

January 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [Updates from the State Executive Director and Dates to Remember](#)
- [USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation](#)
- [Farm Loan Graduation Reminder](#)
- [FSA Can Help with On-Farm Propane Storage](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)

Connecticut FSA Newsletter

Connecticut Farm Service Agency

344 Merrow Road, Suite B
Tolland, CT 06084

Phone: 860-871-4090

Fax: 855-934-2463

www.fsa.usda.gov/ct

State Executive Director:

Clark Chapin

State Committee:

Bonnie Burr, *Chair*

Melissa Dziurgot

Bruce Gresczyk

Diane Karabin

Paul Miller

State Office Staff:

Doris Ostrowski,

Updates from the State Executive Director and Dates to Remember

It's only January, but 2020 is already proving to be a busy year with upcoming program deadlines at Connecticut FSA County Offices. Loan activity is picking up as well and for the first time in over 40 years, we are entering a loan season without our Farm Loan Manager, Ronald Clark who retired last month. Many of you may have worked with Ron over the years and I'm sure you join us in wishing him the best in his retirement.

Signup for the ARC/PLC program is underway and the deadline to select an ARC/PLC program and enroll for 2019 is fast approaching. Signup for these programs has been slow, which means county offices will need to see the majority of producers over the next 7 weeks. Elections may be made and changed any time before the March 16th deadline, so we recommend making an appointment soon to beat the rush in March and so you don't miss the deadline. For more information about the ARC/PLC programs including frequently asked questions and a PLC yield calculator

Administrative Officer
Jule Dybdahl, *Administrative Specialist*
Nathan Wilson, *District Director*
Sarah Fournier, *Program Specialist*
Rebecca Palmer, *Program Specialist*

Farm Loan:

Eric Bodzinski, *Farm Loan Chief*

To find county office locations, program information, and more visit the new Farmers.gov portal

visit https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/arcplc_program/index.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has a general signup that will close on February 28, 2020. CRP contracts are 10-15 years and pay producers an annual rental payment to plant and maintain a cover on cropland instead of growing a crop to address a specific resource concern. Some of the resource concerns include wildlife habitat, soil erosion, and water runoff. CRP has not been popular in Connecticut in the past, but the resource benefits may be worth considering. For more information about CRP call your local county office or visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/index>.

Here are some important dates coming up:

January 30 – Deadline; Filing ELAP application for payment and supporting documentation for 2019 losses

February 17 – FSA Offices closed for holiday

February 28 – Deadline; CRP General Offers

March 16 – Deadline; 2020 NAP Coverage for Annual Crops
– Deadline; 2019 ARCPLC Election and Enrollment

With Groundhog Day this weekend, spring will be right around the corner and you will be back in the field in no time, so please call or stop in to sign up or update your records before you get too busy.

-Clark Chapin

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx>.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA’s online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department’s self-service website for farmers.

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has [increased the limits](#) for several loan products.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

Farm Loan Graduation Reminder

FSA Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

FSA periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower’s ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower’s financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer’s operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower’s potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower’s name, loan type, balance sheet and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower’s loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders that are interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA farm loan office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, FSA’s intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

FSA Can Help with On-Farm Propane Storage

Winter months in Connecticut can be long and cold. For several years, farmers have faced propane storage shortages. FSA’s [Farm Storage Facility Loan \(FSFL\) program](#) provides funding for on-farm liquified petroleum tanks.

FSFL low-interest financing can be used to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment, storage and handling trucks. Liquified petroleum tanks are covered for eligible commodities for the use of fuel for grain dryer equipment.

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

Producers 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 conventional operations,

small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about FSFLs and how these loans can help with your on-site propane tank storage needs, contact your local FSA county office.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

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).

 SHARE



Questions?
[Contact Us](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Delete Profile](#) | [Help](#)