



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

USDA
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Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAAF)

Jackson, MS, (July 19, 2010) - Michael R. Sullivan, State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Mississippi announced that USDA has a revised Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAAF) Program. Under the program, the USDA provides technical assistance and cash benefits to eligible producers of raw agricultural commodities and fishermen who have been hurt by import competition.

“Educational benefits and payments under the TAAF program have been approved for eligible applicants who produced catfish in Mississippi during calendar year 2009. The petition for catfish was filed on May 3, 2010, and was certified on June 25, 2010.” Sullivan said.

Producers who qualify must attend an initial training session for orientation to TAAF, and subsequently will be provided with more intensive education to produce an initial and a long-term business plan to improve their competitiveness with the approved commodity or another commodity. The initial training session and the subsequent intensive training workshops will be provided by the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Participants are eligible for cash payments of up to \$4,000 for completing 12 hours of intensive educational sessions and development of an approved initial business plan, and up to an additional \$8,000 for completing an approved long-term business plan. Plans must be completed within 36 months after the petition is certified. The business plan payments may be reduced based on the level of program participation and available funds.

To be eligible, a producer must:

1. Have produced catfish in calendar year 2009 and in at least one of the prior 3 years (2006, 2007, and/or 2008), AND
2. Provide proof of one of the following:
 - a. That the applicant produced less catfish in 2009 than in the most recent previous year of production.
 - b. That the applicant received a lower price for production in 2009 compared to the average price received for production in the prior 3 years, OR

- c. That the USDA-maintained county price on the petition filing date (May 3, 2010) is less than the average USDA-maintained county price for the prior 3 marketing years. (Eligibility under this option will be determined by USDA)

Producers must provide documentation to establish compliance with one of the above 3 options a, b, or c. This documentation must include total production and price by year.

Also, to be eligible, applicants must comply with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) rules. That is, for 2009 catfish, applicants must be able to certify that their average adjusted gross non-farm income is \$500,000 or less and the average adjusted gross farm income is \$750,000 or less for the years 2005, 2006, and 2007.

Sullivan said applicants must apply for TAA benefits by submitting Form FSA-229-1 to their local County FSA Office by no later than September 23, 2010. Applicants will also be required to submit forms FSA-926 (certification of AGI); the appropriate Payment Limitation form (CCC-902, etc.) and an AD-1026 to certify compliance with conservation compliance provisions.

At the end of the signup period, eligible producers will be contacted by the Mississippi State University Extension Service concerning training times, locations, and available training topics. Initial training sessions are tentatively scheduled for Fall 2010 with intensive training sessions offered in early Spring 2011.

Additional information on TAAF is available at your local FSA County Office, on FSA's web site at www.fsa.usda.gov and on the Foreign Agriculture Service web site at www.fas.usda.gov. A Fact Sheet on the program is available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/htm>.

Contact the local FSA County Office for questions.

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