

March 2014



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## Antrim/Otsego County FSA Updates

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### Antrim/Otsego County FSA Office

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**Phone:** (231) 533-8542  
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**County Executive Director:**  
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**Program Technicians:**  
Kathy B Johnson  
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**County Committee (COC):**  
Roger Bolhuis, Chairman  
John Makarewicz, Vice Chair  
Anthony Prusakiewicz,  
Member  
Daniel Slivinski, Member  
Kevin Bary, Member  
Deborah Milbocker, Advisor

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
James Monroe  
231-941-0951

### AskFSA

Are you looking for answers to your FSA questions? Then ASK FSA at [askfsa.custhelp.com](http://askfsa.custhelp.com).

AskFSA is an online resource that helps you easily find information and answers to your Farm Service Agency (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

AskFSA is FSA's self-service assistance anytime, anywhere!

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## USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Offers Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs

**Farm Loan Program  
Technician:**  
Caleb Boge

The Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on February 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.

**Next County Committee  
Meeting:**  
**Date:** April 24, 2014\*  
at 9:30 a.m.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill](http://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?](#)

(\*subject to change)

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

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## Reconstitutions

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

**Estate Method** - the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

**Designation of Landowner Method** – may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

**DCP Cropland Method** - the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

**Default Method** - the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

**Contact the county office for more information concerning reconstitutions.**

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## Changing Bank Accounts

All FSA payments should be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

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## Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

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## Preventing Fraud

To prevent fraud, waste, and abuse Farm Service Agency (FSA) supports the Risk Management Agency (RMA) 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 county office staff, the RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

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## Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The maximum principal amount of a loan is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas, dry beans and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities
- Honey

A series of improvements to the program have been developed to better tailor loans to finance on-farm storage and handling for small and mid-sized farms. The changes also for the first time allow FSFL's to cover the structure and equipment required to get fruits and vegetables washed, treated and packed along with cold storage.

The area of a structure required to house eligible handling equipment is eligible, in addition to the cold storage space. The handling equipment needs for fruit and vegetable producers are unique, based on the farming operation. Crops must go through certain processes before they can be placed in cold storage for quality to be

maintained. Because of this the following equipment is also eligible for loan as long as it is permanently affixed.

- boxers and baggers
- washers, waxers and polishers
- bulk bin tippers
- case palletizers
- cold dip tanks
- fruit/vegetable conveyors
- food safety-related equipment (for example, sanitizers or pre-washing filter tanks)
- hydrocoolers
- ice machines
- quality graders
- sealants, sizers, sorting bins/tables

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).