Trump Administration Appoints Sherry McCorkle to Serve as State Executive Director for USDA’s Farm Service Agency in Florida and the US Virgin Islands

The Trump Administration recently appointed Sherry McCorkle as the new State Executive Director for the USDA Florida/US Virgin Islands Farm Service Agency (FSA). McCorkle will join the Florida/US Virgin Islands FSA team on February 11, 2019.

McCorkle most recently served as the deputy district director for representative Thomas J. Rooney (retired) and more recently representative Gregory Steube where she supported the Congressman in all aspects of legislative, public and community relations. The agriculture industry in the congressional district in which McCorkle worked was severely impacted by Hurricane Irma in 2018. As such, McCorkle partnered closely with commodity organizations as well as federal, state and local agencies in executing pre-storm preparation and post-storm recovery efforts. She is actively involved with numerous civic and trade
USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Program Deadline Extensions

USDA’s Farm Service Agency extended deadlines on many of its programs because of the government shutdown and the emergency nature of many of the programs. Below are updated deadlines:

*** For details on all program deadlines and extensions, view FSA National Notice CM-807

Farm Programs

- Market Facilitation Program
  - Deadline to apply extended to Feb. 14, 2019
- Marketing Assistance Loans
  - If loan matured in December 2018, settlement date extended to Feb. 14, 2019
  - Peanut loans or Loan Deficiency Payments - loan availability date now Feb. 28, 2019
- Livestock Forage Disaster
  - 2018 application for payment due Feb. 28, 2019
- Emergency Assistance Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program
  - Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019
- Livestock Indemnity Program
  - Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
  - Submitting 2019 application for coverage due Feb. 14, 2019
  - Notice of loss for 72-hour harvest and grazing (as applicable) due Feb. 14, 2019
  - Notice of loss for prevented planting and failed acres due Feb. 14, 2019
  - Applications for payment for 2018 covered losses due Feb. 14, 2019
- Tree Assistance Program
  - Notice of loss due Feb. 14, 2019
- Acreage Reporting
  - January reporting deadlines extended to Feb. 14, 2019

For inquiries related to these programs or any not listed above, contact a local FSA office in your area, visit http://offices.usda.gov.
New Improvement to Streamline Crop Reporting

_Update Lets Farmers and Ranchers Report Common Acreage Information Once_

Farmers and ranchers filing crop acreage reports with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participating insurance providers approved by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) now can provide the common information from their acreage reports at one office and the information will be electronically shared with the other location.

This new process is part of the USDA Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). This interagency collaboration also includes participating private crop insurance agents and insurance companies, all working to streamline the information collected from farmers and ranchers who participate in USDA programs.

Once filing at one location, data that’s important to both FSA and RMA will be securely and electronically shared with the other location avoiding redundant and duplicative reporting, as well as saving farmers and ranchers time.

Producers must still visit both their local FSA office and their insurance provider to validate and sign acreage reports, complete maps, or provide program-specific information, including reporting uninsured crops to FSA. The common data from the first-filed acreage report will now be available to pre-populate and accelerate completion of the second report.

USDA has been working to streamline the crop reporting process for agricultural producers, who have expressed concerns with providing the same basic common information for multiple locations. In 2013, USDA consolidated the deadlines to 15 dates for submitting these reports, down from the previous 54 dates at RMA and 17 dates for FSA. USDA representatives believe farmers and ranchers will experience a notable improvement in the coming weeks as they approach the peak season for crop reporting later this summer.

More than 93 percent of all annual reported acres to FSA and RMA now are eligible for the common data reporting, and USDA is exploring adding more crops. Plans are underway at USDA to continue building upon the framework with additional efficiencies at a future date.

Farmers and ranchers are also reminded that they can now access their FSA farm information from the convenience of their home computer. Producers can see field boundaries, images of the farm, conservation status, operator and owner information and much more.

The new customer self-service portal, known as _FSA Farm+,_ gives farmers and ranchers online access to securely view, print or export their personal farm data. To enroll in the online service, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for details. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit [http://offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov).

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_Crop Insurance Deadline Nears in Florida_

_Rice Growers Need to Make Insurance Decisions Soon_

USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Florida rice growers that the final date to apply for crop insurance coverage is February 15. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the February 15 sales closing date to do so.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy. Coverage is available for rice in Glades, Hendry, and Palm Beach counties.
Growers are encouraged to visit their crop insurance agent soon to learn specific details for the 2019 crop year. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Growers can use the RMA Cost Estimator to get a premium amount estimate of their insurance needs online.

For more information about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net, visit https://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html.

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## Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer’s credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts. FSA’s farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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## Supervised Credit

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, it is our goal to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will advise borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation’s goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA’s staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.
USDA and SCORE Joining Forces to Find Mentors

If you are a farmer or rancher, or have agricultural or business experience, join us in supporting the next generation and in investing in your local community! Your experiences and knowledge as a business owner, agricultural professional, or farmer can provide vital support to the community you live in.

USDA is collaborating with SCORE – www.score.org - the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors in an effort to expand the field of available agricultural mentors and provide free business mentoring to farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural and rural business owners. SCORE is currently looking for volunteers with experience in an agriculture-related field who would like to become a part of an extended field of volunteers. The organization’s Orientation and Mentoring Certification program provides volunteers with everything needed to be a successful volunteer. Training includes background about SCORE’s mission and services, as well as guidance on how to be a business mentor, including enhancement of listening, interviewing and problem-solving skills.

Current SCORE volunteer mentors have backgrounds in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, business and financial planning. The mentors provide local expertise and free one-on-one business mentoring to new and existing farmers and business owners. Together they work through the process of starting up or maintaining agricultural and rural businesses. No matter what stage a business is in, SCORE volunteer mentors can help in developing business plans, navigating financing and legal issues, identifying new markets, and other topics, in order to help their clients succeed. FSA invites you to learn more and sign up to become a mentor today at https://newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship.

Dates to Remember
February 18 Federal Holiday Observed. Offices Closed.

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).