



NEWSLETTER



WELCOME TO THE ILLINOIS FSA STATE NEWSLETTER (24th Edition)

As USDA Farm Service Agency is moving to a paperless, electronic version of County Newsletters, the State Office has developed a State Wide Newsletter that will be posted to this site every month. This is a uniform Newsletter available to all producers in the state. If you would like to have a hard copy of this newsletter for your use, please stop by your local county office to obtain one. If you wish to receive electronic county office news, and have not signed up to do so yet, please contact your local county office and provide them with your email address. We appreciate your patience while we transition into a new, more efficient, cost saving way of providing you with the most up to date information possible.

Sincerely,
Scherrie V. Giamanco – State Executive Director

Illinois State FSA Office

3500 Wabash
Springfield, IL 62711

217-241-6600
855-800-1760 fax

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

MAY 2014

Scherrie V. Giamanco
State Executive Director

Rick Graden
Executive Officer

Mary Kirby – **Public Affairs Specialist**

Visit our Website at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/il

GOVDELIVERY CUSTOMERS ARE NOT IMPACTED BY THE HEARTBLEED BUG

GovDelivery customer subscriptions are not affected by the heartbleed bug.

This bug has caused major security concerns among users of cloud technology. The Heartbleed bug refers to a flaw in an encryption tool used on the Internet that can expose data that is meant to be hidden.

Your GovDelivery account and information is safe. **Nothing in the GovDelivery network architecture is affected by this bug.**

You can find out more about the Heartbleed bug at <http://heartbleed.com/>

COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE (COC) ELECTION

June 15 through August 1, 2014, is the period for nominating farmers and ranchers as candidates for the local COC election. FSA encourages all eligible producers to nominate themselves, or another eligible producer, to run for office. Nomination forms (FSA-669A's) are available:

- at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>, scroll down to the links under "Election Materials" and CLICK "2014 Nomination Form"
- by picking up FSA-669A at your local FSA office
- by calling your local office and requesting FSA-669A be sent to you.

NOMINATE AND VOTE!

USDA SEEKS SPONSORS FOR SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is looking for sponsors to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. SFSP is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

SFSP reimburses approved sponsors for serving meals that meet Federal nutritional guidelines. Sponsors receive payments from USDA based on the number of meals they serve. All meals are served free to eligible children, who are 18 years old and under at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children.

Sponsors are organizations that manage SFSP feeding sites. Sponsors must be organizations that are fully capable of managing a food service program. To be a

sponsor, you must follow regulations and be responsible, financially and administratively, for running your program.

The following types of organizations can be sponsors:

- Public or private nonprofit schools
- Units of local, municipal, county, tribal, or State government
- Private nonprofit organizations
- Public or private nonprofit camps
- Public or private nonprofit universities or colleges

A sponsor may prepare its own meals, purchase meals through an agreement with an area school, or contract for meals with a food service management company (vendor).

For questions or to apply, please contact Nancy Heriford at 217-241-6600, extension 201 or visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp>.

SAVE TIME – MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH FSA

As the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA are implemented, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consultation with local county office FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

LIVESTOCK DISASTER ASSISTANCE SIGN-UP UNDERWAY

Livestock disaster program enrollment opened on April 15, 2014. These disaster programs are authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

To expedite applications, all producers who experienced losses are encouraged to bring records documenting those losses to their local FSA Office. Producers should record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

Eligible producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation by January 30, 2015. LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. Producers who suffered livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

Emergency Assistance For Livestock, Honeybees And Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)

- ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather,

or other conditions, such as blizzards and not covered by LFP and LIP. Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses during 2012 and 2013 program years must submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office by August 1, 2014. For 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

USDA'S FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA) OFFERS FARM BILL WEBSITE AND ONLINE OVERVIEW OF FARM BILL PROGRAMS

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Act), also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014.

The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill and for an FSA program overview please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

In addition, bank account information should be supplied or updated if necessary to ensure that producers receive payments as quickly as possible through direct deposit.

SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS PROGRAM SIGN-UP PERIOD FOR 2012 CROP LOSSES BEGINS

Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that sign-up for 2012 crop losses under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program begins May 5, 2014 and ends August 29, 2014. The program, established by the 2008 Farm Bill, provides for one final period of eligibility for producers suffering crop losses caused by

natural disasters occurring through Sept. 30, 2011, for crops intended for 2012 harvest.

To be eligible for SURE, a farm or ranch must have:

- At least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance resulting from a disaster occurring on or before Sept. 30, 2011.
- A crop of economic significance contributes at least five percent of the expected revenue for a producer's farm. Additionally, the crop must also meet the following eligibility criteria:
- The crop must be considered a 2012 crop which means, in general, that the crop was intended for harvest in 2012;
- For insured crops, the coverage period must have begun on or before Sept. 30, 2011;
- For crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Assistance Program, the coverage period must have begun on or before Sept. 30, 2011;
- The final planting date, according to the specific coverage for the crop, must have been on or before Sept. 30, 2011.

Note: A producer who only plants fall seeded or spring seeded crops with a final planting date on Oct. 1, 2011 or later) cannot meet the above eligibility criteria and will not be eligible for the 2012 SURE program.

- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for all economically significant crops;
- Been physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Secretary of Agriculture under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. A "farm" for SURE purposes means the entirety of all crop acreage in all counties that a producer planted or intended to be planted for harvest for normal commercial sale or on-farm livestock feeding, including native and improved grassland intended for haying.

Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be

eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program coverage.

Farmers and ranchers interested in signing up must do so before the Aug. 29, 2014, deadline.

For more information on the 2012 SURE program, visit any USDA Service Center or online at www.fsa.usda.gov/sure.

USDA ENHANCES FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the expansion of the Farm Storage and Facility Loan program, which provides low-interest financing to producers.

The enhanced program includes 22 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers.

Producers with small and mid-sized operations, and specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers, now have access to needed capital for a variety of supplies including sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety-related equipment. A new more flexible alternative is also provided for determining storage needs for fruit and vegetable producers, and waivers are available on a case-by-case basis for disaster assistance or insurance coverage if available products are not relevant or feasible for a particular producer.

Additionally, Farm Storage and Facility Loans security requirements have been eased for loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Previously, all loans in excess of \$50,000 required a promissory note and additional security, such as a lien on real estate. Now loans up to \$100,000 can be secured by only a promissory note.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage and handling facilities for fruits and vegetables.

Contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov for more about FSA programs and loans, including the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.

2013 ACRE

Producers who enrolled a farm in the 2013 ACRE program are required to submit their production reports for the covered commodities planted on the farm by July 15, 2014. Failure to report production for the covered commodities planted on ACRE farms may result in contract termination. If the contract is terminated, all payments, including direct payments previously received, plus interest, will be required to be refunded.

CONDUCT USDA BUSINESS ONLINE BY CREATING AN eAUTHENTICATION ACCOUNT

The Internet allows you, the customer, access to USDA information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can fill out and submit electronic forms (eForms) any time of the day or night from anywhere you have Internet access. This new service delivery option allows you to complete and file your own forms or applications online, because your signature is already electronically "on file."

Information submitted to the Federal Government remains safe and secure because every customer has a unique User ID and password; only authorized USDA employees can access your information. It's safe, saves paper, saves a visit to your local USDA Service Center and provides electronic tracking of all your USDA transactions.

How to Sign Up for eAuth :

Begin the process by reviewing the information at the USDA Website <https://www.eauth.usda.gov>. This website describes the services available for Level 1 and Level 2 Accounts. Level 1 and Level 2 accounts require that you have an email address so you can register, create a customer profile, and be able to respond to a confirmation email. Level 1 Accounts do not require you to provide proof of your identity at a local USDA Service Center. Level 1 Accounts provide limited access to certain USDA Web site portals that require no authentication or authorization. A Level 2 Account does require a visit to a USDA Service Center with proof of your identity. That is because a Level 2 account allows you access to complete and submit documents and forms electronically.

LEVEL 1 ACCOUNT

STEP 1. To obtain a Level 1 Account, you may self-register online at www.eauth.egov.usda.gov.

Scroll down and click on the button that says "Sign Up for a Level 1 Account." Complete the brief customer profile.

