



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Small Farms
Coordination

Information for Small Farmers and Ranchers







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Enhancing the viability and economic livelihood of America's small farmers and ranchers is USDA's top priority. The Department's small farms coordinators represent all USDA agencies. This brochure is dedicated to the 2-million-plus small farmers/ranchers across the country. The brochure has vital information and contacts that will assist small farmers/ranchers in obtaining USDA's programs and services. These programs and services are critical to the quality of life of small farmers and ranchers in sustaining their operation. Hopefully, information in this brochure will help small farmers and ranchers respond to the challenges of 21st century agriculture.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alfonzo Drain".

Alfonzo Drain
*Director, Small Farms
Coordination*





Food and Nutrition Service

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) oversees the administration of several nutrition assistance programs that benefit small farmers and community-supported agricultural programs. Under the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) receive coupons to purchase fresh produce from farmers' markets. The FMNP was created to provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared foods (such as fruits and vegetables) from farmers' markets to WIC participants, and to expand the awareness and use of farmers' markets by consumers.



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Under the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), low-income seniors receive coupons or shares to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers' markets, roadside stands, and/or community-supported agricultural programs. The SFMNP serves two worthy goals—improving the health of low-income elderly and increasing the awareness and use of farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agricultural programs.

FNS also encourages small or limited-resource farmers/ranchers to sell fresh fruits and vegetables to schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Both schools and small farmers benefit—schools can provide children fresh, tasty, nutritious produce while small farmers acquire new markets.

For More Information:

On WIC, FMNP, or the SFMNP, call 703-305-2746 or visit the website at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. For additional information about Child Nutrition Programs, please call 703-305-2590 or visit the website at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/.



Agricultural Marketing Service

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is working to identify and promote the development of marketing opportunities for small farms by conducting and supporting research and providing information on farmer direct marketing activities. As part of this effort, AMS maintains a direct marketing Internet web page www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing.htm and updates the farmer's market directory every 2 years. Through the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP), AMS provides matching funds to State departments of agriculture or other State agencies for a wide range of research and service projects aimed at improving the marketing and distribution of agricultural products.

For More Information:

Call AMS Transportation and Marketing Programs at 202-690-1300 or visit the AMS web page at www.AMS.usda.gov/cnd/.





Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) makes a significant contribution to the volume and value of the Nation's foods supply by protecting the health of U.S. agriculture and managing problems caused by wildlife. The agency's programs integrate national animal and plant monitoring, disease surveillance, epidemiology, emergency response, and information delivery to ensure the marketability of U.S. agricultural products. APHIS is proactive and creative in its efforts to help small farmers. By focusing on product and program delivery, APHIS strives to ensure that its program activities support USDA's goal of enhancing the economic livelihood of small farms.

For More Information:

Call Arnold Foudin, APHIS, Small Farms Coordinator at 301-734-7710, or e-mail afoudin@aphis.usda.gov, or visit the website: www.aphis.usda.gov





Risk Management Agency

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) administers the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) programs and promotes the national welfare by improving the economic stability of agriculture through a secure system of crop insurance and risk management tools. In 2002, crop insurance was available on 116 different crops in over 3,000 counties in all 50 States and Puerto Rico. The number of insurable crops and commodities and types of insurance plans continue to increase annually.



RMA meets the crop insurance and risk management needs of the Nation's small and limited-resource farmers and ranchers through a network of public and private-sector partners. Together, RMA and these partners create new crop insurance and risk management products, provide risk management education and outreach, and ensure program accessibility and integrity.

Information Available:

Buying a crop insurance policy is one risk management option a producer can make. Producers should consider how a policy will work in conjunction with their other risk management strategies to ensure the best possible outcome each crop year. Another option is to learn more about the risk management strategies in the areas of marketing, production, financial, human and financial risks. The following RMA Web Addresses provide information on crop insurance, risk management education and outreach opportunities for producers.

For More Information:

Call Sharon Hestvik, Small Farms Coordinator, at 202-720-6685, Sharon_Hestvik@wdc.usda.gov or Marie Buchanan, National Outreach Manager, at 202-690-2686, Marie_Buchanan@wdc.usda.gov



National Agricultural Statistics Service

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) serves the basic agricultural and rural data needs of the country by providing objective, important, and accurate statistical information and services to farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, policy officials, and the public. Timely and accurate data are vital to monitoring the ever-changing agricultural sector and carrying out farm policy. NASS also conducts the Census of Agriculture every 5 years, which is the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the United States. Agricultural statistics is an excellent tool for telling the story of small farmers and ranchers.



