

May 2016



NEWSLETTER

West Virginia FSA Newsletter

West Virginia Farm Service Agency

1550 Earl L. Core Road
Morgantown, WV 26505

www.fsa.usda.gov/wv

State Executive Director:
Richard V. Snuffer II

State Committee:
Marjorie Burke, Chair
G. Warren Mickey
Remington Perkins

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county

From the Desk of Richard V. Snuffer II, State Director

HAPPY SPRING to all WV Producers!! As I drive around our beautiful state, I can hardly recall a more brilliant and colorful spring. As State Executive Director of the WV Farm Service Agency, I want to thank each of you for your hard work to feed and clothe our country. In the United States, less than 1 % of the population provides food and agricultural resources for the other 99 %. As a West Virginia producer you should proudly embody that one percent. It is our honor at the Farm Service Agency, to partner with you on a daily basis to keep our state and country running strong through your efforts.

The Farm Service Agency helps to reduce your risk, increase your profits, while at the same time protecting our water and soil. This newsletter includes many programs that we have available to help you in achieving these goals. Please stop in at your local office and see what our staff can do for you. I would like to especially call your attention to our Livestock Incentive Program (LIP) for any livestock deaths you may have incurred during extreme weather events. Also our new Microloans can assist you in improving your property or purchasing Farmland. It also important that each of you take time with your local office to update your records and report your acreages. These reports are critical to FSA being able to maintain your cropping histories.

Again, Thanks and if you have any farm or agriculture questions please just give one of our offices a call. We are the Farm "Service" Agency and that is always our goal to provide service to you.

Borrower Training

Borrower training is available for all Farm Service Agency customers. This training is required for all direct loan applicants, unless the applicant has a waiver issued by the agency.

Borrower training includes instruction in production and financial management. The purpose is to help the applicant develop and improve skills that are necessary to successfully operate a farm and build equity in the operation. It aims to help the producer become financially successful. Borrower training is provided, for a fee, by agency approved vendors. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager for a list of approved vendors.

Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Establishes New Partnerships to Link Underserved Farmers to FSA Programs

Minority, Women, New and Beginning, Military Veteran and Urban Producers to Receive Training and Information on Agency Services

USDA announced cooperative agreements with 55 partners to educate farmers and other producers that have been underserved by USDA programs historically about Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs that provide financial, disaster or technical support. Nearly \$2.5 million will go to nonprofits, associations, universities, and foundations that will provide training and information on agricultural best practices, local networking opportunities, and more.

FSA, which solicited applications last fall, received nearly 100 proposals that requested over \$9 million in funding. Cooperative agreements, encompassing more than 28 states, will be between \$20,000 and \$75,000 each and several involve multi-state or national efforts. A list of awardees can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach.

FSA also announced today that it is accepting proposals for consideration in the second evaluation period. Applications are due no later than July 11, 2016. Projects not selected during the first evaluation period will be reconsidered during the second period. Additional information on the funding solicitation and the related FSA programs can be found at www.grants.gov using reference number USDA-FSA-CA-2016-001. For nonprofits and public institutions of higher education that are considering participation, a recording of the online informational session held with stakeholders is posted on the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach.

USDA is also helping producers find an entry into farming through urban agriculture opportunities and the increasing consumer demand for locally-produced items. Under this Administration, USDA has invested more than \$1 billion in over 40,000 local and regional food businesses and infrastructure projects. USDA is committed to helping farmers, ranchers, and businesses access the growing market for local and regional foods, which was valued at \$12 billion in 2014 according to industry estimates. More information on how USDA investments are connecting producers with consumers and expanding rural economic opportunities is available in [Chapter IV](#) of [USDA Results on Medium](#).

New Program Connects Farmers to More Resources That Benefit Their Operation

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has launched a new service that combines resources offered by

national, state and local agricultural organizations to help farmers and ranchers start, improve or expand their operation.

Bridges to Opportunity is a partnership of USDA and non-USDA agricultural agencies, coming together to help provide the information farmers and ranchers need. The Bridges service is supported through a customized software application that houses information from partner organizations, making the information easily accessible to customers seeking agricultural resources while in FSA county offices.

Partnering with FSA's Bridges to Opportunity provides a central location for USDA and local, state and national agricultural organizations to offer support to farmers and ranchers and help with disaster assistance, grants, technical help, financial advice and educational courses.

Agricultural organizations that partner with FSA are providing access to programs, upcoming events, workshops and other resources with farmers and ranchers that come through the doors of FSA county offices.

To learn more about Bridges to Opportunity and how it can help you, contact your local FSA County Office representative. You may also visit the [FSA website](#) for more information.

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).