



September 18, 2020

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This Week at the Statehouse

Legislative Update - September Session Week 1

The General Assembly was back in Columbia this week to address legislation, the budget, and CARES Act funding.

November 3, 2020 Election: On September 16, 2020, Governor McMaster signed into law that all voters are now qualified to vote absentee under the "State of Emergency" reason for the November 3, 2020 election. All voters can vote absentee in person at their county voter registration office or request an application and vote absentee by mail. An absentee ballot applications must be received by county voter offices by 5 p.m. on Oct. 24 if sent by mail and by 5 p.m. on Oct. 30 if applications are received in person. Also, the law allows county offices to open the outer envelope of absentee ballots two days before Election Day and start counting the actual ballots starting at 7 a.m. on Nov. 3.

Rollback Taxes (H. 3596): The Senate gave third reading this week to the H. 3596 - the Rollback tax bill. The bill was amended in the Senate so it will be sent back to the House for them to consider whether to accept the changes made in the Senate. If

signed into law, rollback taxes would go from five years to three years on a piece of property which is in agricultural use and is being applied to another use

Disaster Relief and Resilience Act (S. 259): This bill, if passed, would create the South Carolina Office of Resilience, which will be charged with developing, implementing, and maintaining the statewide resilience plan, and will coordinate any statewide resilience and disaster recovery plan. Additionally, it would create the South Carolina Resilience Revolving Fund.

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On September 18, 2020, the USDA announced to an additional \$14 billion dollars for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 2) will begin September 21st and run through December 11, 2020.

CFAP 2 payments will be made for three categories of commodities - Price Trigger Commodities, Flat-rate Crops and Sales Commodities.

Price Trigger Commodities

Price trigger commodities are major commodities that meet a minimum 5-percent price decline over a specified period of time. Eligible price trigger crops include barley, corn, sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers, upland cotton, and all classes of wheat. Payments will be based on 2020 planted acres of the crop, excluding prevented planting and experimental acres. Payments for price trigger crops will be the greater of: 1) the eligible acres multiplied by a payment rate of \$15 per acre; or 2) the eligible acres multiplied by a nationwide crop marketing percentage, multiplied by a crop-specific payment rate, and then by the producer's weighted 2020 Actual Production History (APH) approved yield. If the APH is not available, 85 percent of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield for that crop will be used.

For broilers and eggs, payments will be based on 75 percent of the producers' 2019 production.

Dairy (cow's milk) payments will be based on actual milk production from April 1 to Aug. 31, 2020. The milk production for Sept. 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2020, will be estimated by FSA.

Eligible beef cattle, hogs and pigs, and lambs and sheep payments will be based on the maximum owned inventory of eligible livestock, excluding breeding stock, on a date selected by the producer, between Apr. 16, 2020, and Aug. 31, 2020.

Flat-rate Crops

Crops that either do not meet the 5-percent price decline trigger or do not have data available to calculate a price change will have payments calculated based on eligible 2020 acres multiplied by \$15 per acre. These crops include alfalfa, extra long staple (ELS) cotton, oats, peanuts, rice, hemp, millet, mustard, safflower, sesame, triticale, rapeseed, and several others.

Sales Commodities

Sales commodities include specialty crops; aquaculture; nursery crops and floriculture; other commodities not included in the price trigger and flat-rate categories, including tobacco; goat milk; mink (including pelts); mohair; wool; and other livestock (excluding breeding stock) not included under the price trigger category that were grown for food, fiber, fur, or feathers. Payment calculations will use a sales-based approach, where producers are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales.

A complete list of eligible commodities, payment rates and calculations can be found on farmers.gov/cfap.