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Lead Your FSA: Serving Our Neighbors

The nomination period for the [USDA Farm Service Agency's](#) annual county committee election began June 15 and continues through Aug. 2, 2021.

Throughout the nomination period, USDA has been introducing county committee members across the nation. In the fourth installment of the series, we meet Lois Manigold, a member of the Grand Traverse FSA County Committee in Michigan since 2020.



A Fruitful Business

Although she's new to serving on the committee, she's not new to the hard work of farming.

"I grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin with seven siblings, so I learned how to work hard early in life," said Lois. "I've been part of the Manigold Orchard cherry crew for 38 years, since Rob and I were married."

Lois and her family grow sweet and tart cherries, wine grapes and apples on over 400 acres of Old Mission Peninsula on Lake Michigan.

"I love being outdoors. I drive the big truck, tractors, mowers, spray the orchards, and manage the cherry tanks on the cooling pad at harvest," she said. "Being a part of the daily farm work lets me see how the crops are growing and really appreciate it."

Serving Local Producers

In addition to her labor of love on the family farm, Lois extended her service to local agricultural producers.

"I joined the county office committee to help serve our neighbors and the county," she said.

County committee members are farmers elected by their peers to serve as a direct link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers on the committee help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level, help decide the programs their counties will offer, and work to make the programs serve the needs of local producers.

Each year, FSA accepts nominations for a certain Local Administrative Area and the LAA up for election rotates each year.

While serving on the Grand Traverse County committee, Lois meets and learns about other farmers in her community.

“In our county office committee there are also potato and wheat growers, and we all get to learn about and from each other,” she said.

Lois recommends that other farmers and ranchers consider serving on their local FSA county committees.

“If someone is thinking about becoming a county office committee member, I advise them to do it,” she said. “It’s important because farmers need to help each other. By serving, I’m helping our community.”

More Information

For more information on FSA county committee elections, contact your [local FSA office](#) or visit fsa.usda.gov/elections.

USDA Opens Signup for CLEAR30

Landowners and agricultural producers currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) now have a wider opportunity to enroll in a 30-year contract through the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers initiative, called [CLEAR30](#).



Sign Up by Aug. 6

Interested producers with CRP contracts expiring September 30, 2021, should sign up by August 6, 2021. CLEAR30 provides an opportunity for producers to receive incentives for a 30-year commitment to water quality practices on their CRP land, building on their original 10- to 15-year CRP contracts.

These long-term contracts ensure that practices remain in place for 30 years, which improves water quality through reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and helping prevent algal blooms.

About CLEAR30

CLEAR30 was created by the 2018 Farm Bill to better address water quality concerns. Originally, CLEAR30 was only available in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watersheds. Now, access is expanded to agricultural producers nationwide.

Eligible producers must have certain water quality benefitting practices currently enrolled under continuous CRP or through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), under contracts that are expiring on September 30, 2021.

These long-term contracts will help ensure that conservation impacts and benefits remain in place for 30 years, reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and, ultimately, algal blooms. Conservation in riparian areas also provides important carbon sequestration benefits. Traditional CRP contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

Annual rental payments for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus a 20% water quality incentive and annual rate adjustment of 27.5%.

How to Sign Up

To sign up for CLEAR30, contact your local USDA Service Center by August 6, 2021. While USDA offices may be closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Contact information can be found at farmers.gov/service-locator.

More Information

CLEAR30 is an option available through CRP, which is one of the world's largest voluntary conservation programs with a long track record of preserving topsoil, sequestering carbon and reducing nitrogen runoff, as well providing healthy habitat for wildlife.

To enroll in CLEAR30, please contact your [local USDA Service Center](#). For more information on CRP, visit the [Conservation Reserve Program](#).

Grants for Urban Agriculture, Cooperative Agreements for Community Composting

Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

4 million in competitive grants is available to support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov for planning and implementation projects until midnight July 30, 2021.

Planning Projects Planning projects initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers, urban agroforestry or food forests, and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

Implementation Projects Implementation projects that accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers. Projects will improve local food access and collaborate with partner organizations and may support infrastructure needs, emerging technologies, educational endeavors and urban farming policy implementation.

Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction

\$2 million in cooperative agreements is available for local governments to host Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) pilot projects. The cooperative agreements support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans and they are part of USDA's broader efforts to support urban agriculture.

Mailbox Watch: New Form Required for Some Customers

If you are a producer or landowner who participates in USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) may be reaching out by mail with information about a form you'll need to fill out.

Starting this year, all producers and landowners participating or applying to participate in certain NRCS conservation programs must complete form CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan. Historically, to participate in these programs, legal entities could file either the CCC-901, Member Information or the CCC-902, while individuals were not specifically required to file the CCC-902 with FSA. Now, to ensure FSA and NRCS are properly determining payment eligibility and maximum payment limitations, all customers must have a CCC-902 on file to establish eligibility.



