



Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: Jan. 6, 2025

When is the MASC sign-up deadline?

The MASC sign-up deadline has been extended to Friday, January 10, 2025.

Is the deadline to submit associated eligibility documents January 8, 2025?

Producers may provide the eligibility forms by January 8, 2026, if not already on file for the 2025 program year. *Note: Eligibility forms and determinations submitted after the MASC enrollment deadline may affect payment timing.*

Is the payment limitation set or can a producer request an increase in payment limitation?

The payment limitation is \$900,000, which may be lowered if demand for the program exceeds available funding. Producers cannot request an increase to the payment limitation for the MASC Program.

Will payment attribution be modified and applied as it was under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)?

No, the total amount of payments that a person or legal entity (excluding general partnerships and joint ventures) may receive is \$900,000. Attribution rules are explained in the MASC Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA).

If a producer exceeds the \$900,000 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limit what additional information should they provide?

The producer will need to complete forms CCC-941 and the CCC-942.

Form CCC-941, Averaged Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information, for the producer and members of entities;

Form CCC-942, Certification of Income from Farming, Ranching and Forestry Operations, if applicable, for the producer and members of entities.



What is the eligible producer criteria for MASC?

To be eligible for MASC, a producer must be in the business of farming at the time of application and be entitled to an ownership share and share in the risk of producing a specialty crop that will be sold in calendar year 2025. To be considered in the business of farming at the time of application, a producer must have an active business operation with assets and resources needed to grow, harvest, and market a specialty crop in calendar year 2025. Producers who previously grew a specialty crop but have ceased operation at the time of application (for example, through the sale of land and equipment needed to produce a crop) are not eligible for MASC.

With the payment per person or entity, if one person owns two entities with two specialty crops, can they apply under both entities per specialty crop?

The MASC applicant will be the producer who meets the eligible producer criteria, which could be different entities for different crops.

Is there a minimum planted acreage requirement for 2025?

To be an eligible producer, they must be in the business of farming at the time of the application, a producer must have an active business operation with assets and resources needed to grow, harvest, and market a specialty crop in calendar year 2025. There is no minimum amount that must be planted.

What are the MASC payment factors?

The payment factors will be determined and announced through a press release after the end of the application period.

What is the eligibility criteria for new specialty crop producers in 2025?

A new producer must have either of the following:

- a legally binding sales contract or purchase agreement for the specialty crop; or
- evidence that, at the time of application, a specialty crop has been planted and is expected to be harvested and sold in the 2025 calendar year.



Are new producers required to provide the required supporting documentation by the MASC enrollment deadline?

Yes, for a new producer a complete application includes the required application forms and required supporting documents to support the FSA-1141. If the application is not complete by the application deadline, it is considered late-filed.

If a new producer has started transplants in a greenhouse to be planted in the field later, would this be considered "planted" to meet new producer eligibility criteria?

Yes, as a specialty crop has been planted and is expected to be harvested and sold in the 2025 calendar year. The producer's expected 2025 sales must be based on realistic projections that are supported by acceptable documentation demonstrating the producer's ability to achieve the expected sales and their ability to grow, harvest, and market the expected yield or inventory.

Expected sales of new producers without a sales contract are based on inventory that has been planted at the time of application. Does the inventory of seeds already purchased for summer crops that have yet to be planted, such as watermelons, qualify the producer?

If the producer has not produced specialty crops in 2023 or 2024 and is considered a new producer in 2025, then they must either have a sales/purchase contract or the crop must be planted at the time of application. Receipts for purchase of seeds are not sufficient to meet the new producer criteria.

Is a producer who is still in the business of farming and producing specialty crops in 2025, but has reduced the size of their operation eligible?

Yes, as long as the producer is in the business of farming at the time of application and is entitled to an ownership share and shares in the risk of producing a specialty crop that will be sold in calendar year 2025.

If a producer was affected by flooding in both in 2023 and 2024 and had minimal sales in those years, can they apply as a new producer and use expected 2025 sales?

No, existing producers must use their actual sales for 2023 or 2024 and can include their Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) payments or crop insurance indemnity payments.

Are buyers of specialty crops eligible for the program?

No, the applicant must be in the business of farming at the time of application and be entitled to an ownership share and share in the risk of producing a specialty crop that will be sold in calendar year 2025.



If a contract includes a guarantee, is the producer still eligible for MASC?

The contract must still maintain producer eligibility in that the producer must be entitled to an ownership share and share in the risk of producing the specialty crop.

If a producer is still farming but no longer producing a specialty crop, are they considered ineligible?

The producer would not be eligible. To be eligible for MASC, a producer must be in the business of farming at the time of application and be entitled to an ownership share and share in the risk of producing a specialty crop that will be sold in calendar year 2025.

Are small producers selling their raw crop to a processor eligible?

Yes, small producers are eligible if they meet the MASC program eligibility requirements. Existing producers using 2023 or 2024 sales are not required to have a contract, but the FSA County Committee may ask for sales receipts or other documents to substantiate the producer's eligibility and total sales.

