

May 2016



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## South Carolina Farm Service Agency May Newsletter

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#### South Carolina Farm Service Agency

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[www.fsa.usda.gov/sc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sc)

#### State Committee:

Robert Battle,  
Chairperson  
Warren Dixon  
Mary Frances Koon  
Don Sharp  
Tom Trantham

#### Message From the State Executive Director

Greetings from the South Carolina Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Office!

FSA provides federal program benefits to support and sustain America's healthful, stable, accessible and affordable food supply. Our primary mission at FSA is to assist South Carolina farmers and ranchers in securing the best possible benefit from programs such as disaster relief, conservation, loans for operating and land purchase, commodity price support assistance and other available resources through USDA initiatives.

We encourage you to read our monthly newsletters and bulletins as this is our primary way of disseminating information other than by word of

**State Executive Director:**

Wilfred L. Pace

**Administrative Officer:**  
Toni Turner

**Farm Programs Chief:**  
Amy Turner

**Farm Loan Programs Chief:**  
Frank Sligh

Producers can contact their [local FSA Office](#) for more information or to schedule an appointment.

**Important Dates and Deadlines:**

**May 15:** Acreage Reporting Deadline for Tomatoes (planted 3/15 - 4/30).

**May 30:** Offices Closed for Memorial Day

**July 4:** Offices Closed for Independence Day

**July 15:** Acreage Reporting Deadline for Spring and Summer Seeded Crops and CRP Acreage

**August 15:** Acreage Reporting Deadline for Tomatoes (planted 7/1 - 7/15)

mouth. Visit our USDA Service Centers and allow us to assist you in taking advantage of many services that are available to you as landowners and producers. You can contact your [local FSA Office](#) for more information on our programs and loans or schedule an appointment to see how we can better serve you.

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## Sign-Up Period for Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance Ends May 30

The sign-up period for counties in SC that are approved to accept applications for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) to address flood damages ends May 30, 2016.

EFRP provides payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land to enable the owners to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster.

After applications are received the South Carolina Forestry Commission will provide technical assistance by evaluating the damage and developing a plan to restore the NIPF land. The local FSA county committee will determine land eligibility and approve applications.

In order to meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and be sustainable for growing trees. The land must also be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land. The natural disaster must have resulted in damage that if untreated would impair or endanger the natural resources on the land and/or materially affect future use of the land. Individuals may receive up to 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoring the damage. The minimum qualifying cost of restoration is \$1000 per participant, approximately five acres, unless a waiver is requested and approved.

Please contact your local County FSA office for more information or visit <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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# USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

*Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly*

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport) or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Ends Aug. 1

Producers who chose coverage from the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit FSA county offices through Aug. 1, 2016, to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2016.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2016 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

The two programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

### *Local Offices Issue Receipts for Services Provided*

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

To learn more about FSA, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or to find your local USDA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating Loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

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## Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## 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.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

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## USDA Makes \$8.7 Million Available in Risk Management Education Funding

*Traditionally Underserved Farmers and Ranchers Encouraged to Apply*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) today announced \$8.7 million in cooperative agreements for risk management education and training programs. The funding would give organizations needed resources to develop training and education tools to help farmers and ranchers, especially those traditionally underserved or with limited resources, learn how to effectively managing long-term risks and challenges.

Through these partnerships, producers will receive assistance in understanding and using crop insurance programs and other tools so they can make the best risk management decisions for their agricultural operations. Past award recipients have included universities, county cooperative extension offices and nonprofit organizations.

Available funding includes \$4.4 million for the Crop Insurance in Targeted States Program. The program backs development of crop insurance education programs where there is a low level of federal crop insurance participation and availability. The targeted states are Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Additionally, \$4.3 million in funding is available for the Risk Management Education Partnerships Program, which provides money for the development of general nationwide crop insurance education as well as other risk management training programs for producers.

A broad range of risk management training activities are eligible for funding consideration. Training can also focus on educating producers on the federal crop insurance program and options resulting from Farm Bill provisions. The agreements will also help train farmers at all levels on risk management options that help secure local food systems and strengthen rural communities. In particular, RMA seeks to fund projects that include innovative approaches in product delivery toward the priorities – such as Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Farm Financial Benchmarking – listed in each funding opportunity.

The request for applications is available through Grants.gov at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Visitors can search by catalog of federal domestic assistance (CFDA) number 10.460, Risk Management Partnership program, or CFDA number 10.458, Crop Insurance in Targeted States.

Applications for the Crop Insurance in Targeted States Program and Risk Management Education Partnerships Program are due by 11:59 p.m. EST on July 3, 2016. All applications must be submitted electronically through the Results Verification System website at <http://rvs.umn.edu> and received by the deadline.

A strong farm safety net is important to sustain the success of American agriculture. USDA's crop insurance program insured more than 298 million acres, with 1.2 million policies and \$102.3 billion worth of coverage in the 2015 crop year. Visit RMA's website at [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov) to learn more about the agency and its programs.

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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).