

Financial and support services for farmers and their partners



centrelink

Help is available for rural families who may need a hand during tough times.

Farm Household Allowance

Farm Household Allowance (FHA) is for farmers and their partners facing financial hardship. You can get the allowance for up to four years. You don't have to use these four years all at once. It's the same rate as Newstart Allowance. It's paid fortnightly.

Your income and assets may determine the amount of payment you'll get. It's important not to self assess—make a claim to check if you're eligible.

You can also claim activity supplements of up to \$4000 if you get FHA to help with activities to meet your mutual obligation requirements. You may also be eligible for:

- Pharmaceutical Allowance
- Remote Area Allowance
- Rent Assistance.



Immediate relief for farming families

From 1 September 2018, customers getting FHA will get an FHA supplement.

If you're:

- single, you may get one or two lump sum payments of \$3600
- partnered, you may get one or two lump sum payments of \$3000. This will be paid to each member of the couple if they both get FHA.

If you're not currently getting FHA, you can:

- claim before 1 December 2018 to get the first payment
- claim after 1 December and before 1 June 2019 to get the second payment.

The first lump sum payment will be paid from September 2018. The second lump sum payment will be paid from March 2019. These payments are taxable.

The farm asset test also increases to \$5 million. This limit applies until 30 June 2019. This means more farmers may get FHA.

If you're approved under the \$5 million assets test, you'll continue to get FHA until your payment stops.

How to claim

The easiest way to claim FHA is online at humanservices.gov.au/farmhouseholdallowance. If you can't claim online, you can use a paper claim form. You can get help to complete a claim form at our service centres, Agents or Mobile Service Centre. You can also get help from the Rural Financial Counselling Service—call **1800 686 175**.

For more information, call the Farmer Assistance Hotline on **13 23 16**.

Hardship Advance Payment

If you're assessed as eligible for FHA and in severe financial hardship, you can get up to one week of FHA payments as an advance. Some waiting periods may still apply, based on your circumstances.



Health Care Card

You'll automatically be issued a Health Care Card if you're eligible for the FHA. A Health Care Card provides cheaper prescription medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. It may also reduce council rates and land rates, as well as electricity, gas, water and telephone line rental costs. For more information about Health Care Cards, go to humanservices.gov.au/healthcarecard

Payments to help families

We provide payments to help you with the cost of raising children. For more information, go to humanservices.gov.au/families

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme

The Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme helps eligible parents and carers with the costs of educating their children. It's for children who can't go to a local government school because of geographical isolation, disability or special needs. If an appropriate government school isn't available, the family can choose a different school. Scheme payments can help with the additional costs. For more information, go to humanservices.gov.au/isolatedchildren

Find a payment

You can find out what other payments you may be eligible for using our online payment finder at humanservices.gov.au/paymentfinder

What support services are available?

Farm Household Case Officer

We'll assign you a Farm Household Case Officer when FHA is granted. Your case officer will help you develop a Financial Improvement Agreement to improve the financial position of your farm enterprise.

Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Rural Financial Counselling Service is a free service for primary producers and small related businesses who are suffering financial hardship. Rural Financial Counsellors can help you to understand your financial position and the options available. The RFCS can also help with claiming FHA.

To find your closest service provider, go to agriculture.gov.au/rfcs or call **1800 686 175**.

Social workers

Our social workers can help you and your partner during difficult times by providing counselling, support and information. They can also refer you to other support services.

To speak to one of our social workers:

- call **132 850** and ask for a social worker, or
- visit a service centre to be referred to a social worker.

Lifeline provides 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Call Lifeline on **131 114**.

Financial Information Service

The Financial Information Service is a free, confidential service that provides education and information on financial and lifestyle issues to all Australians. For more information, go to humanservices.gov.au/FIS or call **132 300**.

Farmer Assistance Hotline

We provide a telephone service to help people living in rural Australia. Our rural call centres are run by specialist staff who understand the issues that affect rural families and farming businesses. Call **132 316** Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm AEST.

More information

To find out more about the services we offer to farmers, go to humanservices.gov.au/rural. There you can also read and subscribe to news for rural and remote Australians.