Must a producer choose either the 2023 or 2024 sales year on the MASC application?

Yes, the producer must choose the specific year (2023 or 2024) for eligible specialty crop sales.

What should a producer include in the eligible specialty crop sales certification?

Eligible specialty crop sales include gross receipts of the raw crop marketed are considered eligible specialty crop sales for MASC purposes. Federal crop insurance indemnities and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) indemnities received for the 2023 or 2024 specialty crops before the MASC deadline are also included. *Note: Reported sales do not need to be adjusted to deduct for charges and expenses necessary to reach marketability of the raw crop and its intended use.*

Eligible specialty crop sales exclude sales of value-added products resulting from manufacturing and/or processing activities that transform the intended use of the raw crop into a value-added product, including but not limited to shelling and hulling of tree nuts, processing of fruits into wines and jellies, or making sap into syrup.

Is transportation an expense that must be excluded from sales?

Transportation is not a required deduction to the initial point of sale. If it is a nonitemized sales receipt/price the price should already reflect all costs to arrive at the initial point of market for the raw crop's intended use and should not be further adjusted.



Are citrus crops intended for juice instead of fresh crop sales considered value-added? If so, do the sales have to be converted to the fresh citrus price?

No, the eligible specialty crop sales must reflect the sales price of the intended use for the raw commodity. Reported sales do not need to be adjusted to deduct for charges and expenses necessary to reach marketability of the raw crop and its intended use. Citrus intended for juice production will use the juice sales and will not require conversion.

What is the mechanism for producers who only market value-added specialty crops to certify the value of the raw commodity?

Producers who only have value-added crops must determine the amount of production for the raw crop that was used in the value-added products that were sold. The producer may determine the amount to report as sales by multiplying the amount of production by a price for the raw crop. The price source can be the FSA National Crop Table, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) prices, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) price data, or published local prices.

If a producer grows blueberries and also purchases blueberries from other producers to sell as frozen products, can the producer use the price they paid for the purchased blueberries to determine the value of the raw commodity they produced for their sales?

Yes, in this example the producer may use the price they paid for blueberries from other growers to determine the sales for the processed blueberries they produced. Other price sources include the FSA National Crop Table, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) prices, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) price data, or published local prices. Only the blueberries grown by the producer may be included in the producer's sales.

If a producer has to convert sales to the raw commodity and does not have actual sales data what data sources can be used? Example: grapes for winery, floriculture etc.

There are multiple prices a producer can utilize. The price must be a reasonable price. It can be an actual price the producer received for a separate portion of the commodity, a documented price that other producers received, or a price from the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Extension data, etc.

Are maple syrup sales required to be converted to maple sap, the raw commodity?

Yes, MASC is based on the raw specialty crop and will use the same conversion for maple syrup that was used for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) 2.



Is a producer using 2023 or 2024 sales eligible whether or not they have a contract or legally binding agreement as long as they have sales receipts?

Existing producers using 2023 or 2024 sales are not required to have a contract, but the FSA County Committee may ask for sales receipts or other documents to substantiate the producer's eligibility and total sales.

Do producers have to be actively growing a specialty crop in 2025, or does only marketing a specialty crop in 2025 (that was grown in perhaps 2024 or 2023) still count?

Producers must be in the business of farming at the time of application. To be considered in the business of farming at the time of application, a producer must have an active business operation with assets and resources needed to grow, harvest, and market a specialty crop in calendar year 2025. *Note: If a producer produces a biannual crop (perennial crop only harvested every other year) the producer can maintain eligibility if they have an active business operation with assets and resources and will market a specialty crop in 2025.*

Can sales from crops grown and harvested in a prior year be included in eligible specialty crop sales, if the sales were actually received in 2023 or 2024?

Crops grown and harvested in a prior year may be included in 2023 and 2024 sales as long as the sales were actually received in either 2023 or 2024. For 2023 and 2024 sales, there is no qualifier associated to when the crop was planted or harvested.

If a producer receives an indemnity in 2024 for a 2023 crop should that be counted for 2023?

An indemnity for a 2023 crop received during the 2024 calendar year would be considered part of the producer's 2023 sales. Federal crop insurance indemnities and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) payments for the 2023 or 2024 crop year will be included for 2023 or 2024, respectively, regardless of when they were received by the producer, as long as they are received prior to the MASC enrollment deadline.

If an indemnity for 2024 has not yet been received, should the producer include the estimate or use year 2023 since it is complete?

Producers cannot include estimated amounts for indemnities they have not received. To include crop insurance indemnities and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) payments for the 2023 or 2024 crop year, they must be received by the MASC enrollment deadline.



What are the eligible crop insurance indemnities to be included in eligible specialty crop sales?

Only Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) reinsured indemnities may be included. Private hail or other private insurance indemnities are not eligible to be included.

If producers have specialty crops purchased for resale and there is a change in characteristic due to time held, should the producer subtract out the cost of purchasing the original crop?

No, the cost of purchasing the crop is not subtracted from the producer's eligible sales as long as there is a characteristic change due to time held prior to actual sale of the crop.

