

December 2016



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Connecticut FSA Newsletter

Connecticut Farm Service Agency

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www.fsa.usda.gov/ct

State Executive Director

Bryan Hurlburt

2017 Acreage Reporting Deadlines

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their Local County Office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Connecticut Counties:

- January 2, 2017: Report the number of Honeybee Colonies
- January 15, 2017: Apples, Peaches and fall seeded small grains

The following exceptions apply to the acreage reporting dates:

State Committee:

Vincent Malerba,
Chair

Gary Crump,
Member

Theresa Freund,
Member

Stephen Jarmoc,
Member

Edward Kasheta,
Member

Office Staff:

Ross Eddy,
District Director

Randy Kleiner,
Farm Loan Chief

Doris Ostrowski,
Administrative
Officer

Dawn Pindell,
Outreach Specialist

Find your local
office at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/ct

Click on County Offices
On right side column

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Counties Eligible for Drought Disaster Assistance

Connecticut Counties eligible for Disaster Assistance Due to 2016 Drought are Hartford, Litchfield, and Tolland. Programs Eligible are:

LFP - Livestock Feed Program - Compensation to eligible producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought.

NAP – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program – provides financial assistance for noninsurable crop losses due to drought, flood, hurricane or other natural disasters.

TAP – Tree Assistance Program – provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or where applicable, rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines lost by natural disasters.

Emergency Loans – provides EM loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters or quarantine.

Connecticut Office Updates:

Contact or visit your local USDA Farm Service Agency Office for information and program updates:

- * Aimee Fusco, County Executive Director 860-626-8852
Litchfield/Fairfield County FSA, 1185 New Litchfield Street, Torrington, CT
- * Martha Dorsey, County Executive Director 860-688-7725
Hartford/Tolland County FSA, 100 Northfield Drive, FL 4, Windsor, CT
- * Teresa Peavey, Acting County Executive Director 203-269-6665
New Haven/Middlesex County FSA, 97 Barnes Road, Wallingford, CT
- * Sarah Woodward, County Executive Director 860-859-5218
New London County FSA, 238 West Town Street, Norwich, CT
- * Alicia Mott, Acting County Executive Director 860-779-0557
Windham County FSA, 71 Westcott Road, Danielson, CT

Contact the Farm Loan Team:

- * Ronald Clark, Farm Loan Manager 860-859-5218
New London County FSA, 238 West Town Street, Norwich, CT

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

USDA prioritized \$5.6 billion over the next two years within USDA programs and services that serve new and beginning farmers and ranchers. A new, tailored web tool was 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.

The 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](#).

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government

offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

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.

Ask FSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then ASK FSA at <http://askfsa.custhelp.com>

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your FSA questions no matter where you are or what device you use. It is for ALL customers, including underserved farmers and ranchers who wish to be enrolled in FSA loans, farm, and conservation programs.

Through AskFSA you can:

- * Access our knowledge base 24/7
- * Receive answers to your questions faster
- * Submit a question and receive a timely response from an FSA expert
- * Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- * Customize your account settings and view responses at any time

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Current Loan Interest Rates

You can check current FSA loan rates at:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/index>

Rates for December 2016 are:

* Farm Operating – Direct	2.250%
* Farm Operating – Microloan	2.125%
* Farm Ownership – Direct	3.250%
* Farm Ownership – Microloan	3.250%
* Farm Ownership – Direct, Joint Financing	2.50%
* Farm Ownership – Down Payment	1.500%
* Emergency Loan – Amount of Actual Loss	3.250%

Farm Storage Facility Loan (7 years) 1.75%

Upcoming Events & Deadlines

2016

December 14th - 10 to 1; SARE Animal Health Care Practices at Tolland Agriculture Center, Contact: jean.king@uconn.edu

December 14th – 5 to 8 pm; New Farmer Business Planning at Knox Inc., Hartford, Register with charlotte.ross@uconn.edu

December 15th – 9:30 am to 12; FDA Food Safety Modernization Act Information Session, Free, at Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam; reservations at: diane.hirsh@uconn.edu or 203-407-3163

December 15th - 5 to 8 pm; Soil Health & Management at Killingly Agriculture Center; no fee; Register with charlotte.ross@uconn.edu

December 16th - 8 to 4:30; “Build Your Network, Grow Our Future” A full day networking and learning event for emerging farmers in their first 1 to 10 years. Auerfarm, Bloomfield, CT. FSA is an event partner. A panel of new and seasoned farmers will be discussing how they’ve utilized CT Ag services. No fee; Register at: <http://newctfarmers.com/byngof-2016>

2017

January 1st - Happy New Year!

January 2nd - Report the number of Honeybee Colonies to your local county FSA office. By reporting annually you establish eligibility for programs that may

compensate for bee losses like the Emergency Livestock Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP).

January 9th – 8 to 3:30, CT Vegetable & Small Fruit Growers' Conference. Maneeley's Conference Center, South Windsor, CT. Stop by the FSA booth. Pre-Register by January 4th for \$40 or walk in for \$60. Contact Mackenzie.white@uconn.edu or 860-875-3331

January 11 – 13th – 2017 Northeast Aquaculture Conference & Exposition 37th Milford Aquaculture Seminar, Omni Providence Hotel, Providence, RI
www.northeastaquaculture.org

January 14th – 10 to 1, Soil Health & Management at Green Village Initiative, Bridgeport; Register with charlotte.ross@uconn.edu

January 15, 2017 Crop Acreage Reporting deadline for Apples, Peaches. If you are unsure of the acreage to be reported you can ask FSA to do a Measurement Service for a fee. Accurate reporting is essential for NAP and Crop Insurance programs.

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).