Oklahoma FSA Newsletter

Langston University Partners with USDA to Provide Job Opportunities in 2020

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is looking for bright individuals with a passion for helping others to apply for a variety of open positions. On March 4, 2020, Langston University is hosting a job fair with USDA to fill vacancies in its agencies that deliver farm programs. These agencies have nearly three thousand offices nationwide that are offering job opportunities across the country.

One of USDA’s goals is to be a welcoming and diverse workplace, where employees take pride in their positions. As a USDA employee, you’ll have a full career supporting agriculture and America’s farmers. USDA staff works one-on-one with farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to help them recover from natural
State Committee Members:
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Don Allen Parsons, Idabel
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Production & Payment Eligibility

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Conservation

Danny Lee
Compliance & Price Support

Janlyn Hannah
Administration & Public Relations/Outreach

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county. FSA Office contact information can be located on our online Directory.

disasters, manage risk, conserve natural resources, and get access to many resources. At the same time, you’ll enjoy the benefits of federal employment, including numerous health and life insurance options, retirement savings, and generous annual and sick leave.

A few of the job openings include Engineers, Farm Loan Program Technicians, Management Analysts, Risk Management Specialists, Soil Conservationists, Soil Scientists, and Statisticians.

For more information, be sure to visit the job fair at Langston University on March 4th. See you there!

Oklahoma FSA is Hiring COTs

The Oklahoma Farm Service Agency (FSA) is hiring a full time, County Operations Trainees (COTs). The deadline to apply is February 19, 2020.

Positions consist of a 52-week training period to achieve certification as a County Executive Director (CED). CEDs manage FSA county offices which support FSA programs administered at the field level. Successful applicants must be reliable, have a professional attitude, have strong leadership skills and enjoy working with the public.

If you are interested or know of someone who might be interested, please share this information with them. Here is the direct link to the position with information on how to apply:

https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/55846670

Applications must be completed through USAJOBs no later than close of business February 19, 2020.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Are you interested in adjusting crops for FSA?

FSA is currently hiring seasonal loss adjuster contractors (LACs) to inspect and appraise crop losses.

Loss Adjustors schedule and conduct timely field inspections, analyze aerial maps and fields, appraise destroyed or damaged crops and losses as well as determine percentage of loss, inspect and measure fields, measure grain bins, maintain knowledge of regulations and procedures, promote a good working relationship with producers, complete accurate reports for FSA employees and maintain logs of time and travel.
Skills include: good verbal and written communication skills, good customer service skills, knowledge of the agriculture industry, good decision-making skills and ability to problem-solve, strong analytical skills, and attention to detail.

LACs are paid by hourly rates based on a combination of certification and length of service.

**Note:** LACs receive compensation for both travel and training at the training rate effective during the training time period, including any field services performed for on the job training.

Training is required and will be provided by FSA. The training date is to be determined. Loss Adjusters that attend training will be reimbursed for travel (mileage, hotel, per diem).

Call your local FSA office for details.

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**Oklahoma Farm Service Agency is holding Surplus Farm Property Auctions in Southeastern Oklahoma**

**Latimer and McIntosh County Auction on March 10, 2020**

Auction will be held in the USDA Conference Room of the Pittsburg County FSA office at 1:30pm on March 11th for two properties:

FSA will auction a 75-acre tract in Latimer County, OK located South of Craven’s Lake, Southwest of Red Oak, OK. Acreage consists of 30 acres pasture and 45 acres woods with 1,664 square foot house, 550 square foot garage, and a small shed. Property is suitable for hunting and being sold “as is.”

FSA will auction a 120-acre tract in McIntosh County, OK located at 110758 S 4290 Rd, Checotah, OK. Acreage consists of 80 acres pasture and 40 acres woods/farmland with 2,708 square foot 2-story house.

**Le Flore & Haskell County Auction on March 11, 2020**

Auction will be held in the USDA Conference Room of the Le Flore County FSA office at 9:30am on March 11th for two properties:

FSA will auction a 274.34 acre tract in Le Flore County, OK with a small barn located southwest of Bokoshe, OK. Property consists of 104.25 acres native pasture, 142.66 acres woodland, and 27.43 acres other.

FSA will auction a 160-acre tract in Haskell County, OK. Acreage is mostly open native pasture and 10 acres woods.

**Terms of Sales:** Cash Only. The successful bidder must furnish a 10% deposit the day of the sale with balance due at closing within 30 days. The Government reserves the right to cancel the sale at any time and the right to reject any or all bids. This property is being sold subject to the redemption rights according to Oklahoma State statutes.

