



NEWSLETTER



February 2014 Rhode Island County Office

60 Quaker Lane Suite 49
Warwick, RI 02886

Hours

Monday-Friday
8:00 am-4:30 pm

Phone

401-828-3120 Option 2
Or 1-800-551-5144
Farm Loan: Option 3
Fax: 401-821-0780

County Committee

Doreen Pezza-Chairperson
Gilbert W Rathbun Jr.-Vice
Chairperson
Victor Hoogendoorn-Member
Joseph Silveira-Member
Lauri Roberts-Member

County Office Staff

Ingrid Fratantuono, CED
Anne Belleville, PT
Leila Naylor, KPT
Sheryl Michener, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Roxanne Boisse, FLM
Sandra Steere-Loring, FLA

Next County Committee Meeting:

March 5, 2014 at 10:00 am

Rhode Island County FSA Updates

The Rhode Island County Office staff are currently working on our third Women in Ag conference scheduled for March 11th in the CBLS building at URI. This conference will discuss Food Safety, Marketing, Beginning Farmer and more. If you are interested in attending please register at <https://www.regonline.com/riwomeninagconference>.

County Committee Elections

County committee elections are over, the ballots are counted and the results are in...

- Joseph Silveira was elected to represent LAA # 5 Bristol County
- Gilbert Rathbun Jr was elected to represent LAA # 2 Kent County
- Victor Hoogendoorn was elected to represent LAA # 4 Newport County

No alternates were elected in this years County Committee Election.

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity, and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues.

County committee members are a valuable asset because they are comprised of local producers who participate in FSA programs themselves and have a direct connection to farmers and ranchers in the community. All recently elected county committee members and alternates will take office on February 18, 2014, and join the existing committee.

For more information about county committees and the election process, please contact your local FSA Office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

March 15, 2014 Signup deadline for Annual Crops under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

March 15th is the deadline for producers to apply for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to a natural disaster.

The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees. Please contact the RI county office for more information.

FSA Allows Lenders to Use Evaluations Instead of Appraisals for Loans of \$250,000 or Less

Lenders that originate Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteed loans may now use internal real estate “collateral evaluations” to support loan requests of \$250,000 or less, rather than appraisals.

This policy change will allow lenders more flexibility and a faster underwriting process, and is consistent with industry standards.

Lenders must follow their regulator’s “Interagency Appraisal and Evaluation Guidelines” and apply these same policies to FSA guaranteed loans as non-guaranteed loans. In addition, lenders should request an appraisal when they would do so for unguaranteed loans even if the loan is under the threshold, such as when the expected loan-to-value is above their established standards.

A description of the method of establishing the real estate value – whether appraisal or evaluation – needs to be described to FSA in their credit presentation.

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 who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is 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. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.