

Farm Household Allowance – what to expect



Key steps while you're getting FHA

Your Farm Household Case Officer (FHCO) will contact you when you start getting Farm Household Allowance (FHA). They guide and support you while on this payment.

Starting on FHA

You'll need to complete a Farm Financial Assessment. This is due one month from the date we request it. If you don't complete it, your FHA payment may stop. Talk to your FHCO as soon as possible if you need more time.

After completing your assessment, you need to meet with your FHCO. They'll help you to work out your Financial Improvement Agreement. This agreement sets out your goals and activities while you're getting FHA. You have 28 days to enter into an agreement or your payment may stop. Talk to your FHCO as soon as possible if you need more time.

Your FHCO can refer you to a Rural Financial Counsellor (RFC). These counsellors can help you work out your financial and business options. They can prepare you for meetings with your lenders and can go along for support. You can work with an RFC at any stage before, during or after getting FHA.

Making the most of FHA

The activities in your agreement will help you to improve your financial situation. You might get an activity supplement worth up to \$10,000 over your lifetime. Check with your FHCO before you start an activity.

You need to tell us about all your farm and non-farm income. People with employment income need to report every 2 weeks. Everyone else needs to report every 6 weeks.

We'll tell you how often you need to report when we approve your claim. The easiest ways to report your income are online, using myGov or through the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app. You can also call the Centrelink reporting line on **133 276**.

Each year, we'll ask you to complete a Farm Financial Update by providing information from your most recent tax returns.

Your FHCO will discuss the Farm Financial Update with you and send you a letter asking you to provide information.

You'll usually have one month from the date of our request to complete your Farm Financial Update. If you need more time, call your FHCO as soon as possible.

Your FHCO will contact you every 3 months to check how you're going with your activities.

Talk to your FHCO if your circumstances change or if you want to change your agreed activities.

Let us know as soon as possible if your financial situation improves. This is so you won't get overpaid and have to pay us back.

Preparing to come off FHA

When you're close to the end of 4 years on FHA, your FHCO will help you to leave the program. If you stop getting FHA before 4 years are up, you can always claim again later if you need to.

FHA is available for 4 years in a specified 10-year period. A new 10-year period started on 1 July 2024.

If you used your 4 years of FHA in the previous 10-year period, you can claim again.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide to payments and services. It's your responsibility to decide if you'll apply for a payment, with regard to your particular circumstances.

FHA – an overview

Farm Household Allowance

FHA is a program of support that includes a fortnightly payment for farmers and their partners who are in financial hardship.

Payment is at the maximum rate of JobSeeker Payment or Youth Allowance.

You can get FHA for up to 4 years in specific 10-year periods.

You don't have to use these 4 years all at once. You can save it for when you need it.

The amount of FHA you get depends on your income and assets. Your combined net personal and net farm assets must be below \$5.5 million. Let us know if your income or assets go up or down so we pay you the right amount.

Farm Household Case Officer

An FHCO will contact you when you start to get FHA. They'll guide and support you through your time on this payment. This includes making sure you're doing what you need to do to keep getting FHA. They'll check in with you every 3 months. If you have questions about FHA activities once you start getting the payment, call your FHCO.

Farm Financial Assessment

This is an assessment of your farm's financial position. You and a financial assessor need to complete it online. It helps you to see how you can improve your farm business. You can get up to \$1,500 inclusive of GST to pay for the assessment. You do the first part of the assessment and the financial assessor does the rest.

Financial assessor

This type of financial assessor is someone who both:

- normally provides this kind of advice or assessment
- has relevant financial, agronomic or business qualifications or expertise to complete the FFA.

The financial assessor can't have a conflict of interest. This means they can't:

- have an interest in the farm, including a business or trust that owns the farm
- be an immediate family member of yours or anyone else who has an interest in the farm.

Ask the person if they qualify to be a financial assessor. If you're still not sure check with your FHCO.

Financial Improvement Agreement

This agreement sets out your goals and activities over the next 4 years. It helps you to improve your financial position. For some people their goal may be to improve productivity. For others their goal may be to find work away from the farm. The agreement can include study or training to help you improve your financial position on or off the farm. Your FHCO will develop this agreement with you. You can change your agreement if your circumstances change. If you can't complete an activity as agreed, talk to your FHCO as soon as possible or your FHA payment may stop.

Activity supplement

You can get an activity supplement to help pay for agreed activities. It's worth up to \$10,000 over your lifetime. This amount is available only once. It doesn't reset each time you get FHA.

You can use the supplement for activities such as:

- professional advice
- study, training, or counselling
- travel and accommodation related to an activity.

Speak to your FHCO before you do the activity. They'll tell you if you can pay for it with an activity supplement.

Rural Financial Counselling Service

This service gives financial counselling to farmers in hardship, at no cost to you. You can meet an RFC on your farm or at another convenient location. They'll look at your current financial position to give you options for the future. They can also help with debt mediation and succession planning.

For help finding a counsellor, go to agriculture.gov.au/rfcs

For more information

 Go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/farmhouseholdallowance

 Call your Farm Household Case Officer.

Call the farmer assistance hotline on **132 316, Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.**