

From: Campbell, Erica (Sanders) <Erica_Campbell@sanders.senate.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 6:29 PM
Subject: RE: Relief for farms during COVID-19 pandemic

Dear farmers,

I hope you and your families are well and you are getting through these challenging times. I am sharing a few updates that may be helpful.

Agriculture support:

As you may have heard, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue recently announced a plan for the over [\\$20 billion allocated to Ag producers in the CARES Act](#). The plan was short on details, but essentially will provide \$16 billion in direct payments to farmers and \$3 billion in food product purchases for distribution through the emergency food system. We have learned that dairy producers will receive \$2.9 billion in direct payments, and \$2.1 billion will go to specialty crop producers. The payments are based on milk production and calculated through a formula. There's a good [Hoard's Dairyman article](#) that provides some good estimates. We do not know exact timeline, but have heard there will be a sign up through FSA and payments may be as early as late May. For food purchases for the emergency food system, USDA said they would spend \$100 million per month on a variety of dairy products.

Small business support:

The Senate passed a bill on Tuesday that added more money to the [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#) and the [Economic Injury Disaster Loan \(EIDL\)](#) program. This just passed the House a few minutes ago, and we expect it to be promptly signed by the President (meaning these program could both be back open tomorrow). The bill also **made farmers eligible for the EIDL program**. As a reminder, the PPP is a loan through a lender (Yankee Farm Credit, VEDA, your bank, etc.) that reimburses for payroll and other expenses spent over an 8 week period as long as employees are hired back or retained. You can use the money for employee salaries, paid sick or medical leave, insurance premiums, and mortgage, rent, and utility payments. The EIDL program is a loan program directly through SBA which can be used to cover a wide variety of expenses. It provides a grant (the EEIG) up to \$10,000 (\$1,000 per employee up to 10) whether the applicant takes the loan or not. Note, there has been a major backlog in applications and most Vermont businesses have not yet back from SBA after applying. Hopefully that will be resolved soon.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA):

Self-employed farmers are eligible to apply for PUA if you have had some level of lost income. The VT DOL system opened up last night. If eligible (and I think many farmers could be), you'd receive a minimum of \$790 per week and a maximum of \$1,113 per week. <https://labor.vermont.gov/PUA>

If you haven't checked them out, there are great resource lists on both the [Vermont Agency of Agriculture website](#) and the [Vermont Farm to Plate website](#). If you need business advising, the [Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Network](#) has wonderful advisors. Other support programs include [Farm First](#) and [Ag Mediation](#).

Please feel free to reach out with questions anytime!

Wishing you and your families good health,
Erica

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[Senator Sanders' COVID-19 Resource Page](#)