

## Farm Service Agency now accepting Nominations for County Committee Members



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) began accepting nominations for county committee members on June 15. Elections will occur in **Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1- Providence County, RI**. All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 2, 2021.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in a USDA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote, and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serving on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

### More Information

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election. They should check with their local USDA Service Center to see if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form or an [FSA-669-A-3](#) for urban county committees. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 1, 2021. To find your local USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

## The importance of responding to NASS Surveys



USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at [nass.usda.gov/Publications](http://nass.usda.gov/Publications) and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at [youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be).

---

## Reminders for FSA direct and guaranteed borrowers with real estate security



Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations
- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

---

## Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans



The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables

for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

For more information, contact the Rhode Island FSA County USDA Service Center at 401-828-3120 Option 2 or visit [fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](https://fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).

---

## Ask the Expert: Understanding the U.S. Drought Monitor; a Q&A with Brian Fuchs

We've had plenty of rain in Rhode Island lately, but drought conditions could affect your operation in the future. The [U.S. Drought Monitor \(USDM\)](#) is a resource producers can use to help determine how to best respond and react to a drought as it develops or lingers.



The USDM is an online, weekly map showing the location, extent, and severity of drought across the United States. It categorizes the entire country as being in one of six levels of drought. The map is released on Thursdays and depicts conditions for the week.

The USDM provides producers with the latest information about drought conditions where they live, enabling producers to best respond and react to a drought as it develops or lingers. In some cases, the USDM may help a producer make specific decisions about their operation, such as reducing the stocking rate because forage is not growing. For others, it may provide a convenient big-picture snapshot of broader environmental conditions.

The USDM incorporates varying data – rain, snow, temperature, streamflow, reservoir levels, soil moisture, and more – as well as first-hand information submitted from on-the-ground sources such as photos, descriptions, and experiences. The levels of drought are connected to the frequency of occurrence across [several different drought indicators](#). What makes the USDM unique is that it is not a strictly numeric product. The mapmakers rely on their judgment and a nationwide network of 450-plus experts to interpret conditions for each region. They synthesize their discussion and analysis into a single depiction of drought for the entire country.

USDA uses the Drought Monitor to determine a producer's eligibility for certain drought assistance programs, like the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) and [Emergency Haying or Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres](#). Additionally, the Farm Service Agency uses the Drought Monitor to trigger and “fast track” Secretarial Disaster Designations which

then provides producers impacted by drought access to emergency loans that can assist with credit needs.

[Learn more about the U.S. Drought Monitor.](#)



## Rhode Island USDA

60 Quaker Lane

Warwick, RI 02886

RI NRCS:	401-828-1300
RI FSA State Office:	401-828-3120 Option 1
RI FSA County Office:	401-828-3120 Option 2
RI FSA Farm Loan Team:	401-828-3120 Option 3
Risk Management Agency:	919-875-4880

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).