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USDA Reminds Farmers and Ranchers of Nov. 1 Deadline to Submit Your RTCP Receipts

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) signup ended on September 3, 2021. This program covered transportation expenses incurred from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. If you applied for the RTCP program and have not turned all your receipts into the FSA office, now is the time to do so. Applicants will have until COB on Nov. 1, 2021, to provide supporting documentation. If you have any questions, contact your local FSA office.

For more information on RTCP, farmers and ranchers in the eligible areas can visit their FSA county office or the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport. To locate your local FSA office visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Alaska FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2021 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 1, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 6, 2021.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters in the Northern County local administrative area (LAA 3) and the Southern County local administrative area (LAA 1), who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2022.

The following are this year's candidates who have been nominated in their LAA's to serve as a committee member. All candidates have agreed to serve if elected.

Northern County LAA-3 which includes the area beginning at the SE corner of the Matsu Borough proceeding north to NW corner of SE Fairbanks Census area, east to line following Clearwater road intersecting AK Hwy, proceeding SE to AKGREAA line, south then SE following line to Canadian border, south following Canadian border to Chugach Mtn. Range, turning west following Chugach Mtn. west to SW corner of Matsu Borough. (Includes Delta Junction, Glennallen, and Kenny Lake.)

Matthew Bates is the co-owner of Blue Creek Livestock a family-owned business. The operation raises Cattle, Hogs, Goats, Sheep for meat. They raise their own forage hay for the animals. Matthew and his family moved to Alaska in 2016 from Idaho and have been actively involved in the community. They are members of Farm Bureau and have led the "Bucket Calf" program that enlightens youth to what agriculture is about. Matthew is a staunch supporter of agriculture in Alaska and feels local agriculture production is vital to Alaska's food security.

Kelly Patton and her family moved to Alaska in 2013 from Texas. They raised livestock and hay in Texas and raise hay in Alaska. They have participated in the CRP program. Kelly has been actively involved in FFA "Ag Mechanics Program" at the Delta High School. Have been members of Farm Bureau. Kelly supports agriculture in Alaska and states agriculture is vital to providing food security for all Alaska residents.

Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Northern County FSA Office at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 9, 2021.

Southern County LAA -1 which includes all of the following boroughs and census areas: Wade Hampton, Bethel, Dillingham, Bristol Bay, Lake & Peninsula, Aleutians East and West, Kodiak Island and the Kenai Peninsula Borough south of the Kasilof river (includes Homer and surrounding area).

Rita Jo Shultz is the managing partner of Alaska Perfect Peony (APP) a family owned business. APP was the first commercial peony cut flower farm in Alaska. APP manages

several other peony farms and markets stems for several more. Past experiences include owner of Fritz Creek Gardens, a small retail nursery in Homer; 40 plus years in marketing positions, finance, 25 years in Commercial Real Estate Development, served in many positions with the Alaska Farm Bureau and is currently Chairman of the Certified American Grown organization representing 60% of the Cut flower and foliage farmers in the USA. Rita Jo was a nominee for 'Champions of Change for the Future of Agriculture' and invited to the White House and was recently named the 'Small Business Champion' for Alaska.

Paulette Selkirk is a farmer originally from New Mexico. Her dad and uncle taught her about farming and running the business at a young age. Her passion was to grow up and have her own farming business one day. Her and her husband moved to Kodiak in 2009. She has been in the poultry business for over 25 years. She is the owner of Farmhouse Pantry, Livestock Feed & Supply. Her husband, children and grandchildren help with the operations, building the next generation of farmers. She sells fresh eggs, adult meat chickens and turkeys. Along with poultry she sells feed and hay to the community of Kodiak.

Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Southern County FSA Office at 1:00 p.m. on December 9, 2021.

More information on county committees, such as fact sheets, can be found on the FSA website at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections> or at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak>.

USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after spring planting should make an appointment with the Northern or Southern County Farm Service Agency (FSA) before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for the Northern and Southern County Offices:

For 2022 Crop Year

September 30, 2021	Value-loss crops and controlled environment crops (except Nursery)
December 15, 2021	Fall-Seeded Small Grains
January 2, 2022	Honey

May 31, 2022

Nursery

July 15, 2022

All other spring planted crops, CRP, Perennial Forage

Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact the Northern or Southern County FSA office to set up an in-person or phone appointment.