For More Information:

NASS publications are available at their website www.usda.gov/nass/ or call the Agricultural Statistics Hotline at 1-800-727-9540.



Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is proud to be a partner in conservation with private land managers, conservation districts, resource conservation and development (RC&D) area councils, State and local governments, Tribal governments, rural communities, businesses, and others. This partnership has helped conserve natural resources and increase agricultural productivity while improving the environment and enhancing the quality of life.

Assistance Available

NRCS has more than 65 years of experience in helping land users plan and install conservation practices to reduce soil erosion, improve soil and water, enhance air quality, improve and restore woodlands and wetlands, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, improve pasture and rangeland, and reduce upstream flooding.

- **Conservation Plans**—NRCS can help develop a conservation plan, a record of your decisions on how you plan to manage the natural resources on your land. A conservation plan will include a land use map, soils information, inventory of resources, engineering notes,





and other supporting information. It is your plan, based on your goals. NRCS will help you develop a plan at no cost.

- **Applying Practices**—Through local conservation districts, farmers and ranchers can get assistance from NRCS in planning and applying conservation practices. These practices include conservation tillage, waterways, terraces, strip cropping, windbreaks, and irrigation water management. There may be financial assistance opportunities available to share in the cost of the practices.

- **Diversifying Farm/Ranch Income**—Your RC&D area office can help you discover opportunities for diversifying into new enterprises or expanding those that you already have. Together you will assess the natural, economic, and social resources of your operation.

For More Information:

Contact your local Conservation District, RC&D area office, NRCS office at 202-720-2847 or call Joan Comanor at 202-720-2847.

Website address: www.nrcs.usda.gov



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) vision sees agriculture as a knowledge-based, global enterprise, sustained by the innovation of scientists and educators. CSREES advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities through a national network of land-grant university State partners which link research, science and technology to people's needs at home and work. Partners include State small farm program coordinators, public and private sectors, including farmers, community-based organizations, and foundations.

CSREES scientists provide national leadership through diverse program initiatives and competitive grant programs which support the food and agricultural sciences. Research, extension, and education efforts address:

- Animal, plant, and human health/nutrition,
- Invasive species,
- Pest management,
- Food safety/security,
- Tropical/subtropical agriculture,
- Water quality,
- Biobased products,
- Sustainable agriculture,
- Natural resource management,
- Forestry,
- International exchange,
- Disaster education, and
- Global change.



CSREES produces the Small Farm Digest newsletter which disseminates direct marketing and other timely information to 15,000 subscribers, including Congress, farmers, ranchers, and those who work with farmers and ranchers at federal, State, and local levels. CSREES also provides leadership for train-the-trainer regional and national small farm conferences.

For More Information:

Call Denis Ebodaghe, The CSREES National Program Leader for Small Farms, USDA/CSREES/Economic and Community Systems (ECS), Ag Box 2215, Washington, DC 20024-2215; Telephone: 202-401-4385; e-mail: debodaghe@reeusda.gov; Small Farm website: www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm/ CSREES Small Farm Hotline: 1-800-583-3071





Farm Service Agency

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Stabilizing farm income, helping farmers conserve land and water resources, providing credit to new or disadvantaged family-size farmers and ranchers, and helping farm operations recover from the effects of disaster through a network of State and county offices are the missions of the FSA. The agency's commodity operations office handles the



acquisition, procurement, storage, and distribution of certain commodities. FSA programs are directed primarily at agricultural producers or, in the case of loans, at those with farming experience. Three- five- person county committees, elected by local farmers, play an important role in carrying out programs at the county level.

Further information and applications for the agency programs are available at local FSA offices. These offices are usually listed in telephone directories under "U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency."

For More Information:

Call Jorge O. Comas at 202-690-1700. For loans to beginning farmers, contact Mark Falcone at 202-720-1632. USDA FSA Public Affairs, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Stop 0506, Washington, DC 20250-0506, FSA home page at www.fsa.usda.gov.



Forest Service

The Forest Service (FS) State and Private Forestry (S&PF) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service connects people to resources, ideas, and one another so they can care for forests and sustain their communities. S&PF provides technical and financial assistance to help rural and urban citizens, including private landowners, care for forests and sustain the communities where



they live, work, and play. Through partnerships with State forestry organizations and many others, Federal funding is leveraged to help produce a variety of forest-based goods and services, such as recreation, water, wildlife and fish resources, timber, and a variety of non-timber products to meet domestic and international needs.

