

March 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

**GovDelivery**

- [A Special 2018 Ag Day Message from Clark Chapin, State Executive Director](#)
- [Loan Interest Rates](#)
- [USDA Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018](#)
- [Signature Policy](#)
- [Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting](#)
- [Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early](#)
- [USDA Microloans Help Purchase Farmland and Improve Property](#)
- [Agriculture Meetings & Program Deadlines](#)

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## Connecticut FSA Newsletter

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### Connecticut Farm Service Agency

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

#### State Executive Director:

Clark Chapin

#### State Committee:

Bonnie Burr, Chair  
Bruce Gresczyk Jr, Member

### A Special 2018 Ag Day Message from Clark Chapin, State Executive Director

#### *National Agriculture Day Celebrates American Food and Fiber Production*

March 20 is National Agriculture Day, a day designated each year by the [Agriculture Council of America \(ACA\)](#) to celebrate the accomplishments of agriculture. The Farm Service Agency joins the council in recognizing farmers, ranchers and foresters for their contributions to the nation's outstanding quality of life.

This year's theme, **Agriculture: Food for Life**, spotlights the hard work of American producers who diligently work to provide food, fiber and more to the United States and countries around the world. To ensure a prosperous future for American agriculture, FSA provides continuous support to agriculturalists across the country.

FSA is rural America's engine for economic growth, job creation and development, offering local service to millions of rural producers. In fiscal year 2017, [USDA Farm Loan programs](#)

Diane Karabin, Member  
Mark Sellev, Member

**Office Staff:**

Doris Ostrowski,  
Administrative Officer

Ross Eddy,  
District Director

Sarah Fournier,  
Program Specialist

Dawn Pindell,  
Outreach Specialist

Rebecca Palmer,  
Administrative Specialist

**Farm Loan:**

Julie Kolodji,  
Farm Loan Chief

provided \$6 billion in support to producers across America, the second highest total in FSA history. FSA also distributed \$1.6 billion in [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#) payments to over 375,000 Americans to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.

For agricultural producers who suffered market downturns in 2016, USDA is issuing approximately \$8 billion in payments under the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\) programs](#). USDA also continues to provide extensive assistance in response to natural [disasters](#) throughout the country, including last year's hurricanes in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, drought in the northern high plains, wildfires in the west and central plains, floods, tornados, freezes and other catastrophic weather events.

To support [beginning farmers and ranchers](#), Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue signed a Memorandum of Understanding with officials from [SCORE](#), the nation's largest volunteer network of expert business mentors, to support new and beginning farmers. The agreement provides new help and resources for beginning ranchers, veterans, women, socially disadvantaged Americans and others, providing new tools to help them both grow and thrive in agribusiness.

I am honored to administer programs that enable our producers to manage their risks when the agriculture industry faces hardship. On behalf of the Connecticut Farm Service Agency, I would like to thank our agricultural producers for continuing to feed our nation and the world.

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## Loan Interest Rates

**Farm Storage Facility Loan:**

Three years 2.25%  
Seven Years 2.75%  
Ten Years 2.75%

**Farm Loan:**

Farm Operating Direct 3.25%  
Farm Ownership Direct 3.750%  
Farm Ownership Beginning Farmer Down Payment 1.50%

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## USDA Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018

Farmers and ranchers with base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program may enroll for the 2018 crop year. The enrollment period will end on Aug. 1, 2018.

**Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers must enroll by signing a contract each program year.**

The producers on a farm that are not enrolled for the 2018 enrollment period will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in previous years must still enroll during the 2018 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC 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).

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## Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman shall sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from an eligible parent

Note, by signing the applicable document, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc.

When signing on one's behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form, or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc.

FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Examples of documents not approved for FAXED signatures include:

- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office.

Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Any member of the general partnership can sign on behalf of the general partnership and bind all members unless the Articles of Partnership are more restrictive. Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office. Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures,

corporations, estates, and trusts shall consist of an indicator “by” or “for” the individual’s name, individual’s name and capacity, or individual’s name, capacity, and name of entity.

