



FSA encourages farmers to vote in County Committee elections

The 2021 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 1, 2021, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return 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. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

Eligible voters in local administrative area **(LAA-1) Providence County**, 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 candidate in this year's election are:

Joe Polseno is nominated in LAA-1, Providence County to serve as a county committee member for a 3-year term. Joe is a third-generation apple grower who operates Pippin Apple Orchard in Cranston, RI. After growing up on the farm and working under the care and supervision of his father, Joe was ready to take over the duties of the orchard in 2011.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2021 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.



Higher loan limit now available for USDA guaranteed farm loans



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.

Share your 2021 harvest #Harvest2021



This past spring, many of you shared with us photos and videos of the seeds and seedlings you sowed, and your hopes for the coming season. (View the storymap: <https://arcg.is/0Lq1z5>)

This fall as you reap the rewards of your work, we want to hear from you once again. Did the year go as you expected, or did you experience some surprises? Is your harvest bountiful, or were you impacted by conditions like drought, flood, or pests? Did our pandemic or farm programs benefit your operation this year? Did you try any new tactics or equipment, and if so, how did it go?

Send photos and videos of your operation's harvest activities, along with a few sentences reflecting your thoughts on the above questions by **October 27** to SM.FP.Social@usda.gov. You may be featured on Farmers.gov national social media channels, a national storymap, and/or our wrap-up blog scheduled to publish in late October. For more details and examples, read our short blog story: <https://go.usa.gov/xMUan>.

USDA announces 2022 application ranking date for the RI Statewide Natural Systems Demonstration Project



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) encourages farmers and forestland owners to sign up by **January 14th** for conservation assistance through the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) as part as the Rhode Island Statewide Natural Systems Demonstration Project.

RCPP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and forestland owners to address natural resource concerns through an array of conservation practices. This demonstration project will have three focus areas:

Eastern Rhode Island (*Bristol and Newport counties*) – Funding will be used to implement a suite of natural system-based approaches including floodplain restoration and riparian buffer restoration to reduce impacts, erosion, sediment transport and nutrient loading into surface water.

Northern Rhode Island (*Providence County*) – Funding will be used to implement a suite of natural systems-based approaches including green infrastructure improvements, riparian buffers, and stream corridor restoration to protect water quality in an inland, forested watershed.

Southern Rhode Island (*Kent and Washington counties*) – Funding will be used to implement suite of natural system-based approaches including green infrastructure to protect water quality in a coastal saltwater pond.

Applications may be submitted at any time during the year, however, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by **January 14, 2022** to ensure their application is considered in the 2022 fiscal year ranking period. For more information on

available programs, the application process, and natural resource priorities, visit the Rhode Island NRCS website at www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov.

READ MORE



Rhode Island USDA

60 Quaker Lane

Warwick, RI 02886

RI NRCS Field Office:	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).