STEP 2. You will receive a confirmation email, and you must respond to it within 7 days to activate your account.

LEVEL 2 ACCOUNT

STEP 1. To obtain a Level 2 Account, you must complete an 18 question customer profile and prove your identity by presenting state or federal photo ID at a local USDA Service Center.

Go to www.eauth.egov.usda.gov, scroll down and click on "Sign Up for a Level 2 Account." Complete your customer profile, which includes designating your user ID and password created by you, contact information and email information. The data you enter in your customer profile must match the data on the document you use as identification at your local USDA Service Center. Example: Your first and last names and address must match the government-issued photo ID you plan to use to prove your identity. Identify proof can only be verified by one of the following documents: Current State Driver's License, State Photo ID, US Military ID, or United States Passport.

STEP 2. After completing your customer profile and submitting it online, you will receive a confirmation email, and you must respond to it within 7 days to activate your account.

STEP 3. Then you must complete the "Identify Proofing" process by visiting a local USDA Service Center. You will be required to present the eligible photo ID to an USDA employee who will verify your identity and enter the expiration date of the ID document used.

STEP 4. The USDA employee then will update your customer profile to a Level 2 Account. You will have access to USDA online applications and forms within one hour of your account being updated.

MAINTAINING THE QUALITY OF LOANED GRAIN

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION OF GRAIN

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

FILING A NAP NOTICE OF LOSS

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

PREVENTING FRAUD

The Farm Service Agency supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program.

FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA.

Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office, RMA, or the Office of the Inspector General.

COMPLIANCE SPOT CHECKS

Compliance spot checks will be conducted on 2014 crops. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, deficiency loans, etc. for review, a nationwide selection of producers is employed. Spot check selections are to be conducted based on a producer's participation in USDA programs, such as, Conservation Reserve Program, Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, Loan Deficiency Program, NAP, etc.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT DISCLOSURE

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural

land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All foreign persons who acquire, transfer, or hold interests in agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

Producers who file accurate and timely reports for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage can prevent the potential loss of FSA program benefits.

Please pay close attention to the acreage reporting dates below, as some dates have changed for 2014.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following 2014 acreage reporting dates are applicable for Illinois:

- September 30, 2013 aquaculture, Christmas trees, turfgrass sod, floriculture
- December 15, 2013: perennial forage (with an intended use of haying or grazing), fall-seeded small grains
- January 2, 2014 honey
- January 15, 2014: apples, asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries
- July 15, 2014: cabbage (planted 3/15 – 5/31), perennial forage (with an intended use of cover only, green manure, left standing, or seed) and all other crops

August 15, 2014: cabbage (planted 6/1 – 7/20)

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15, 2014.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local County FSA office.

USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY ANNOUNCES TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) SIGN-UP

As of Tuesday, April 15, 2014, orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011, can sign up for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality

from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

NAP APPLICATION CLOSING DATES

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) applications are due at different times, depending on the crop being insured.

- March 15 is the 2014 NAP application closing date for spring and summer planted NAP crops
- May 1 is the 2015 NAP application closing date for nursery crops
- August 31 is the 2014 NAP application closing date for canola
- September 1 is the 2014 NAP application closing date for value loss crops, such as, aquaculture, Christmas trees, ornamental nursery, and turfgrass sod
- September 30 is the 2014 NAP application closing date for mechanically harvested forage, grazed forage, and fall seeded small grains.
- November 20 is the 2014 NAP application closing date for bi-annual and perennial crops, such as apples, asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, rhubarb, and strawberries.
- December 1 is the 2014 NAP application closing date for honey.

Producers should apply for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage using form CCC-471 (Application for Coverage). Related service fees are due when the application is filed. The application and service fee MUST be filed by the crop sales closing date. Contact your local FSA office for the filing dates for your crops.

HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND COMPLIANCE

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland

Conservation (WC) provisions. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website a www.fsa.usda.gov

NEW FARM BILL OFFERS INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRODUCERS

The 2014 Farm Bill offers increased opportunities for producers including farm loan program modifications that create flexibility for new and existing farmers. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available [here](#).

The Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Changes that will take effect immediately include:

- Elimination of the 15 year term limit for guaranteed operating loans.
- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.
- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership Down Payment Loan Program from \$225,000 to \$300,000.

- Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.
- Increase of the guaranteed percentage on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.
- Microloans will not count toward direct operating loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rulemaking processes. Visit the [FSA Farm Bill website](#) for detailed information and updates to farm loan programs.

FARM LOAN PROGRAM FUNDING UPDATE

The Secretary of Agriculture has recently approved the Agency's request to transfer a portion of unused Guaranteed Operating Loan funds to be used in the Agency's Direct Operating and Direct Farm Ownership loan programs. Recent backlogs of direct loan applications approved subject to funding and/or other conditions, including continued eligibility have been funded. Agency loan officials will be working with loan applicants to update any needed information, and to arrange loan closings as appropriate.

Direct and guaranteed farm operating and farm ownership loan funds are available for providing financing to eligible applicants. Loan approval is also dependent on acceptable feasibility and security determinations. Priority funding is provided for beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged applicants (one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.)

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

MICROLOAN PROGRAM

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less.

The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses.

As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact the local FSA office to setup an appointment with a Loan Approval Official.

USDA SETS DATE FOR SOYBEAN REQUEST FOR REFERENDUM

USDA will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order (Order), as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act).

Soybean producers who are interested in having a referendum to determine whether to continue the Soybean Checkoff Program are invited to participate. To be eligible to participate, producers must certify and provide documentation that shows that they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2012, through Dec. 31, 2013.

Producers may obtain a form by mail, fax, or in person from FSA county offices starting on May 5, 2014 through May 30, 2014. Forms are also available on the [AMS website](#). Producers who don't participate in FSA programs can still request a referendum at the FSA county office where they own or rent land.

Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate FSA county office by fax or in person no later than close of business May 30, 2014. If

returned by mail, it must be postmarked by midnight May 30, 2014, and received in the office by close of business on June 5, 2014.

Notice of the Request for Referendum has been published in the March 4, 2014, Federal Register. For more information, visit the [AMS website](#) or contact James Brow, Research and Promotions Branch; Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program, AMS, USDA; STOP 0251 - Room 2610-S; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0251; tel. (202) 720-0633.

ASKFSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then ASK FSA at askfsa.custhelp.com.

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your FSA questions no matter where you are or what device you use. It is for ALL customers, including underserved farmers and ranchers who wish to be enrolled in FSA loans, farm, and conservation programs.

Through AskFSA you can:

- Access our knowledge base 24/7
- Receive answers to your questions faster
- Submit a question and receive a timely response from an FSA expert
- Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- Customize your account settings and view responses at any time

FSA's self-service assistance anytime, anywhere!

2009 - 2013 AVERAGE ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Ongoing AGI verification and compliance reviews for 2009-2013 are being conducted on producers who the IRS indicates may have exceeded the adjusted gross income limitations described in 7 CFR 1400.500. Based on this review, producers will receive determinations of eligibility or ineligibility.

If the producer is determined to have exceeded the AGI limitation of \$500,000 nonfarm income, \$750,000 farm income, \$1 million non-farm, and/or the \$1 million total AGI, receivables will be established for payments earned directly or indirectly by the producer subject to the applicable limitation. Adverse determinations become administratively final if not timely appealed and can only be reopened if exceptional circumstances exist that prevented the producer from timely filing the appeal.

Producers who subsequently receive initial debt notification letters may only appeal the amount of the debt to their local FSA office.

MAY 2014 INTEREST RATES

90 Day Treasury Bills	.125%
Farm Operating Loans – Direct	2.125%
Farm Ownership Loan – Direct	4.00%
Farm Ownership Loans – Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Direct Farm Ownership – Joint Financing	2.50%
Emergency Loans	3.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loan (7 years)	2.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loan (10 years)	2.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan (12 years)	2.875%
Commodity Loans 1996 – Present	1.125%

DATES TO REMEMBER

July 15, 2014	Final date to submit 2013 production for ACRE participants
Continuous	Farm Storage Facility Loans Sign up to conduct business online through E-authentication