

August 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

**GovDelivery**

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## Virginia FSA State Newsletter

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**Virginia FSA  
State Office**

**Nivin A. Elgohary**  
State Executive Director

Sharon Rust  
Executive Assistant

1606 Santa Rosa Rd  
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Richmond, VA 23229

### **State Executive Director Message** **County Office Committee Election**

Have you visited your local USDA Farm Service Agency and heard the term County Office Committee (COC)? Do you truly understand what it means? The COC allows local input in the administration of federal farm programs on a local level. This means members of the COC are farmers who have the experience and knowledge to ensure Farm Bill programs are delivered fairly and consistently.

County Committee nominations came to a close on August 1, 2018. The next step in the process is for local producers to vote for their member. Each COC Member is trained on Protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII), ethics, diversity, security awareness,

804-287-1503  
855-621-5866 fax

**Hours**

Monday - Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**State Office Staff**

Pete Adamson  
Chief Farm Loans

Brent L. Whitlock  
Chief Farm Programs

Connie Washburn-Marsh  
Chief Administration Officer

Diane Lenoir-Giles  
Public Relations/Outreach  
Specialist

the Federal Employee Anti-Discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2017 (No FEAR Act), and other topics of importance to their position. Each member of the county and state committees take the following oath:

I, the undersigned, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully, fairly, and honestly perform to the best of my ability all duties entrusted in me as a committee member or employee. I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purposes of evasion; and that I will, under the guidance of the State or County FSA Committee, as applicable, faithfully discharge the duties of this office, including carrying out and obeying the laws, regulations, and procedures of FSA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Our county and state committee members work hard to ensure personal information is protected and the best interests of producers are kept during the decision-making process. Be sure to look for a ballot in your mailbox this November and do your part in keeping federal agricultural program decisions close to home.

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## **Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Educational Tool Available for Farms with Generic Base Acres that Planted Seed Cotton**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is notifying farmers with generic base acres that planted seed cotton that a new tool is available to assist them in understanding how the new seed cotton program may affect their FSA payments. It helps a producer make decisions on how to allocate generic base acres to other covered crops based on a producer's planting history.

The educational tool can be viewed at <https://www.afpc.tamu.edu/tools/cotton-base>.

Developed by Texas A&M University, the tool is for educational purposes only, and by using the tool, it is agreed that the results are not a guarantee of future FSA program parameters or payments. Users also acknowledge that this tool is provided with absolutely no warranty, without even the implied warranty of fitness for a particular purpose.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 included [seed cotton as a covered commodity](#) under the Agriculture Risk Coverage (**ARC**) and Price Loss Coverage (**PLC**) program effective for the 2018 crop year. The Act also authorizes owners of a farm with generic base acres and a recent history of covered commodities a one-time opportunity to update the farm's payment yield for seed cotton.

Complete details of this decision are available by reading the [Notice \(https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_Notice/arcplc50.pdf\)](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_Notice/arcplc50.pdf)

Or by contacting your State or County FSA office  
<http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

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## Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2017 to Sept. 30, 2018 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by Nov. 1, 2018
- An application for payment by Nov. 1, 2018

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at [www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets).

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## Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2018 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap).

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## FSA Releases Signup Information for Tree Assistance Program

USDA's Farm Service Agency recently released signup information for the [Tree Assistance Program](#), a nationwide program that provides orchardists and nursery tree growers with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 prescribed several changes to the program, including the removal of the \$125,000 per person and legal entity payment limitation. The [notice](#) outlined when producers should file applications for any recent losses, given the changes to the program.

Eligible producers should file for TAP assistance by the later of these two dates:

- 90 days of the disaster or when damages from the disaster are noticed; or
- 60 days after the regulation is published on the Federal Register later this summer.

The following producers can file applications:

- Producers who did not previously apply for TAP for 2017 or 2018 losses; and
- Producers who had applied and received an adverse determination that their 2017 or 2018 TAP application was filed late.

Additionally, producers with 2017 losses can also file an application or revise an original application because of the changes made through the Act.

For more information on TAP, producers should contact their [local USDA service center](#).

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## Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

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## FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$300,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager to learn about the options available to you.

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## Selected Interest Rates for August 2018

90-Day Treasury Bill - 1.875%  
Farm Operating Loans — Direct - 3.75%  
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct - 4.125%  
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher - 1.5%  
Emergency Loans - 3.75%  
Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years) - 2.625%  
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years) - 2.750%  
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) - 2.875%  
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) - 2.875%  
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) - 2.875%  
Commodity Loans 1996-Present - 3.375%

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## Dates to Remember

Sept. 4:  
Deadline to submit 2019 NAP application for coverage, pay fee and elect buy up coverage for Value Loss crops.

Sept. 28:  
Deadline to sign and submit 2018 ARCPLC contracts for non-generic base farm enrollment.

Oct. 1:  
Deadline to submit 2019 acreage report of value loss crops.

Oct. 1:  
Deadline to submit 2019 NAP application for coverage, pay fee and elect buy up coverage for small grains, wheat and triticale crops for forage.

Oct. 31:  
Deadline to submit 2018 Organic Certification Cost Share Program applications.

Nov. 1:  
2018 ELAP notice of loss and application for payment deadline.

Cont.:  
Submit your AD-1026 **prior** to forest land being cleared for agricultural use and new ground (hay and pasture) to be planted to a row crop or vegetable.

Cont.:  
Need on farm grain, hay or cold storage, consider FSFL for your storage needs. Contact your local FSA Office for more details.

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For more information on bulletin subjects or details regarding your GovDelivery subscription with the Virginia FSA State Office, contact Diane Lenoir-Giles at [diane.lenoir-giles@va.usda.gov](mailto:diane.lenoir-giles@va.usda.gov) or call at 804-287-1537.

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