



## FACT SHEET

### Agricultural Mediation Program

**Issue Summary:** *The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides funding for state-run mediation programs, which aim to serve producers impacted by USDA decisions. An impartial mediator works to help producers, their lenders and other interested parties discuss conflicts, evaluate opportunities and work to find solutions.*

- State mediation programs help resolve disputes, including lending by USDA (FSA and Rural Development) or commercial banks, farm program eligibility and payments, conservation programs, wetland determinations, grazing disputes, pesticide applications and crop insurance.
- Benefits of mediation can include resolving financial disputes and reorganizing finances within a participant's means, avoiding legal fees and litigation, shortening the time to resolve disputes and potentially avoiding bankruptcy.
- Producers can request mediation through the Farm Service Administration (FSA) prior to an administrative appeal. If mediation is requested, FSA mediation officials suggest steps participants should take to prepare for mediation.
- The Agricultural Mediation Program has a success rate of 73 percent (FSA).
- Mediation is non-binding, but involves the cooperation of all parties.
- The process is confidential and shared documents are not used in legal action against participants.
- If an agreement is not reached, the case is ended and formal appeals proceedings begin.
- Cost of the mediation varies state to state, but usually involves a nominal fee. To find out fee amounts for your state, or to request a mediation service, contact your local FSA office.