

January 2016



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Louisiana State FSA Newsletter

State Farm Service Agency

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

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=la&agency=fsa>

Firearms and Dangerous Weapons Forbidden in Federal Facilities

USDA Service Centers and Farm Service Agency Offices are Off Limits for Firearms

This is an important reminder to all customers and patrons of USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices and USDA Service Centers statewide that **firearms are forbidden (even with a permit/license) in Federal Buildings.** A Federal Building by definition is any building owned, leased or rented by the Federal Government, where Federal employees are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official duties.

The items that are prohibited in Federal facilities include any item prohibited by any applicable Federal, State, local, and tribal law and/or ordinance, as well as firearms, dangerous weapons, explosives, or other destructive devices (including their individual

parts or components) designed, redesigned, used, intended for use, or readily converted to cause injury, death, or property damage. Possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in Federal facilities as outlined above is a crime punishable by fines and imprisonment.

For a complete list of items prohibited in Federal facilities, please view and/or download the document titled, **Items Prohibited from Federal Facilities: An Interagency Security Committee Standard:** <http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/isc-items-prohibited-federal-facilities-feb-2013-508.pdf>. **The lists of prohibited items outlined in this document apply to all facility occupants, contractors, and the visiting public.**

If you have questions or concerns regarding this notification, please contact your local Farm Service Agency Office—<http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Removes Farm Program Payments to Managers Not Actively Engaged in Farming

USDA finalized a rule to ensure that farm safety-net payments are issued only to active managers of farms that operate as joint ventures or general partnerships, consistent with the direction and authority provided by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill. The action, which exempts family farm operations, closes a loophole where individuals who were not actively part of farm management still received payments.

Since 1987, the broad definition of “actively engaged” resulted in some general partnerships and joint ventures adding managers to the farming operation, qualifying for more payments that did not substantially contribute to management. The rule applies to operations seeking more than one farm manager, and requires measureable, documented hours and key management activities each year. Some operations of

certain sizes and complexity may be allowed up to three qualifying managers under limited conditions. The changes apply to payments for 2016 and subsequent crop years for Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Programs, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) and Marketing Loan Gains (MLG) realized via the Marketing Assistance Loan Program.

As required by Congress, the new rule does not apply to family farms, or change regulations related to contributions of land, capital, equipment, or labor. The changes go into effect for the 2016 crop year for most farms. Farms that have already planted fall crops for 2016 have until the 2017 crop year to comply. For more details, producers are encouraged to consult their local Farm Service Agency office.

New USDA Commitments to Help Build Up Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced a commitment by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prioritize \$5.6 billion over the next two years within USDA programs and services that serve new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Deputy Secretary Harden also announced a new, tailored web tool designed to connect burgeoning farm entrepreneurs with programs and resources available to help them get started.

The new web tool is available at www.usda.gov/newfarmers. The site was designed based on feedback from new and beginning farmers and ranchers around the country, who cited unfamiliarity with programs and resources as a challenge to starting and expanding their operations. The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to grow their business, to filing taxes as a new small business owner. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the site's Discovery Tool to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs.

Using the new web tool and other outreach activities, and operating within its existing resources, USDA has set a new goal of increasing beginning farmer and rancher participation by an additional 6.6 percent across key USDA programs, which were established or strengthened by the 2014 Farm Bill, for a total investment value of approximately \$5.6 billion. Programs were targeted for expanded outreach and commitment based on their impact on expanding opportunity for new and beginning farmers and ranchers, including starting or expanding an operation, developing new markets, supporting more effective farming and conservation practices, and having access to relevant training and education opportunities. USDA will provide quarterly updates on its progress towards meeting its goal. A full explanation of the investment targets, benchmarks and outcomes is available at: [BFR-Commitment-Factsheet](#).

As the average age of the American farmer now exceeds 58 years, and data shows that almost 10 percent of farmland in the continental United States will change hands in the next five years, we have

no time to lose in getting more new farmers and ranchers established. Equally important is encouraging young people to pursue careers in industries that support American agriculture. According to [an employment outlook report](#) released by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Purdue University, one of the best fields for new college graduates is agriculture. Nearly 60,000 high-skilled agriculture job openings are expected annually in the United States for the next five years, yet only 35,000 graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher in agriculture related fields are expected to be available to fill them. The report also shows that women make up more than half of the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and environment higher education graduates in the United States. USDA recently released a [series of fact sheets](#) showcasing the impact of women in agriculture nationwide.

This announcement builds on USDA's ongoing work to engage its resources to inspire a strong next generation of farmers and ranchers by improving access to land and capital; building market opportunities; extending conservation opportunities; offering appropriate risk management tools; and increasing outreach and technical support. To learn more about USDA's efforts, visit the [Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Results Page](#).

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address or zip code or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

USDA to Provide Agricultural Credit Training, Expand Opportunities for Farmer Veterans and Beginning Farmers

USDA announced a partnership with the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) to conduct agricultural credit training sessions in the Midwest for military veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers. States under consideration to host the workshops include Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska.

These workshops will provide individuals interested in farming as a career, including military veterans, with methods to improve business planning and financial skills, and improve understanding of the risk management tools that can help small farm operations.

Other partners include Niman Ranch a community network of more than 700 independent family farmers and ranchers, and the Farm Credit Council and the Farm Credit System, which provides loans, leases and financial services to farmers, ranchers and rural businesses across the United States. The workshops will also include assistance with credit applications and introductions to local or regional food markets.

To learn more about veterans in agriculture, visit www.usda.gov/veterans. Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to learn more about FSA's farm loan programs. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. More information also is available from the Farmer Veteran Coalition at www.farmvetco.org.

USDA Commits \$2.5 Million to Expand New Farmer Education

Training Will also Help Returning Service Members, Underserved, and Urban Producers

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced that \$2.5 million in grants is now available for projects to educate new and underserved farmers about more than 20 Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs that can provide financial, disaster or technical assistance to the agricultural community.

The grants will be awarded to nonprofits and public higher education institutions that develop proposals to improve farmer education on topics such as financial training, value-added production, recordkeeping, property inheritance, and crop production practices.

USDA will conduct four evaluation periods to review applications, with the deadlines of Nov. 20, 2015, Jan. 22, 2015, Mar. 18, 2016, and May 27, 2016. Awards between \$20,000 and \$100,000 per applicant will be available. To learn more about the funding solicitation and the related Farm Service Agency programs, details can be found at www.grants.gov with the reference number USDA-FSA-CA-2015-001. For nonprofits and public institutions of higher education that are considering participation, an online informational session will be conducted on Sept. 28, 2015. Additional information is posted on the Web at www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach.

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).