These changes will not affect participants who already have a Form CCC-902 with a “determined” status recorded with FSA. Customers that do not have a CCC-902 on file with FSA will be sent a letter in the mail in the coming weeks with detailed information on what is needed and how to file the form. The letter requests that the form be completed within 30 days of receiving the letter.

For added convenience, USDA is offering options for remote or in-person submission of the CCC-902. Fiscal year 2021 is considered a transition year to ensure all NRCS program participants can meet this updated filing requirement. Beginning in FY 2022, if form CCC-902 is not on file your payments may be impacted.

We can help: NRCS and FSA staff are available at [USDA Service Centers](#) nationwide to provide information and assistance to walk you through meeting this filing requirement. For more information, see the [NRCS National Bulletin 300-21-7](#) or [FSA Notice PL-293](#).

Heirs' Property Landowners

USDA recently launched a new website for producers to find information on heirs' property.

Heirs' property is family owned land that is jointly owned by descendants of a deceased person whose estate did not clear probate. The descendants, or heirs, have the right to use the property, but they do not have a clear or marketable title to the property since the estate issues remain unresolved.



The 2018 Farm Bill authorized alternative documentation for heirs' property operators to establish a farm number. A farm number is required to be eligible for many different USDA programs, including lending, disaster relief programs, and participation in county committees.

For more information visit farmers.gov/manage/HeirsPropertyLandowners.

Additional USDA Programs and Services

USDA offers a variety of farm loan, risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs to support farmers, including heirs' property landowners once they have a farm number.

USDA also has several special provisions and resources for heirs' property landowners, including:

- Targeted funding through farm loans
 - Crop insurance benefits
 - Conservation program benefits
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Pandemic Assistance to Livestock Producers for Animal Losses - Application Period Opens July 20

Livestock and poultry producers who suffered losses during the pandemic due to insufficient access to processing can apply for assistance for those losses and the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animals. Livestock and poultry producers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 20 through Sept. 17, 2021.



The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized payments to producers for losses of livestock or poultry depopulated from March 1, 2020 through December 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. PLIP payments will be based on 80% of the fair market value of the livestock and poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animal. Eligible livestock and poultry include swine, chickens and turkeys.

PLIP Program Details

Eligible livestock must have been depopulated from March 1, 2020, through December 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. Livestock must have been physically located in the U.S. or a territory of the U.S. at the time of depopulation.

Eligible livestock owners include persons or legal entities who, as of the day the eligible livestock was depopulated, had legal ownership of the livestock. Packers, live poultry dealers and contract growers are not eligible for PLIP.

PLIP payments compensate participants for 80% of both the loss of the eligible livestock or poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal based on a single payment rate per head. PLIP payments will be calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible livestock or poultry by the payment rate per head, and then subtracting the amount of any payments the eligible livestock or poultry owner has received for disposal of the livestock or poultry under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or a state program. The payments will also be reduced by any Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 1 and 2) payments paid on the same inventory of swine that were depopulated.

There is no per person or legal entity payment limitation on PLIP payments. To be eligible for payments, a person or legal entity must have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) of less than \$900,000 for tax years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Applying for Assistance

Eligible livestock and poultry producers can apply for PLIP starting July 20, 2021, by completing the FSA-620, Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program application, and submitting it to any FSA county office. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/plip for a copy of the Notice of Funding Availability and more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means. To find your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator. Livestock and poultry producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

July 2021 Lending Rates

FSA loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment and storage structures, or meet cash flow needs.



Operating, Ownership and Emergency Loans

FSA offers farm ownership and operating loans with favorable interest rates and terms to help eligible agricultural producers, whether multi-generational, long-time or new to the industry, obtain financing needed to start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation.

Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for July 2021 are as follows:

- [Farm Operating Loans](#) (Direct): 1.875%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct): 3.250%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Direct, Joint Financing): 2.500%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#) (Down Payment): 1.500%
- [Emergency Loan](#) (Amount of Actual Loss): 2.875%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders.

You can find out which of these loans may be right for you by using our [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#).

Commodity and Storage Facility Loans

Additionally, FSA provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade on-farm storage facilities and purchase handling equipment and loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low.

- [Commodity Loans](#) (less than one year disbursed): 1.125%
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#):
 - Three-year loan terms: 0.375%
 - Five-year loan terms: 0.750%
 - Seven-year loan terms: 1.250%
 - Ten-year loan terms: 1.500%
 - Twelve-year loan terms: 1.750%
- [Sugar Storage Facility Loans](#) (15 years): 1.875%

More Information

Producers can explore available options on all FSA loan options at fsa.usda.gov or by contacting your [local USDA Service Center](#).

3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 350
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-324-5110

State Executive Director

David P. Russ (acting)

Farm Loan Programs Chief

David P. Russ

Price Support Programs Chief

Ken Schapman

Conservation Programs Chief

Dale Allen

Production Adjustment Programs Chief

Kyle Knapp

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