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- [FSA County Committee Elections to Begin; Producers to Receive Ballots Week of Nov. 9](#)
- [USDA Develops Resources for New and Beginning Farmers](#)
- [USDA Reminds Dairy Producers of Nov. 20 Deadline](#)
- [USDA FSA Announces \\$210 Million to be Invested in Renewable Energy Infrastructure through the Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership](#)
- [Ohio Counties Receive Administrator's Physical Loss Notice Due to Severe Storms](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [USDA Offices Issue Receipts to Customers for USDA Services Provided](#)

Ohio FSA State News and Updates

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FSA County Committee Elections to Begin; Producers to Receive Ballots Week of Nov. 9

Farmers and Producers Have a Voice in Local Farm Program Decisions

FSA will begin mailing ballots to eligible farmers and producers across the country for the 2015 FSA County Committee elections on Monday, Nov. 9, 2015. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA offices by Dec. 7, 2015, to ensure that their vote is counted.

Nearly 7,700 FSA County Committee members serve FSA offices nationwide. Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office. One-third of county committee seats are up for election each year. County committee members apply their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs; conservation programs; indemnity and disaster programs; emergency programs and eligibility.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. Farmers and producers who supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, but are not of legal voting age, also may be eligible to vote.

**Production Adjustment,
Compliance and Risk
Management Chief:**
Matt Kleski

State Committee:
Bob Boggs, Chairperson
Bob Cole, member
Bruce Long, member
Jim Rex, member
Jim Zumbrink, member

Visit Ohio FSA website for
additional information at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

Please contact your [FSA
County Office](#) for
questions specific to your
operation.

Farmers will begin receiving their ballots the week of Nov. 9. Ballots include the names of candidates running for the local committee election. FSA has modified the ballot, making it more easily identifiable and less likely to be overlooked. Voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week can pick one up at the FSA office. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than Dec. 7, 2015. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office Jan. 1, 2016.

USDA Develops Resources for New and Beginning Farmers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will prioritize \$5.6 billion over the next two years for new and beginning farmers. A new, tailored web tool designed to connect farm entrepreneurs with programs, services and resources is available for anyone interested in getting started into farming at www.usda.gov/newfarmers.

The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to grow their business, to filing taxes as a new small business owner, starting or expanding an operation, developing new markets, supporting more effective farming and conservation practices, and having access to relevant training and education opportunities. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the site's *Discovery Tool* to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs.

To learn more about the new and beginning farmers website, visit www.usda.gov/newfarmers.

USDA Reminds Dairy Producers of Nov. 20 Deadline

FSA announced that almost half of all dairy farms in America have made their annual elections for 2016 coverage under the Margin Protection Program, and reminded producers who have not yet enrolled that they have until Nov. 20, to select coverage.

Established by the 2014 Farm Bill, the program provides financial assistance to dairy producers when the margin – the difference between feed costs and the price of milk – falls below the coverage level selected by the applicant.

FSA estimates that based on current participation rates, had the program existed before the 2014 Farm Bill, producers in 2009 would have invested \$73 million in premiums and received \$1.44 billion in financial protection during that historically weak market period.

Enrolled dairy operations must pay a \$100 administrative fee annually to receive basic catastrophic coverage. Greater levels of margin protection are available for a higher premium, and provide expanded coverage based on historic dairy production. Once enrolled, producers can change their levels of coverage each year. Dairy producers are encouraged to review protection options online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop by the FSA office to learn more about the Margin Protection Program.

USDA FSA Announces \$210 Million to be Invested in Renewable Energy Infrastructure through the Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership

Ohio Receives 3.3 Million to Expand Infrastructure and Increase Fuel Options for Consumers

USDA FSA is partnering with 21 states through the Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership (BIP) to nearly double the number of fueling pumps nationwide that supply renewable fuels to American motorists. Earlier this year, USDA announced the availability of \$100 million in grants through the BIP, and states and private partners must match the federal funding by a 1:1 ratio. With the matching commitments by state and private entities, the BIP is investing a total of \$210 million to strengthen the rural economy.

The 21 states participating in the BIP include Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Ohio will receive \$3,388,036 through the BIP to expand infrastructure by adding 41 fueling stations and 148 pumps.

A typical gas pump delivers fuel with 10 percent ethanol, which limits the amount of renewable energy that consumers can purchase. The new partnership will increase the number of pumps, storage and related infrastructure that offer higher blends of ethanol, such as E15, E85, and even intermediate combination blends.

For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/energy-programs/index.

Ohio Counties Receive Administrator's Physical Loss Notice Due to Severe Storms

USDA has designated 29 Ohio counties as primary natural disaster areas due to physical damage and losses caused by excessive rain, flash flooding, flooding, high winds, hail, and lightning and are eligible for emergency loans.

The following 29 counties were designated as primary natural disaster areas for physical damage and losses that occurred from April 1, 2015, through August 12, 2015:

Adams, Allen, Auglaize, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Clinton, Columbiana, Coshocton, Defiance, Fulton, Gallia, Harrison, Henry, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Lawrence, Meigs, Morrow, Paulding, Pickaway, Putnam, Shelby, Stark, Tuscarawas, Van Wert, Wood and Wyandot counties.

In addition to the primary counties, the following 40 Ohio counties were designated as contiguous disaster counties:

Ashland, Athens, Belmont, Champaign, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Highland, Hocking, Jefferson, Licking, Logan, Lucas, Madison, Mahoning, Marion, Mercer, Miami, Muskingum, Ottawa, Pike, Portage, Richland, Ross, Sandusky, Scioto, Seneca, Summit, Vinton, Warren, Wayne and Williams counties.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Sept. 18, 2015, making FSA emergency physical loss loans available to eligible applicants with qualifying severe physical losses, provided eligibility requirements are met. This approval is limited to applicants who suffered disaster related damages to chattel or real estate essential to the farming operation. To qualify, farmers must be unable to obtain credit from commercial sources.

Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part or all of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merit, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity. Additional programs available to assist farmers include the [Emergency Conservation Program](#), the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#), the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#), the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#), and the [Tree Assistance Program](#).

Interested farmers should contact their local FSA office for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other FSA programs.

Dates to Remember

Nov. 20 --- Last day to apply for coverage for asparagus, blueberries, caneberries, cherries, chestnuts, forage for hay and pasture, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries, honey, hops and maple syrup.

Nov. 20 -- Last day for dairy producers to make elections for Milk Price Protection Program.

Nov. 20 – Deadline to apply for CRP Grasslands.

Nov. 26 --- Thanksgiving Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.

Dec. 1 ----- General CRP sign-up 49 begins.

Dec. 7 ----- Last day to return voted Ballots in county committee election.

Dec. 15 ---- Deadline to report the 2016 Fall Seeded Crops for fall barley, fall wheat and all other fall-seeded small grains.

Dec. 25 ---- Christmas Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.

USDA Offices Issue Receipts to Customers for USDA Services Provided

FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs. As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

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).