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.

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## Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, and updated the definitions of “idle” and “fallow.”

### Reporting Cover Crops:

Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- **Cereals and other grasses** - Any cover crop that is classified as a grass plant or cereal grain, and would include, but not be limited to, the following cover crops: cereal rye, wheat, barley, oats, black oats, triticale, annual ryegrass, pearl millet, foxtail millet (also called German, Italian or Hungarian millet), sorghum sudan grass, sorghum and other millets and grasses.
- **Legumes** - Any cover crop that is classified as a legume, including, but not limited to, clovers, vetches, peas, sun hemp, cowpeas, lentils and other legumes.
- **Brassicas and other broadleaves** - Any cover crop that is classified as a non-legume broadleaf, including, but not limited to, Brassicas such as radishes, turnips, canola, rapeseed, oilseed rape, and mustards, as well as other broadleaf plants such as phacelia, flax, sunflower, buckwheat, and safflower.
- **Mixtures** - Mixes of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time, for example, oats and radishes.
- If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

### Permitted Revision of Intended Use After Acreage Reporting Date:

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm have 30 days to change the intended use. Producer share interest changes alone will not allow for revisions to intended use after the acreage reporting date. The revision must be performed by either the acreage reporting date or within 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee’s satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

### Acreage Reports:

To maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

## Definitions of Terms

FSA defines "idle" as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row. For example, the balance of a field that could not be planted due to moisture or a turn area that is not planted would be reported as idle.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season. Resting the ground in this manner allows it to recover its fertility and conserve moisture for crop production in the next growing season.

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## Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Farm Loan team is already working on operating loans for spring 2018 so it is important that potential borrowers submit their requests early, so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

**Microloans** are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation.

Contact Ron Clark 860-319-8073 or Carolyn Marlowe 860-319-8072 for details on farm operating and microloans and to obtain loan applications. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

**Marketing Assistance Loans** allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

**Farm Storage Facility Loans** can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, or for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

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## USDA Microloans Help Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

*Producers, Including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans), or contact your local FSA office.

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## Agriculture Meetings & Program Deadlines

**March 21** - Agriculture Day at the Capitol, 10 am to 1 pm, Capitol Building, Hartford, CT; [Rebecca.eddy@ct.gov](mailto:Rebecca.eddy@ct.gov) or 860-713-2538

**March 26 & 27** - Producer Safety Alliance Approved Grower Training Course, 9 am to 3:30 pm, Middlesex County Extension Center; <http://www.cahnrcconference.uconn.edu/>

**March 28** - One-on-One Sessions, 9 am to 3:30 pm, Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam, CT; Reserve sessions with: [Mackenzie.white@uconn.edu](mailto:Mackenzie.white@uconn.edu); or 860-875-3331

**March 29** - AGvocate Regional Meeting, 6:30 pm to 9 pm, Canterbury Town Hall, Canterbury, CT, Farmland Preservation Options, USDA, SCORE mentoring, Agritourism, Agriculture Commission Updates

**March 31** - New Farmer Business Planning, 10 am to 1 pm, Burroughs Community Center, Bridgeport, CT; <https://newfarms.extension.uconn.edu/solidground/>

**April 7** - One-on-One Agriculture Advising Session, 9 am to 3:30 pm, CT Farm Bureau Office, Wethersfield, CT; <http://www.ctfarmrisk.uconn.edu/one-on-one.php>

**April 11** - Small Vegetable Farm Equipment Field Day, 2 pm to 6 pm, UConn Plant Science and Education Facility, Storrs, CT; [charlotte.ross@uconn.edu](mailto:charlotte.ross@uconn.edu)

**April 17** - One-on-One Agriculture Advising Session, 9 am to 3:30 pm, Wamogo High School, Litchfield, CT; <http://www.ctfarmrisk.uconn.edu/one-on-one.php>

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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).