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Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

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Wisconsin FSA Newsletter

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www.fsa.usda.gov/wi

Welcome Sandy Chalmers, State Executive Director

The Wisconsin Farm Service Agency is pleased to announce that Sandy Chalmers has been appointed as the new State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Wisconsin Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Chalmers has more than 25 years of experience working on agriculture and rural policies. She most recently served as Assistant Deputy Secretary at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Sandy is a familiar face to FSA as she served as Executive Officer from 2004 to 2011.

Chalmers holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and a master's degree from the University of Nebraska, and assists in the management of her family's farm.

As SED, Chalmers will use her leadership experience to oversee FSA programs in a customer-focused manner to ensure a safe, affordable, abundant and nutritious food supply for consumers.

Please join us in welcoming Sandy back to the Wisconsin Farm Service Agency.

Dates to Remember

December 4, 2017:

County Committee Election ballots must be postmarked or returned to the local FSA office

December 15, 2017:

Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP) deadline to enroll in coverage for the 2018 program year

December 25, 2017:

USDA Service Centers closed in observance of Christmas

USDA Announces Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018

FSA announced that starting Nov. 1, 2017, farmers and ranchers with base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program may enroll for the 2018 crop year. The enrollment period will end on Aug. 1, 2018.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

The producers on a farm that are not enrolled for the 2018 enrollment period will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in previous years must still enroll during the 2018 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has launched a new tool to provide farmers and ranchers with remote access to their personal farm information using their home computers. Farmers and ranchers can now view, print or export their personal farm data all without visiting an FSA county office.

The program, known as FSAfarm+, provides you with secure access to view your personal FSA data, such as base and yields, Conservation Reserve Program data, other conservation program acreage, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation status information, field boundaries, farm imagery, name and address details, contact information and membership interest and shares in the operation. This data will be available in real time at no cost to the producer. Producers also can electronically share their data with a crop insurance agent from their own personal computer.

Farm operators and owners first will need "Level 2 eAuthentication" to access the web portal. This level of security ensures that personal information is protected for each user. Level 2 access can be obtained by going to www.eauth.usda.gov, completing the required information and then visiting your local FSA office to finalize access.

For more information on FSAfarm+, the customer self-service portal, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, click <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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:

- Meets the loan eligibility requirements of the program to which they are applying
- Has operated a farm for no 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
- For Farm Ownership loans, 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 <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans/index>.

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USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, traditionally underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser2017/CropCriteria.aspx>.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. The following deadlines for Wisconsin crops are approaching:

March 15, 2018 (for crop year beginning April 15, 2018): All spring-seeded annual crops, including but not limited to: Artichokes, Barley, Beets, Broccoli, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Buckwheat, Cabbage, Camelina, Canola, Cantaloupe, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chicory/Radicchio, Corn (sweet), Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Ginger, Greens, Herbs, Honeydew, Horseradish, Israel Melons, Jerusalem Artichoke, Kohlrabi, Korean Golden Melon, Leeks, Lettuce, Oats, Okra, Onions, Parsnip, Peas, Peppers, Potatoes, Pumpkins, Radish, Rutabaga, Scallions, Shallots, Sorghum, Soybeans, Squash, Sunflowers, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Turnips, and Watermelon.

May 1, 2018 (for crop year beginning June 1, 2018): Nursery crops

To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator:

<http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

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Malted Grains and Maple Syrup Eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loans

Malted small grains and maple syrup are now eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

FSFLs provide low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

The eligible commodities have been expanded to include malted small grains and maple syrup. Eligible malted small grains include barley, oats, rice, rye and wheat. Maple sap is used to produce maple syrup.

The low-interest funds can be used for:

- bottler or filling systems for maple syrup, excluding containers
- equipment to improve, maintain, or monitor the quality of stored FSFL commodities, such as cleaners, moisture testers, heat detectors, along with a proposed storage facility
- handling and drying equipment determined by the County Committee to be needed and essential to the proper functioning of a storage system
- electrical equipment, such as pumps, lighting, motors, and wiring, integral to the proper operation of the storage and handling equipment, excluding installing electric service to the electrical meter.

FSFLs are not available for the actual processing of the small grain into the malted commodity or maple sap into maple syrup. Additionally, purchased commodities are not eligible for FSFLs.

The following storage and handling equipment is ineligible for FSFLs:

- boiling equipment
- feed handling and processing equipment
- production and feed facilities
- structures of a temporary nature not having a useful life of the term of the loan
- maple sap tubing and pumping systems.

Loans up to \$100,000 may be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and loans above \$100,000 will require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

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

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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).

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