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From the Alaska FSA State Executive Director

As my friend Arthur often says “nothing has a greater impact on our health than the food we put into our bodies.”

Where do you source your local farm products? I've been hitting up my favorite farmers markets and farm stands, devouring local lettuces, zucchini, kohlrabi, tomatoes and even some early carrots! If you're not familiar with when and where the different markets and stands are, take a minute to visit [Market Directory – Alaska Farmers Market Association](#) (alaskafarmersmarkets.org) and explore the 60(!) listed outlets for local food products. From Bethel to Petersburg and Salcha to Sitka – find a farm stand, food hub or farmers market and explore the bounty of eating local. And if you know of a market or stand that is not listed on the database, please reach out to Alaska Farmers Market Association Executive Director Robbi Mixon at robbi@inletkeeper.org



I'm very excited that USDA has added \$1 million additional dollars to our RTCP program! Enrollment is open now through September 2 – don't forget to turn in your paperwork.

Reminders:

- All nomination forms for the 2022 COC election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by Aug. 1, 2022.
- Producers interested in the Continuous CRP signup, CLEAR 30, or TIP should contact FSA by August. 5, 2022.
- The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of September 01, 2022: Floriculture (Peonies), Aquaculture, Turf Grass
- Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) applications deadline is September 02, 2022.
- The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of September 30, 2022: Perennial Grass Forage (Perennial Grasses intended use seed), Honey
- Acreage Reporting date for 2023 Crop year for Value-loss crops and controlled environment crops (except Nursery) is September 30, 2022.
- Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022

Amy Pettit
State Executive Director
Alaska Farm Service Agency

Welcome Deborah White Northern County Program Technician

Deborah White is our new County Program Technician (PT) in the Northern County Office in Delta Junction. We're excited to have Debbie on the team! Please give Debbie a call at 907-895-4242 ext.102 or email her at Deborah.white@usda.gov if she can assist you in with any of the FSA programs or just to introduce yourself. Debbie has resided in Delta Junction for 12 years and previously worked in botany and land rehabilitation within Donnelly Training Area. Debbie enjoys cultivating vegetables and flowers in her garden and is looking forward to aiding agriculture producers through Alaska FSA programs.

Nominations Open for the 2022 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the Alaska Northern and Southern County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are

accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2022 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by Aug. 1, 2022. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member* available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections or www.fsa.usda.gov/ak.

This year, nominations and elections will be held in the following Alaska LAAs:

Northern County LAA-1

LAA-1 Includes the area that encompasses the following areas: North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Yukon-Koyukuk and Nome Census areas, as well as the Denali and Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Southern County LAA-2

LAA-2 Includes the municipality of Anchorage, Valdez/Cordova Census area south of Chugach Mtns. Kenai Peninsula Borough north of Kasilof River.

For more information about county committees, please contact the Northern County FSA office at 907-895-4242 and the Southern County FSA office at 907-761-7773 or visit fsa.usda.gov/elections or www.fsa.usda.gov/ak.

Enrollment Period Begins for USDA's Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program

Call your local FSA County Office Today!

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Alaska opened enrollment for the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP), which has increased its available funding to \$3 million for fiscal year 2022. The enrollment period began July 11 and will run through Sept. 2.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 reauthorized RTCP and allows farmers and ranchers in Alaska, Hawaii and insular areas including the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands of the United States, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and

Republic of Palau, to recover any costs to transport agricultural commodities or inputs used to produce an agricultural commodity.

RTCP payments are calculated based on the costs incurred for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs during a 12-month period, subject to an \$8,000 per producer cap per fiscal year once the allocated \$3 million has been reached. If total transportation cost for payments exceeds the funds available from the program for a fiscal year, payments will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

Farmers and ranchers interested in participating in RTCP can obtain applications and other documents by calling toll-free 1-866-794-1079 or by contacting FSA at their local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Announces Assistance for On-Farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers

New Program Part of Broader Effort to Transform Food System, Create Jobs

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans to provide up to \$200 million in assistance for specialty crop producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 or 2023. USDA's new [Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops](#) (FSCSC) program will help to offset costs for specialty crop producers to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements, which is part of USDA's broader effort to transform the food system to create a more level playing field for small and medium producers and a more balanced, equitable economy for everyone working in food and agriculture.

Specialty crop operations can apply for assistance for eligible expenses related to a 2022 food safety certificate issued on or after June 21, 2022, beginning June 27, 2022. USDA is delivering FSCSC to provide critical assistance for specialty crop operations, with an emphasis on equity in program delivery while building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions. Vilsack made the announcement from Hollis, N.H., where he toured a local, family-owned farm and highlighted USDA's efforts to help reduce costs for farmers and support local economies by providing significant funding to cut regulatory costs and increase market opportunities for farmers in New Hampshire and across the nation.

