

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAA for Farmers) program?

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAA for Farmers) program provides free technical assistance in the development of business adjustment plans to producers of raw agricultural commodities and fishermen who have been adversely affected by import competition. The plans are to serve as a guide for adjusting producers' business operations to prevailing economic conditions. TAA for Farmers provides cash payments related to the implementation of an approved initial business plan and development and implementation of a subsequent long-term business adjustment plan.

What Federal law created TAA for Farmers?

Funding for technical assistance and cash payments is made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA, the "stimulus package"). The TAA for Farmers program was originally established under the 2002 Trade Act amendment to the provisions of the Trade Act of 1974. That program was in effect from October 1, 2002 through December 31, 2007. The ARRA revised and reauthorized TAA for Farmers.

Do I qualify?

[See questionnaire.](#)

Who is covered by TAA for Farmers?

TAA for Farmers covers farmers, ranchers, fish farmers, and fishermen. It does not cover the forest products industry.

How will producers become eligible?

A group of producers first petitions the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) for Trade Adjustment Assistance on behalf of producers in their state or group of states. If the petition satisfies eligibility and other program criteria for TAA for Farmers, FAS will certify the group of producers as eligible and publish a notice of such certification in the Federal Register. Producers then have up to 90 days to apply to USDA for benefits, which are conditioned on meeting individual producer eligibility requirements. A producer or group of producers who resides outside of the state or group of states identified in the petition may file a request to become a party to the petition not later than 15 days after the notice is published in the Federal Register,

What criteria must TAA for Farmers petitions satisfy?

At least one of four factors relating to market conditions of the raw commodity must have declined, in the year specified in the petition, by more than 15 percent compared to the average of the previous 3 marketing years. The four factors (covering the entire U.S. or one or more states) are the average price received by producers, quantity of production, value of production, and cash receipts. In addition, FAS must make a determination that increases in imports of like or competitive products “contributed importantly” to the decline in one of these factors. Definitions of “like or competitive products” and the specific criteria for groups and individual producers will be detailed in rules developed by USDA and published in the Federal Register.

Do we qualify?

[See Questionnaire.](#)

What is included in the technical assistance?

The initial technical assistance will include information on improving the yield and marketability of the agricultural commodity, and the feasibility and desirability of substituting one or more alternative agricultural commodities for the commodity affected by import competition. Eligible producers then receive intensive technical assistance, which consists of a series of courses leading up to an initial business plan. Producers may then receive additional technical assistance for development of a longer-term more detailed business plan.

What are the monetary benefits to producers?

Eligible producers who develop an approved business plan, with guidance from educators working under approved Extension programs, are entitled to receive a cash payment of up to \$4,000 to implement the initial business plan or develop a long-term business plan. Producers who subsequently develop approved longer-term business plans are entitled to receive an additional cash payment of up to \$8,000 to implement their long term plans. A producer may not receive more than \$12,000 during the 36-month period following certification of the group petition. Travel and subsistence expenses related to attending training sessions may also be reimbursable.

Unlike prior TAA for Farmers programs, cash payments will not be based on the production level or net-farm income of the individual program applicant.

Do payment limits or income limits apply to applicants?

To be eligible, an applicant is subject to two adjusted gross income limits. An applicant shall not be eligible to receive any benefit if the average adjusted gross nonfarm income of the person or legal entity exceeds \$500,000, or if the average adjusted gross farm

income exceeds \$750,000. These payment limits are established by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm bill).

Payments to an individual producer, excluding subsistence and per diem payments for training attendance, may not exceed \$12,000 in the 36-months following petition approval. Payments for business plan development and implementation are also subject to the payment limits applicable to counter-cyclical and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments established under the 2008 Farm Bill.

How much money is available and when is the program in effect?

\$90 million per year is available for the 2009 and 2010 fiscal years, and \$22.5 million is available for October through December 2011, the final three months of the program. The funds will be used for developing and implementing approved Extension training programs, as determined by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (formerly CSREES¹), for cash payments to producers for development and implementation of business plans, and for USDA administration of the program.

Who administers the program?

Overall program authority rests with the Administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Training in business plan development will be provided by approved Extension programs, as determined by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (formerly CSREES). Payments to producers will be made by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

When can producers apply?

A proposed rule governing the TAA for Farmers program will be developed by USDA and published in the Federal Register for public comment. When that process is completed and a final rule is published, groups can submit petitions. Once a petition is certified, individual producers can submit applications. Watch this website for further information on pending regulations and the submission process.

-  [TAA for Farmers Homepage](#)
-  [Contact Information](#)

¹ As directed by Congress through the 2008 Farm Bill, the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) will become the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) no later than October 1, 2009.