

COVID-19 UPDATE



UNION ACTIVITY REPORTED IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY

Union protests, organized by the United Farm Workers (UFW), have been occurring over the past couple of days involving several blueberry growers in the Central San Joaquin Valley. Beginning on Monday, May 25th, it was reported that nearly 200 employees walked off a job site after a dispute involving a previously agreed upon change in wages. Activity has reportedly continued at additional blueberry production sites today as well.

It is important to note that in situations like this, clear communication with crews regarding wage adjustments is of paramount importance. It is also important to note that the UFW uses these cases to build support, garner press attention, and push for union elections.

As the situation continues to evolve, the CA Wild Rice Advisory Board will continue to provide updates. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

APPLICATION FOR CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BEGINS TODAY

Starting today, producers of all the eligible commodities may apply for assistance through their local USDA Farm Service Agency center. Interested applicants can locate their service center and find the application at www.farmers.gov/cfap.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced last week that it will provide up to \$2.1 billion in direct payment to specialty crop producers as part of the Coronavirus Farm Assistance Program (CFAP). The payments will be based on losses where prices and market supply chains have been impacted as result of Covid-19.

A payment calculator is available here: <http://fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdafiles/cfap/cfap-payment-calculator-public-facing-version-1-final.xlsm>

You may also access a copy of the application here:

https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/documents/AD3114_200519V01%20%20FINAL.pdf

USDA PROPOSAL ON HOW SUBMIT ADDITIONAL COMMODITIES TO RECEIVE CFAP PAYMENTS

On Friday, USDA issued a proposed rule around requesting assistance for identifying additional commodities that should be eligible for CFAP payments. Here is the link:

Link to Doc: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-05-22/pdf/2020-11155.pdf>

Per the proposed rule, USDA will be receiving comments until June 22, 2020. As part of the comment for submission, USDA is looking for the following information:

- (1) What commodities not listed above have suffered a 5-percent-or greater price loss between January and April 2020 and face additional marketing costs due to COVID-19?
- (2) What was the price received per unit of measure sold the week of January 13 through January 17, 2020, (or if not available, the nearest to this date) and what is the basis for the determination of this price?
- (3) What was the price received per unit of measure sold the week of April 6 through April 10, 2020, (or if not available, the nearest date to this) and what is the basis for the determination of this price?

According to the Federal Register Notice: If sufficient information is received and a decision is made to add commodities to the program, USDA will issue another NOFA listing the additional commodities, the respective payment rates, application dates, and any other unique information that producers will need to know for those commodities and the availability of CFAP payments.