

Trade Adjustment Assistance Program



What is Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers and Fishermen

The Trade Act of 1974, as amended by the Trade Act of 2002, established Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers. The Trade Act of 1974 was created by Congress to provide business owners and their employees relief from hardships created by foreign import competition.

The purpose of TAA for Farmers is to help agricultural producers and fishermen adjust to import competition. The amended program provides technical assistance and cash benefits to eligible farmers and fishermen from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and access to Department of Labor (DOL) retraining and education programs.

Traditional TAA has provided technical assistance and labor retraining services to non-agricultural businesses and employees. TAA for farmers expands the benefits to include:

- Technical assistance from the Extension Service to assist producers and fishermen in exploring alternative commodities, marketing opportunities, and alternative enterprises.
- A cash payment of up to \$10,000 depending on the amount of product you harvested.
- Retraining and education to help producers and fishermen transition to a different career, including tuition for up to 104 weeks of full-time classroom education.

Establishing a Commodity's Eligibility for TAA

Commodities must be certified as eligible for TAA before individual producers can apply for benefits. The eligibility criteria for a commodity are:

- Average price of the commodity in the most recent 12 months must be less than 80% of the average price over the past 5 years in which data is available.
- Imports of directly competing products must have increased during the most recent 12 month period.
- Increase in imports must have “contributed importantly” to the price decrease.

Petitions to seek TAA eligibility may be filed by a group of agricultural producers or their representatives (grower groups) with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

The TAA petition form is available at www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa/FAS0930.pdf or may be requested by phone at (202) 720-2916 or by e-mail at trade.adjustment@fas.usda.gov. Petitions may be made on behalf of a state, region or the nation as a whole.

FAS does an initial eligibility screen. If the petition meets basic requirements, the information is posted in the Federal Register and FAS must announce the determination regarding a commodity's eligibility within 40 days of posting in the Federal Register.

Applying for Individual Producer or Fishermen TAA Benefits

Producer or fishermen are eligible to apply for TAA benefits once a commodity petition has been certified and if:

- They are an owner, operator, landlord, tenant, sharecropper, or fisherman who is entitled to a share of the commodity available for marketing from the farm or fishing operation.
- They harvested the commodity in the year for which TAA eligibility has been established.

Applying for Cash Benefits

Application must be made at a USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office within 90 days after the commodity has been certified as eligible for TAA. The application form is available at http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/Forms/FSA0229_030923V01.pdf or at local FSA offices. Information regarding the location of local FSA office is available at http://oip.usda.gov/scripts/ndisapi.dll/oip_agency/index?state=us&agency=fsa. After an application has been submitted the applicant has until September 30 of the current year to submit the following documentation:

- Certification that technical assistance has been received from the Extension Service.
- Acceptable production documentation for the commodity.
- Evidence that net income was less than the last year in which no adjustment assistance was received.
- Proof that average gross revenue was less than \$2.5M for preceding 3 years.

Applying for Technical Assistance Benefits

Technical assistance at no cost will be widely available through the Extension Service. Technical assistance must be completed within 180 days after the commodity has been certified as eligible for TAA. Sources for technical assistance are listed at <http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/taa/> or can be obtained by contacting one of the four regional TAA centers:

Western Region	Washington State University	(800) 477-4012
Southern Region	Texas A&M University	(254) 968-4144
Northeast Region	University of Delaware	(302) 831-6540
North Central Region	University of Nebraska	(402) 472-2039

Technical assistance will help producers and fishermen evaluate opportunities to improve production efficiencies, alternative or improved marketing, and alternative enterprises potentially suitable for the geographic area.

Applying for Retraining and Education Benefits

To apply for Department of Labor retraining and education benefits contact your state department of labor. Links to your state department of labor TAA coordinators are available at <http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/contacts.cfm>. The national Department of Labor TAA site is <http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact>.

The Department of Labor provides TAA employment counseling, case assessment, job development, and self-directed job search services. Education assistance (Trade Readjustment Allowances) pay tuition and travel for up to 104 weeks of full-time education including classroom training, on-the-job training, and employer –based training.

Deadlines to Apply for Benefits

Application for cash benefits must be made at with FSA within 90 days after FAS announces a commodity is approved for TAA.

Technical assistance must be received from the Extension Service within 180 after FAS announces a commodity is approved for TAA.

Department of Commerce Assistance

Farmers and fishermen may also qualify for assistance as business owners through the U.S. Department of Commerce. Qualified applicants may receive 50% cost sharing for projects like developing business plans, creating new marketing strategies, research and new product development, or design of marketing materials. A separate application with the Department of Commerce is required. For more information contact go to www.taacenters.org/locations.html.

To Obtain Further Information

Extension's one stop site for information on technical assistance is <http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/taa>. This site also provides links to obtaining cash benefits from FSA and retraining benefits from the Department of Labor. You can also obtain additional information at your local FSA or Extension county offices.

Alternatively you can contact the Washington, D.C. Trade Adjustment Assistance Office, Foreign Agricultural Service, at (202) 720-2916 or write to USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service, Trade Adjustment Assistance, STOP 1021, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1021, or e-mail at trade.adjustment@fas.usda.gov.