S&PF contributes to healthy forests and livable communities near and through our Nation's forests. There are nearly 500 million acres of non-Federal forest land in the United States, comprising about 20 percent of the Nation's land mass and two-thirds of the Nation's forests. Over 50 percent of the Nation's forests are privately owned. Management practices on these lands impact the social, economic, and natural environment for everyone.

There are a variety of programs administered by the Forest Service for small farmers. Among these is the Forest Land Enhancement Program, which will provide financial, technical and educational assistance to nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) landowners. Urban and Community Forestry assist the urban and community areas and the surrounding forests lands to manage and protect their forests and trees. The Forest Legacy Program secures the development rights from willing landowners to protect the land

from development and keep them as working forests. Economic Action Programs works through communities and organization to promote the economy and private forestry activities. Forest Health and Protection monitors and treats lands impacted by the various forest pests. Fire and Aviation Management assists States, volunteer fire departments and communities to build capacity for controlling fire and assists in wildfire suppression. Many programs on the National Forest lands are also available to surrounding landowners and communities.

For More Information:

Call Hal Brockman at 202-205-1694 or view our website at: www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/





Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) programs help small farmers of grain, oilseeds, and livestock. Technological advances, including biotechnology, are diversifying grain and oilseed quality. Value-added crops have the potential to create new market opportunities for small farms as end users seek suppliers of unique quality attributes. GIPSA programs help foster these market opportunities for America's small farmers. For example, GIPSA is developing the testing technology needed to measure these new quality attributes to promote open and fair price discovery—a farmer must know the quality of his crop to negotiate or demand a fair market price. GIPSA also is developing a process verification system to facilitate the marketing of specialty crops.

GIPSA also promotes fair and competitive markets for livestock, meat, and poultry by enforcing the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 (P&S Act). The P&S Act requires prompt and full payment for livestock and poultry. Livestock buyers subject to the P&S Act are required to maintain a bond or bond equivalent to cover their livestock purchases. Livestock auction markets must establish and maintain a custodial (trust) account for payment to livestock sellers. Packer and poultry trusts established by the P&S Act give unpaid cash sellers of livestock and poultry growers and sellers first claim to trust assets in the event of nonpayment. The P&S Act and its regulations also require subject entities to weigh livestock and poultry accurately.

For More Information:

or to share concerns, or lodge a complaint about a payment or other problem, please call GIPSA's 800-998-3477 toll free or website: www.gipsa.usda.gov





Foreign Agricultural Service

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) administers market development and assistance programs designed to build new markets and improve the competitive position of the U.S. food and agricultural sector, including fish and forest products.



FAS programs help U.S. exporters develop and maintain markets overseas for hundreds of food and agricultural products, from bulk commodities to brand-name items. For example, the Market Access Program (MAP), a cost-share program with non-profit U.S. agricultural trade associations, agricultural cooperatives, non-profit State-regional trade groups, and small businesses, helps finance the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities such as consumer promotions, market research, trade shows, and trade servicing. Export Credit Guarantee Programs encourage exports to buyers in countries where credit is necessary to maintain or increase U.S. sales, but where financing may not be available without such credit guarantees. FAS also provides assistance to exporters through practical marketing information and services to help them locate buyers.

FAS maintains a worldwide agricultural intelligence network that covers changes in policies and assists U.S. exporters with marketing opportunities. FAS enhances U.S. agricultural competitiveness by providing linkages to world resources and international organizations.

For More Information:

Visit the FAS website at www.fas.usda.gov; or telephone 202-720-9509. Your local State department of agriculture also may provide export assistance.



USDA Office of Outreach

Meeting the Challenge to Provide Excellence in Customer Service— The proactive effort to ensure that USDA programs and services are accessible to all constituents, including the under served.

USDA Office of Outreach provides leadership, coordination, facilitation and expertise to internal and external partners to ensure equal and timely access to USDA programs for all constituents, with emphasis on the under served.



Outreach Core Functions:

- Leadership,
- Coordination,
- Communication,
- Education and Training, Program Delivery and Customer Service, and
- Outreach Research and Evaluation.

Outreach serves as the focal point and clearinghouse to coordinate and implement USDA outreach-related activities.

The Office develops and maintains effective vehicles for internal and external coordination and sharing of activities and information.

Outreach develops, manages, coordinates, and supports national level outreach initiatives, programs, and activities that provide information and technical assistance and training to under-served constituents.

For more information on services available:

Call toll free 1-800-880-4183, or 202-720-6350 or by fax 202-720-7489. Outreach contacts are Charles L. Whitaker 202-720-6078 and Darlene Levy 202-720-6081.

Visit our web site at: www.usda.gov/agency/outreach.



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