

JUNE 2, 2026

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## GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

## USDA Opens Specialty Crop Assistance Program Enrollment

- According to a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [press release](#), the agency will provide \$1.625 billion in payments through the new Assistance for Specialty Crops Farmers (ASCF) program to help producers address elevated input costs and market disruptions linked to foreign trade practices.
- USDA announced that producers with a Login.gov account can begin accessing and submitting pre-filled applications as of June 1, 2026, while producers enrolling through local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices can begin the process on June 8, 2026. The enrollment period closes on August 7, 2026.
- According to USDA, payments will be based on eligible specialty crop acreage reported to FSA for the 2025 crop year, with payment rates ranging from \$650 per acre for the highest-value specialty crops to \$25 per acre for eligible beans and peas. The program includes a \$250,000 payment limitation.
- USDA indicated that approved payments could begin flowing as early as the first week of enrollment, reflecting the agency's effort to expedite assistance to specialty crop producers facing market and cost pressures.
- A corresponding [Federal Register notice](#) provides additional implementation details, including eligibility requirements, payment limitations, and crop-specific payment rates. For the cherry industry, the notice confirms that sweet cherries qualify for the program's highest payment tier at \$650 per acre.

**A REPORT FOR  
THE CALIFORNIA  
CHERRY BOARD**

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