To file a crop acreage report, you will need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

Acreage Reporting Details

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

More Information

For questions, please contact the Northern County FSA office at 907-895-4242 ext 150 and the Southern County FSA Office at 907-761-7754.

USDA Expands Farmers.gov to Include Farm Records

Producers with farmers.gov accounts can now access farm records and maps online, the latest self-service feature added to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website.

You can quickly and easily access your land information in real time by desktop computer, tablet or phone. Capabilities include:

- View, print and export detailed farm records such as cropland, base acres, yields, CRP acres, land ownership details, and much more;
- View, print and export farm/tract maps that can be provided to lenders, chemical or fertilizer providers, and FSA for reporting acreage and crop insurance agents; and
- Export common land unit (field) boundaries as ESRI shapefiles.

The ability to access these records on demand without a visit to the service center saves you time and money.

[Farmers.gov](#) now includes the most popular functionalities from FSAFarm+, the FSA portal for producers, while providing enhanced functionality and an improved user experience. A new enhancement expands the scope of accessibility to include farmers and ranchers who are members of an entity, as well as people with a power of attorney form (FSA-211) on file with FSA.

Managing USDA Business Online

Using farmers.gov, producers, entities and those acting on their behalf can also:

- View, upload, download, and e-sign conservation documents.
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application.
- View and submit conservation requests.
- View technical references and submit questions.
- Access information on current and past conservation practices, plans and contracts.
- Report practice completion and request practice certification.
- View farm loan and interest information (producers only).

Future plans include adding the ability to import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture planting boundaries.

To access your information, you'll will need a [USDA eAuth account](#) to login to farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit [farmers.gov](#) and sign into the site's authenticated portal via the [Sign In/Sign Up link](#) at the top right of the website. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.

In addition to the self-service features available by logging into farmers.gov, the website also has ample information on USDA programs, including pandemic assistance, farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs and crop insurance. Recently, USDA updated the navigation and organization of the site as well as added some new webpages, including "[Get Involved](#)," "[Common Forms](#)," and "[Translations](#)." [Learn more about these changes](#).

Applying for Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

For help preparing the application forms, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Higher Loan Limit Now Available for USDA Guaranteed Farm Loans

USDA Extends Disaster Set-Aside for Direct Loans Until 2022

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a higher loan limit will be available for borrowers seeking a guaranteed farm loan starting Oct. 1, 2021, from \$1.776 million to \$1.825 million.

FSA farm loans offer access to funding for a wide range of producer needs, from securing land to financing the purchase of equipment. Guaranteed loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. FSA provides up to a 95% guarantee against possible financial

loss of principal and interest. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

In fiscal year 2021, FSA saw continued strong demand for guaranteed loans. FSA obligated more than \$3.4 billion in guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans. This includes nearly \$1.2 billion for beginning farmers. The number of guaranteed borrowers has grown by 10% to more than 38,750 farmers and ranchers over the last decade. FSA expects the increasing demand for farm loans to continue into fiscal year 2022.

Disaster Set-Aside Extension

USDA has additional support available to producers given the recent outbreaks of the COVID-19 Delta variant and has extended the availability of COVID-19 Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) for installments due through Jan. 31, 2022. In addition, FSA will permit a second DSA for COVID-19 and a second DSA for natural disasters for those who had an initial COVID-19 DSA. Requests for a COVID-19 DSA or a second DSA must be received no later than May 1, 2022.

Last year, FSA broadened the use of the DSA. Normally used in the wake of natural disasters, the DSA can now allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19 and determined to be eligible, to have their next payment set aside. The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. This will improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting their [local USDA Service Center](#). Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some [USDA Service Centers](#) are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. Additionally, more information related to USDA's response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

USDA Offers Online Tool for Drought-Stricken Ranchers to Estimate Compensation for Feed Transportation Costs

Contact Farm Service Agency for Feed Transportation & Water Hauling Assistance

An online tool is now available to help ranchers document and estimate payments to cover feed transportation costs caused by drought, which are now covered by the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated the program this year to include feed transportation costs as well as lowered the threshold for when assistance for water hauling expenses is available. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin taking applications this fall.