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**USDA Reminds Producers of Feb. 28 Deadline for Conservation Reserve Program General Signup**
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds agricultural producers interested in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2020 general signup to enroll by February 28, 2020. This signup is available to farmers and private landowners who are either enrolling for the first time or re-enrolling for another 10- to 15-year term.

Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive yearly rental payments for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers"), which can control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

CRP has 22 million acres enrolled, but the 2018 Farm Bill lifted the cap to 27 million acres.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the U.S. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. Marking its 35th anniversary in 2020, CRP has had many successes, including:

- Preventing more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;
- Reducing nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively;
- Sequestering an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road;
- Creating more than 3 million acres of restored wetlands while protecting more than 175,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, enough to go around the world 7 times; and
- Benefiting bees and other pollinators and increased populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, grasshopper sparrows and many other birds.

The CRP continuous signup is ongoing, which enables producers to enroll for certain practices. FSA plans to open the Soil Health and Income Protection Program, a CRP pilot program, in early 2020, and the 2020 CRP Grasslands signup runs from March 16, 2020 to May 15, 2020.

To enroll in CRP, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

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USDA Announces Details of Risk Management Programs for Hemp Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of two programs that protect hemp producers’ crops from natural disasters. A pilot hemp insurance program through Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) provides coverage against loss of yield because of insurable causes of loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain or Cannabidiol (CBD) oil and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage protects against losses associated with lower yields, destroyed crops or prevented planting where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. Producers may apply now, and the deadline to sign up for both programs is March 16, 2020.
Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

NAP provides coverage against loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, seed or CBD for the 2020 crop year where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

NAP basic 50/55 coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. The 2018 Farm Bill allows for buy-up levels of NAP coverage from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

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

Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Pilot Insurance Program

The MPCI pilot insurance is a new crop insurance option for hemp producers in select counties of 21 states for the 2020 crop year. The program is available for eligible producers in certain counties in Alabama, California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin. Information on eligible counties is accessible through the USDA Risk Management Agency’s Actuarial Information Browser.

Among other requirements, to be eligible for the pilot program, a hemp producer must have at least one year of history producing the crop and have a contract for the sale of the insured hemp. In addition, the minimum acreage requirement is 5 acres for CBD and 20 acres for grain and fiber. Hemp will not qualify for replant payments or prevented plant payments under MPCI.

This pilot insurance coverage is available to hemp growers in addition to revenue protection for hemp offered under the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection plan of insurance. Also, beginning with the 2021 crop year, hemp will be insurable under the Nursery crop insurance program and the Nursery Value Select pilot crop insurance program. Under both nursery programs, hemp will be insurable if grown in containers and in accordance with federal regulations, any applicable state or tribal laws and terms of the crop insurance policy.

Eligibility Requirements

Under a regulation authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill and issued in October 2019, all growers must have a license to grow hemp and must comply with applicable state, tribal or federal regulations or operate under a state or university research pilot, as authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

Producers must report hemp acreage to FSA after planting to comply with federal and state law enforcement. The Farm Bill defines hemp as containing 0.3 percent or less tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) on a dry-weight basis. Hemp having THC above the federal statutory compliance level of 0.3 percent is an uninsurable or ineligible cause of loss and will result in the hemp production being ineligible for production history purposes.

For more information on USDA risk management programs for hemp producers, visit farmers.gov/hemp to read our frequently asked questions. For more information on the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program, visit USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Services’ website to read their frequently asked questions.
FSA Encourages Producers to Enroll Soon in Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. March 15, 2020 is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year.

Although more than 200,000 producers have enrolled to date, FSA anticipates 1.5 million producers will enroll for ARC and PLC. By enrolling soon, producers can beat the rush as the deadline nears.

FSA offices have multiple programs competing for the time and attention of our staff. Because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs; and to ensure FSA meets your program delivery expectations, please do not wait to start the enrollment process. Call your FSA county office and make an appointment soon to ensure your elections are made and contracts signed well ahead of the deadlines.

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Until March 15, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested. Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our program fact sheet or our 2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet. Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at fsa.usda.gov/arc/plc. To enroll, contact your FSA county office for an appointment.

The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

Producers who receive survey questionnaires should respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm
payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications and through the searchable Quick Stats database. Watch a video on how NASS data is used at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be.

**Reminder to FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security**

Farm Service Agency would like to remind farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their loans, of key items for maintaining loan collateral. It is required that borrowers must obtain prior consent, or approval, by either FSA, for direct loans, or by a guaranteed lender, for any transaction affecting real estate security. Examples of these transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind;
- Easements of any kind;
- Subordinations;
- Partial releases, and
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements set forth in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read Your FSA Farm Loan Compass.

**USDA Microloans Help Farmers 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, or contact your local FSA office.

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).