

February 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Alaska State FSA Newsletter

Alaska State Farm Service Agency

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Alaska State FSA Director News

We are all happy to be off furlough and back to work helping you. Thank you for your understanding and patience as we work through the pile of tasks that were waiting for us. Several of our programs had deadlines that have been extended to further serve you. Our staff is ready and anxious to assist with your business needs and extend to you all the programs FSA has to offer.

Winter time brings with it the chance to plan for the coming summer, review last year, get income taxes completed, order supplies, and fix equipment. Gardeners are busy pouring over seed catalogs, planning the vegetable/flower gardens and ordering seeds. My garden seed order went in last night. This activity is a welcome break from the cold winter weather as our thoughts and minds look forward to digging and working in the soil. Farmers are doing many of these same tasks, only on a much larger scale.

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Hours Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Committee Meetings:
Northern Co TBA
Southern Co TBA

Please contact your local FSA
Office for questions specific to
your operation or county

Friends and neighbors often work and share together simple things, like minimize shipping or freight costs. Last year I worked with a friend on our annual strawberry plant order to lower postage costs. We both enjoyed the savings so budgeted dollars could be used elsewhere.

Friends and neighbors with common interests are regularly drawn together to accomplish larger tasks and generate better ideas than any of us could have done alone. Professional organizations are often a vehicle to assist in achieving common goals. Much good comes from working together, expanding ideas, building consensus, and actively applying cooperation. Dues and updated memberships are part of all these professional entities so be sure to review and update yours in all your business planning for the year.

Market Facilitation Program - Deadline Feb. 14

The last day to submit your Market Facilitation Program (MFP) application is Feb. 14, 2019. The final day to certify 2018 production is May 1, 2019.

Producers of corn, cotton, sorghum, soybeans, wheat, dairy, hogs, fresh sweet cherries and shelled almonds may be eligible to sign up for an MFP payment. MFP is designed to help producers significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Contact your local FSA county office for more details to apply or visit www.farmers.gov/MFP.

County Committee Election Results

County committee elections are over, the ballots are counted and the results are in...

Northern County: Robert Green of Delta Junction was elected to represent LAA 3 and Joshua Scott of Copper Center/Kenny Lake will serve as the first alternate. The other members are currently Steven Helkenn and Rebecca Hammond.

Southern County: Rita Jo Shoultz of Fritz Creek was elected to represent LAA 1 and Paulette Selkirk of Kodiak will serve as the first alternate. The other members are Janet Dinwiddie and Abby Ala.

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity, and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues.

County committee members are a valuable asset because they are comprised of local producers who participate in FSA programs themselves and have a direct connection to farmers and ranchers in the community. All recently elected county committee members and alternates was effective on January 1, 2019, and join the existing committee.

For more information about county committees and the election process, please contact your local FSA Office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Program Deadline Extensions

USDA's Farm Service Agency extended deadlines on many of its programs because of the government shutdown and the emergency nature of many of the programs. Below are updated deadlines:

*** *For details on all program deadlines and extensions, view [FSA National Notice CM-807](#)*

Farm Programs

- Market Facilitation Program
 - *Deadline to apply extended to Feb. 14, 2019*
- Marketing Assistance Loans
 - *If loan matured in December 2018, settlement date extended to Feb. 14, 2019*
 - *Peanut loans or Loan Deficiency Payments - loan availability date now Feb. 28, 2019*
- Emergency Conservation Program
 - *Performance reporting due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Livestock Forage Disaster
 - *2018 application for payment due Feb. 28, 2019*
- Emergency Assistance Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program
 - *Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Livestock Indemnity Program
 - *Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
 - *Submitting 2019 application for coverage due Feb. 14, 2019*
 - *Notice of loss for 72-hour harvest and grazing (as applicable) due Feb. 14, 2019*
 - *Notice of loss for prevented planting and failed acres due Feb. 14, 2019*
 - *Applications for payment for 2018 covered losses due Feb. 14, 2019*
- Tree Assistance Program
 - *Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019*

For inquiries related to these programs or any not listed above, contact the Local County FSA.

Payments to Deceased Producers

In order to claim a Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment on behalf of a deceased producer, all program conditions for the payment must have been met before the applicable producer's date of death.

If a producer earned a FSA payment prior to becoming deceased, the following is the order of precedence of the representatives of the producer:

- administrator or executor of the estate
- the surviving spouse
- surviving sons and daughters, including adopted children
- surviving father and mother
- surviving brothers and sisters
- heirs of the deceased person who would be entitled to payment according to the State law

In order for FSA to release the payment, the legal representative of the deceased producer must file a form FSA-325, to claim the payment for themselves or an estate. The county office will verify and determine that the application, contract, loan agreement, or other similar form requesting payment issuance, was signed by the applicable deadline for such form, by the deceased or a person legally authorized to act on their behalf at that time of application.

If the application, contract or loan agreement form was signed by someone other than the participant who is deceased, FSA will determine whether the person submitting the form has the legal authority to submit the form to compel FSA to pay the deceased participant.

Payments will be issued to the respective representative's name using the deceased program participant's tax identification number. Payments made to representatives are subject to offset regulations for debts owed by the deceased.

FSA is not responsible for advising persons in obtaining legal advice on how to obtain program benefits that may be due to a participant who has died, disappeared or who has been declared incompetent.

Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

Producers Urged to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to review available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the crop deadline of March 15th.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

The following crops have a NAP application deadline of March 15, 2019:

All Annual Spring Planted Crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx>.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Buy-up coverage is also available.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

For more information on NAP, service fees, sales deadlines, contact the your County FSA office or visit the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Amongst other purposes, Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities and improvements essential to an operation.

To do this, applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In

some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.

Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. An applicant for a direct loan to finance a construction project must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.

A surety bond is required when a contract exceeds \$100,000, an authorized agency official determines that a surety bond appears advisable to protect the borrower against default of the contractor or a contract provides for partial payments in excess of the amount of 60 percent of the value of the work in place.

Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant's farming operation or work schedule.

Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.

For more eligibility requirements and information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Supervised Credit

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, it is our goal to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will advise borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation's goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA's staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings and/or events should contact Lloyd Wilhelm, Northern CED, at (907) 895-4242, Erin Sturdivant, Southern CED, at (907) 761-7754 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

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