Do eligible specialty crop sales for tree nuts include the in-shell sales price or the shelled (processed) sales?

Eligible sales for tree nuts are the in-shell price prior to shelling/processing. This is the first point of marketability.

We have producers who grow dahlias or similar floriculture crops. Should sales include both the sales of the flower and the tubers or are sales limited to just the flower?

Yes, both the sales of the flowers and tubers can be included.

A producer has sold specialty crops in 2023 and 2024. But, are not sure what year to choose due to the payment factor not determined yet. Can the producer refer to the Sales Range information to help them determine what year they should use for the application?

Yes, the MASC sales range information can be utilized to explain the program and payment calculation to the producer. Factors are unknown, but sales ranges are published and will not change.

Are organic crops eligible?

Eligible specialty crops provided in the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) are eligible regardless of organic status.

Would food-grade Non-GMO soybeans (reported and insured as such) be an eligible specialty crop?

No, they are not considered eligible because they are considered an oilseed crop.



Are sunflowers certified as grain or seed eligible for MASC?

No, sunflowers are considered an oilseed and are ineligible.

Are truffles an eligible crop?

Yes, fungus is considered a vegetable and an eligible specialty crop under the MASC program.

Is Hemp or CBD oil eligible?

No, hemp is not considered an eligible specialty crop for MASC.

Does Birch Tree Sap count as a specialty crop?

No, birch tree sap is not an eligible specialty crop for MASC.

Are nursery crops grown in ground and containers both eligible?

Nursery crops are eligible crops regardless of whether grown in ground or in containers.

Sweet corn is often grown and always sold as a vegetable. Is sweet corn considered a specialty crop?

Sweet corn is considered a vegetable and is an eligible specialty crop.

Is popcorn an eligible specialty crop under MASC?

No, popcorn is not an eligible specialty crop. The only type of corn eligible for MASC is sweet corn.

Are Christmas wreaths eligible for MASC under floriculture?

Christmas wreaths are considered a value-added product since they are made from the raw commodity of Christmas trees or greenery. However, the raw product of Christmas trees and/or floriculture products are eligible. Sales must be reported as the portion for the raw commodity.

Is there a linkage requirement for this program?

No, MASC does not have a linkage requirement.



If a customer has farms across multiple different states/counties, do they need to fill out more than one application?

No, the producer will complete one MASC application nationwide for their operation.

If a producer planted a specialty crop in 2024 and sold all of it in 2024, but plan on planting significant more acreage in 2025, are there provisions for the increase in acres? Could they be considered a new producer even if they sold all of the crop in 2024?

Producers who had a full year of specialty crop sales in 2023 or 2024 must select one of those years. They are not considered a new producer and adjustments to 2023 or 2024 sales for an increase in capacity in 2025 are not authorized under MASC.

Are nonprofits eligible?

Yes, nonprofits are eligible if they meet MASC eligible producer criteria.

A producer grows an eligible specialty crop but not every year due to crop rotation. Are they still eligible? One year specialty crop, next year grain crop, next year specialty crop, etc.

A producer must be in the business of farming at the time of application and be entitled to an ownership share and share in the risk of producing a specialty crop that will be sold in calendar year 2025. If the producer will not be planting or marketing any specialty crops in 2025 they are not eligible. If the operation includes 2025 as a rotational year, they do not meet eligibility criteria.

Is a producer eligible for MASC who grew strawberries in 2023 and/or 2024 but will not grow strawberries in 2025, but will grow other eligible specialty crops in 2025?

To be eligible for MASC, a producer must be in the business of farming at the time of application and be entitled to an ownership share and share in the risk of producing a specialty crop that will be sold in calendar year 2025. The policy does not require the producer to plant the same specialty crop in 2025. However, their eligible specialty crop sales will be those in 2023 or 2024.

Is a farm number required to apply for MASC?

No, a farm number is not required. However, the producer must meet conservation compliance provisions. There are some requirements for a farm number to obtain conservation compliance, but not in all cases. Check with your local FSA Office to determine the specific requirement applicable to your operation.



If a producer did not have any specialty crop sales in 2023 or 2024, as 100% was prevented plant, would they be eligible for MASC or did they have to have sales plus a crop insurance indemnity?

The producer could be eligible and would report their federal crop insurance indemnity as eligible sales.

Are farmer's markets considered commercially marketed and would sales from that be eligible to include in their sales?

Yes, sales of the raw commodity and intended use at farmer's markets are included in eligible sales.

Is an existing 2023 or 2024 specialty crop producer required to provide sales receipts to support their application at the time of enrollment?

For existing producers, a certification is only required. However, FSA County Committees may request additional supporting documentation when necessary prior to approval and payment.

Note: All producers MUST maintain sales records and all other associated documentation to support their certified sales in case selected for spot check.

Do the Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning and Veteran Farmer certifications (CCC-860) affect a producer's payment?

No, certification as a socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning, or a veteran farmer or rancher on form CCC-860 is not applicable to MASC and does not affect the MASC payment calculation.