

April 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

### New Jersey Farm Service Agency

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#### State Executive Director:

[Barry Calogero](#)

#### Farm Loan Chief:

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Visit the  
New Jersey FSA  
website for more  
information at  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/nj](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj)

### From the Desk of the SED

SPRING has arrived, the days are longer, the temperatures are warmer, and the cabin fever has subsided.

While I'm sure you are all anxious to get out in the fields and do what you do best, don't forget to visit your local FSA office and discuss any changes to your operation, including any land that you may have acquired or dropped or if you are now operating as an entity rather than an individual.

With the rush and excitement to get in the fields please keep safety in mind and be careful while you go about your daily routines.

We all know stressful times can inhibit our mood and ability to function. Who knows better than our Producers the day to day stresses of being a farmer. The USDA recognizes the stress farmers are under due to markets and weather, which is why we've provided materials to our staff to help identify potential issues and resources for our farmers. We all have had our peaks and valleys in life and if someone can assist you during a troubling time please take advantage of this great opportunity.

*Don't forget to visit [www.Farmers.gov](http://www.Farmers.gov) for exciting new information,*

Farmers.gov provides Farmers, ranchers and foresters with a more user friendly online self-service applications, educational material, engagement opportunities and business tools to increase efficiency and productivity while preserving and fostering long held traditional relationships between USDA and our producers.

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... SED Message continued

A few examples you might find of interest:

- H-2A visa program, is a new interactive check list tool that makes getting started much simpler.
- Now you can securely View Loans and Financial information including interest payments, loan history, Paid in full and restructured loans and account alerts through the Farmers.gov portal
- Service center locator / Digital forms / read about success stories /Disaster assistance tools and much more.

To access personal information through the Farmers.gov portal you must have Level 2 Access. Enrolling is a two-step process. For producers who do not have an account can register for one at [www.eauth.usda.gov](http://www.eauth.usda.gov) . After creating the account, customers receive a confirmation email with instructions for identity verification. Identity verification can be completed online or by presenting a government issued photo ID in person at a USDA service center.

As I am sure you are aware the 2018 Farm Bill has been passed and there are a few significant changes.

Please take a moment to visit our NJ FSA home page <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj> to review several new informative additions.

A few "New" items worth mentioning:

- A link to receive FSA's 2 page consolidated "What's new in the farm bill "report.
- A link to obtain a more detailed in-depth version of farm bill changes.
- View a list of (6) 2018 Crop disaster designations. (you might be eligible for (Emergency loans)
- Program deadlines / COC meeting schedules / SED & SOC information.

In closing I'd like to include a press release I recently sent out to honor our producers during National Ag day.

"Farmers and ranchers are the backbone of America. They grow food to feed us, fiber to cloth us, and fuel to run our homes and cars. Their hard work and dedication provide economic stability across the nation- stability that supports rural economies and creates much needed jobs for local communities.

No matter who we are, where we live, or what we do, we all have a reason everyday to Celebrate and Thank our farmers

Respectfully:  
NJ State Executive Director

**Barry Calogero**

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## **Buy-Up Coverage Availability for Noninsured Crop Coverage to end May 24th**

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that higher levels of coverage will be offered through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), a popular safety net program. The 2018 Farm Bill also increased service fees and made other changes to the program, including service fee waivers for qualified military veterans interested in obtaining NAP coverage.

“When other insurance coverage is not an option, NAP is a valuable risk mitigation tool for farmers and ranchers,” said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. “In agriculture, losses from natural disasters are a matter of when, not if, and having a NAP policy provides a little peace of mind.”

NAP provides financial assistance to producers of commercial crops for which insurance coverage is not available in order to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevent crop planting.

### **NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option**

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.

Producers have a *one-time opportunity until May 24, 2019*, to obtain buy-up coverage for 2019 or 2020 eligible crops for which the NAP application closing date has passed.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

### **NAP Service Fees**

For all coverage levels, the new 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. These amounts reflect a \$75 service fee increase for crop, county or multi-county coverage. The fee increases apply to obtaining NAP coverage on crops on or after April 8, 2019.

### **NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans**

The 2018 Farm Bill NAP amendments specify that qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are now eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.*”

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

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## **Higher Limits Now Available on USDA Farm Loans**

Higher limits are now available for borrowers interested in USDA’s farm loans, which help agricultural producers purchase farms or cover operating expenses. The 2018 Farm Bill increased the amount that producers can borrow through direct and guaranteed loans available through USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) and made changes to other loans, such as microloans and emergency loans.

Key changes include:

- The Direct Operating Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000, and the Guaranteed Operating Loan limit increased from \$ 1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Operating loans help producers pay for normal operating expenses, including machinery and equipment, seed, livestock feed, and more.
- The Direct Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$600,000, and the Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Farm ownership loans help producers become owner-operators of family farms as well as improve and expand current operations.

