, additional safety equipment/PPE, etc.)
- Will I qualify for this program if most of my farm income comes later in the year?
- How will USDA handle payments to diversified farmers who don't produce just one commodity? [Share a little bit about what you grow / raise]
- How can I prove my losses and price information as a certified organic farmer?