Program Details

FSCSC will assist specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and related expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023. For each year, FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing their certification, as well as a portion of their related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small business or very small business; and have paid eligible expenses related to the 2022 (issued on or after June 21, 2022) or 2023 certification.

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
- Training

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each category of eligible costs. A higher payment rate has been set for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers. Details about the payment rates and limitations can be found at farmers.gov/food-safety.

Applying for Assistance

The FSCSC application period for 2022 is June 27, 2022, through January 31, 2023, and the application period for 2023 will be announced at a later date. FSA will issue payments at the time of application approval for 2022 and after the application period ends for 2023. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application. The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. Producers can visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find their local FSA office. Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to assist.

Producers can visit farmers.gov/food-safety for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs of Organic, Transitioning Producers

Applications for the Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program (OTECP) and Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) due October 31, 2022.

Agricultural producers and handlers who are certified organic, along with producers and handlers who are transitioning to organic production, can now apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Organic and Transitional Education Certification Program](#) (OTECP) and [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP), which help producers and handlers cover the cost of organic certification, along with other related expenses. Applications for OTECP and OCCSP are both due October 31, 2022.

OTECP covers:

- Certification costs for organic producers and handlers (25% up to \$250 per category).

- Eligible expenses for transitional producers, including fees for pre-certification inspections and development of an organic system plan (75% up to \$750).
- Registration fees for educational events (75% up to \$200).
- Soil testing (75% up to \$100).

Meanwhile, OCCSP covers 50% or up to \$500 per category of certification costs in 2022.

This cost share for certification is available for each of these categories: crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and State organic program fees.

Producers can receive cost share through both OTECP and OCCSP. Both OTECP and OCCSP cover costs incurred from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. Producers have until October 31, 2022 to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

To apply, producers and handlers should contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center. As part of completing the OCCSP applications, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses. Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through participating State agencies.

Additional details can be found on the [OTECP](#) and [OCCSP](#) webpages.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

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.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of

between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

For Alaska, 2022 Fall deadlines for crop year 2023 coverage:

The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of **September 01, 2022**:
Floriculture (Peonies), Aquaculture, Turf Grass

The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of **September 30, 2022**:
Perennial Grass Forage (Perennial Grasses intended use seed), Honey

For Alaska, 2023 Spring deadlines for crop year 2023 coverage:

The following crops in Alaska have a NAP application deadline of **March 15, 2023**:

Spring planted annual crops (vegetables)

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery, to predict insurance premium costs.

USDA Reminds Alaska Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers in Alaska who have not yet completed their [crop acreage reports](#) after planting should make an appointment with their U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center 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 in Alaska:

September 30, 2022	Value-loss crops and controlled environment crops (except Nursery)
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December 15, 2022	Fall-Seeded Small Grains
January 2, 2023	Honey
May 31, 2023	Nursery
July 15, 2023	All other spring planted crops, CRP, Perennial Forage

To file a crop acreage report, producers 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.
- If crops are covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, acreage reports should be submitted by the applicable state, county, or crop-specific reporting deadline or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to because of a natural disaster.

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.

FSA offers continuous certification for perennial forage. This means after perennial forage is reported once and the producer elects continuous certification, the certification remains in effect until a change is made. Check with FSA at the local USDA Service Center for more information on continuous certification.

New Option to View, Print and Label Maps on Farmers.gov

Producers with an eAuth account linked to their USDA customer record can now access their FSA farm records, maps and common land units by logging into farmers.gov. A new feature

will allow producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries. This will allow producers to view, print and label their own maps for acreage reporting purposes.

Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via form FSA-211 Power of Attorney, Business Partner Signature Authority, along with other signature types, or as a member of a business can now access information in the farmers.gov portal.

Producers can learn how to use the farmers.gov Farm Records Mapping functionality with this [fact sheet](#) and these [video tutorials](#).

More Information

For questions, please contact the Northern County FSA office at 907-895-4242 ext 150 and the Southern County FSA Office at 907-761-7773.

Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans require applicants to have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, see if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information on your credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score:

- Make sure to pay bills on time
 - Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt
- Keep your credit card balances low
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information about farm loans, please contact the Northern County FSA office at 907-895-4242 ext 150 and the Southern County FSA Office at 907-761-7773.

Progression Lending from FSA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loans are considered progression lending. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Our goal is 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. FSA staff will advise borrowers on developing strategies and a plan to meet your goals and graduate to commercial credit. FSA borrowers are responsible for the success of their farming operation, but FSA staff will help in an advisory role, providing the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information about farm loans, please contact the Northern County FSA office at 907-895-4242 ext 150 and the Southern County FSA Office at 907-761-7773 or visit www.usda.gov.

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) 761-7773, or dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunication relay services.

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: 907-761-7773
Fax: 907-761-7789

County Committee Meetings

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

Southern Co August 9, 7:30 a.m.

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).