The new [ELAP Feed Transportation Producer Tool](#) is a Microsoft Excel workbook that enables ranchers to input information specific to their operation to determine an estimated payment. Final payments may vary depending on eligibility.

To use the tool, ranchers will need:

- Number of truckloads for this year.
- Mileage per truckload this year.
- Share of feed cost this year (if splitting loads).
- Number of truckloads you normally haul.
- Normal mileage per truckload.
- Share of normal feed cost

The tool requires Microsoft Excel, and a [tutorial video](#) is available.

Updates to ELAP

ELAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. ELAP now covers feed transportation costs where grazing and hay resources have been depleted. This includes places where:

Drought intensity is D2 for eight consecutive weeks as indicated by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#); or Drought intensity is D3 or greater.

The tool calculates the estimated payment for feed transportation assistance, but it is not an application. Once FSA begins accepting applications later this fall for feed transportation assistance, ranchers should contact their FSA county office to apply. To simplify the application process, ranchers can print or email payment estimates generated by this tool for submission to FSA. The deadline to apply for ELAP, including feed transportation costs, for 2021 is Jan. 31, 2022.

ELAP already covers above normal costs for hauling water to livestock in areas where drought intensity is D3 or greater on the drought monitor. FSA is also updating ELAP to also cover water hauling in areas experiencing D2 for eight consecutive weeks, lowering the threshold for this assistance to be available. Program benefits are retroactive for 2021.

Payment Calculations

USDA will reimburse eligible ranchers 60% of feed transportation costs above what would have been incurred in a normal year. Producers qualifying as underserved (socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning or military veteran) will be reimbursed for 90% of the feed transportation cost above what would have been incurred in a normal year.

USDA uses a national cost formula to determine reimbursement costs that will not include the first 25 miles and distances exceeding 1,000 transportation miles. The calculation will also exclude the normal cost to transport hay or feed if the producer normally purchases some feed. For 2021, the initial cost formula of \$6.60 per mile will be used (before the Percentage is applied).

Eligibility

To be eligible for ELAP assistance, livestock must be intended for grazing and producers must have incurred feed transportation costs on or after Jan. 1, 2021. Although producers will self-certify losses and expenses to FSA, producers are encouraged to maintain good records and retain receipts and related documentation in the event these documents are requested for review by the local FSA County Committee.

More Drought Recovery Information

USDA has taken additional steps to assist drought-impacted producers, including:

- [Extending deadlines for crop insurance premium and administrative fees, and deferring interest accrual.](#)
- [Streamlining and accelerating losses and issuance of indemnity payments for crop insurance.](#)
- [Investing \\$41.8 million through a four-state pilot of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Conservation Incentive Contracts focused on drought practices.](#)
- [Investing \\$15 million through a block grant to the Klamath Drought Response Agency to provide payments to producers to reduce irrigation demand.](#)

USDA offers a comprehensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs. On [farmers.gov](#), the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine all program or loan options available for disaster recovery assistance. For details, producers should contact their [local USDA Service Center](#).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings and/or events should contact the Northern County FSA Service Center, at (907) 895-4242, ext. 150, Southern County FSA Service Center, at (907) 761-7754 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

Alaska State Farm Service Agency

800 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy., Suite 216
Palmer, AK 99645

Phone: 907-761-7738
Fax: 907-761-7789

Northern County FSA Service Center

PO Box 585

Delta Junction, AK 99737

Phone: 907-895-4242 ext. 150

Fax: 855-711-9095

Hours:

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

www.fsa.usda.gov/ak

Southern County FSA Service Center

800 E Palmer-Wasilla Hwy. Ste 216

Palmer, AK 99645

Phone: 907-761-7754

Fax: 907-761-7789

County Committee Meetings

Northern Co December 9, 10:00 a.m.

Southern Co December 9, 1:00 p.m.