- Producers can now receive both a \$50,000 Farm Ownership Microloan and a \$50,000 Operating Microloan. Previously, microloans were limited to a combined \$50,000. Microloans provide flexible access to credit for small, beginning, niche, and non-traditional farm operations.
- Producers who previously received debt forgiveness as part of an approved FSA restructuring plan are now eligible to apply for emergency loans. Previously, these producers were ineligible.
- Beginning and socially disadvantaged producers can now receive up to a 95 percent guarantee against the loss of principal and interest on a loan, up from 90 percent.

### **About Farm Loans**

Direct farm loans, which include microloans and emergency loans, are financed and serviced by FSA, while guaranteed farm loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. For guaranteed loans, FSA provides a guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest.

For more information on FSA farm loans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or contact your [local USDA service center](#).

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## **USDA Announces Sign-Up Period for Updated Conservation Stewardship Program**

The current application period for the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP) will close on May 10, 2019. While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by May 10 to ensure their applications are considered for 2019 funding.

State Conservationist Carrie Lindig said, "The 2018 Farm Bill made several changes to this critical conservation program, which helps agricultural producers take the conservation activities on their farm or ranch to the next level." USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest up to \$700 million for new enrollments and contract extensions across the country in fiscal year 2019.

### **Changes to the Program**

The 2018 Farm Bill authorizes NRCS to accept new CSP enrollments from now until 2023, and it makes some important improvements to the program. These updates include:

- NRCS now enrolls eligible, high ranking applications based on dollars rather than acres. For fiscal 2019, NRCS can spend up to \$700 million in the program, which covers part of the cost for producers implementing new conservation activities and maintaining their existing activities.
- Higher payment rates are now available for certain conservation activities, including cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations.
- CSP now provides specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities and a special grassland conservation initiative for certain producers who have maintained cropland base acres.

### **About the Program**

CSP is offered in all 50 states and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups. The program provides many benefits including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP is for working lands including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

### **More Information**

For additional information about CSP, contact NRCS at [your local USDA service center](#). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

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## FSA Employment Opportunity - Apply by April 30, 2019

A permanent fulltime County Program Technician position is now available at our Frenchtown, NJ FSA office. The position is posted on USAJobs starting today through midnight on April 30, 2019.

The vacancy announcement can be found at: <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/530729100>

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### Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address 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 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](http://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>.

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### Double-Cropping & Final Planting Dates

#### Double Cropping

Each year, state committees will review and approve or disapprove county committee recommended changes or additions to specific combinations of crops.

Double-cropping is approved when the two specific crops have the capability to be planted and carried to maturity for the intended use, as reported by the producer, on the same acreage within a crop year under normal growing conditions. The specific combination of crops recommended by the county committee must be approved by the state committee.

Double-cropping is approved in New Jersey on a county-by-county basis. Contact your office for a list of approved double-cropping combinations for your county or [click here for a complete list](#).

A crop following a cover crop terminated according to termination guidelines is approved double cropping and these combinations do not have to be approved by the state committee.

## Final Planting Dates

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on the final planting date for specific crops. The final planting dates vary by crop, planting period and county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific planting deadlines. The timely planting of a crop, by the final planting date, may prevent loss of program benefits.

Click [here](#) for a list of final plant dates for some common New Jersey crops.

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## Soybean Referendum

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announces that soybean producers may request a referendum to determine whether producers want the Secretary to conduct a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act). Participation in the request for referendum is voluntary. Producers should participate only if they wish to request a referendum on the program. If at least 10 percent, not to exceed  $\frac{1}{5}$  of producers from any 1 State, of the 515,008 eligible producers determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) participate in the request for referendum, a referendum will be held within 1 year from that determination. If results of the request for referendum indicate that a referendum is not supported, a referendum will not be conducted. The results of the request for referendum will be published in a notice in the Federal Register.

### To Request Referendum:

Soybean producers may request a referendum during the 4-week period beginning **May 6, 2019, and ending May 31, 2019.**

To be eligible to participate in the request for referendum, producers must certify that they or the producer entity they are authorized to represent paid an assessment at any time between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2018.

Form LS-51-1, Soybean Promotion and Research Order Request for Referendum, can be obtained from May 6, 2019, to May 31, 2019, by mail, FAX, or in person from Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Offices, or can be downloaded from <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/soybean>. **NOTE: LS-51-1 will only be available on the AMS web site from May 6, 2019, through May 31, 2019.** Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate FSA County Office:

- By FAX or in person no later than COB on May 31, 2019.
- By mail postmarked by midnight on May 31, 2019, and must be received in the FSA County Office by COB on June 6, 2019.

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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).