

October 2014



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Alaska State and County FSA Updates

Alaska FSA Offices

www.fsa.usda.gov/ak

State Executive Director

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Northern County Office

PO Box 585
Delta Junction, AK 99737

County Executive Director/Farm Loan Officer

Lloyd Wilhelm
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Email:

lloyd.wilhelm@ak.usda.gov

Southern County Office

800 W Evergreen, Ste 216
Palmer, AK 99645

Reminder to Submit Your RTCP Receipts

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) signup ended on September 8, 2014. This program covered transportation expenses incurred from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014. If you applied for the RTCP program, and have not turned all your receipts in to the FSA office, now is the time to do so. If you have any questions, contact your local FSA office.

USDA Expands Access to Credit to Help More Beginning and Family Farmers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced improvements to farm loan programs by expanding eligibility and increasing lending limits to help more beginning and family farmers. As part of this effort, USDA is raising the borrowing limit for the microloan program from \$35,000 to \$50,000; simplify the lending processes; updating required "farming experience" to include other valuable experiences; and expanding eligible business entities to reflect changes in the way family farms are owned and operated. The changes become effective Nov. 7.

The microloan changes will allow beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to [small and midsized farming operations](#).

County Executive Director

Erin Sturdivant

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erin.sturdivant@ak.usda.gov**Farm Loan Manager**

Jeff Curry

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Fax: 907-761-7789

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Hours Monday-Friday

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Committee Meetings:

Northern Co Oct TBA

Southern Co Oct 30, 1:00 pm

In addition to farm related experience, other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm loan eligibility such as operation or management of a non-farm business, leadership positions while serving in the military, or advanced education in an agricultural field. Also, individuals who own farmland under a different legal entity operating the farm now may be eligible for loans administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Producers will have an opportunity to share suggestions on the microloan process, and the definitions of farming experience and business structures through Dec. 8, 2014, the public open comment period.

FSA is also publishing a Federal Register notice to solicit ideas from the public for pilot projects to help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of farm loan programs. Comments and ideas regarding potential pilot projects will be accepted through Nov. 7, 2014.

For more information on farm loans, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local Farm Service Agency office.

USDA Announces New Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

USDA has announced the implementation of new Farm Bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA also unveiled www.USDA.gov/newfarmers, a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

USDA's www.usda.gov/newfarmers has in depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.

Today's policy announcements in support of beginning farmers and ranchers include:

- Waiving service fees for new and beginning farmers or ranchers to enroll in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the 2014 crop year. NAP provides risk management tools to farmers who grow crops for which there is no crop insurance product. Under this waiver, announced via an [official notice](#) to Farm Service Agency offices, farmers and ranchers whom already enrolled in NAP for the 2014 crop year and certified to being a beginning farmer or social disadvantaged farmer are eligible for a service fee refund.
- Eliminating payment reductions under the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans. Previously, farmers and ranchers grazing on CRP land were subject to a reduction in CRP payments of up to 25 percent. Waiving these reductions for new and beginning farmers will provide extra financial support during times of emergency like drought and other natural disasters.
- Increasing payment rates to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for [Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#). Under this provision, beginning farmers can claim up to 90 percent of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a fifty percent increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

In the near future, USDA will also announce additional crop insurance program changes for beginning farmers and ranchers – including discounted premiums, waiver of administrative fees, and other benefits.

Additional information about USDA actions in support of beginning farmers and ranchers is available [here](#).

County Committee Elections

Watch your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on Nov. 3, 2014. If for some reason you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office.

Completed and signed ballots must be returned to the county office by close of business on Dec. 1, 2014.

The following are this year's candidates who have been nominated in their LAA's to serve as a committee member. All candidates have agreed to serve if elected.

Northern County LAA-2

LAA-2 Includes the area that begins where the Clear-water road intersects the AK Hwy NE to north line of Southeast Fairbanks census area, proceeding to Canadian border, then SE following Canadian border where the Alaska Gateway Regional Educational Attendance Area (AKGREAA) line intersects the Canadian border, turning NW following AKGREAA line to the AK Hwy, then proceed NW on AK Hwy to Clearwater road.

Roger Hendry resides on Cummings Road, Delta Junction. Roger has been raising forage crops and livestock as well as potatoes since 1989. Roger Hendry is a member of Alaska Farm Bureau.

Randy Mayo resides on Spruce Road, Delta Junction. Randy has been managing the Steven's Village Bison Ranch for the past 5 years. The farm produces Bison for meat and raises small grain forage for animal feed. Randy is a member of the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Northern County FSA Office at 10:00 a.m. on December 4, 2014.

Southern County LAA -3

LAA-3 Includes all of the Matanuska Borough.

Rose Marie "Tiny" DePriest arrived as a Colonist in the Mat-Su Valley in 1935. Tiny worked with her parents farming over 100 acres of potatoes and without electricity she worked in the dairy operation. With her spouse, they own and operate the Tiny Moose Farm & Earth Products since 1957 with dairy operation and farming peas, oats and brome grass.

Pam Lewis of Palmer married into a third generation farm family 33 years ago. She has helped her husband with the planting and harvesting of several varieties of spuds. The last two years she has ventured into the greenhouse business, along with tending a nice outdoor veggie garden where she has been harvesting and selling her produce at the Anchorage Farmers' Market.

Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Southern County FSA Office at 3:30 p.m. on December 4, 2014.

Eligible voters in the above local administrative area who have not received a ballot should contact the FSA county office staff.

Voter Requirements - Persons meeting requirements in **1** or **2**, plus **3**, below, are eligible to vote: **1.** Legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as any of the following: an individual, an authorized representative of an entity, spouses when property is owned jointly or in community property states. **2.** Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm. **3.** Participates or

cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law.

Discrimination Prohibited No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Key Dates for New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs

USDA announced key dates for farm owners and producers to keep in mind regarding the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

- Sept. 29, 2014 to Feb. 27, 2015: Land owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- Nov. 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015: Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- October 2015: Payments for 2014 crop year, if needed.

USDA leaders will visit with producers across the country to share information and answer questions on the ARC and PLC programs.

Producers can contact their local FSA office for more information or to schedule an appointment.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Announces Online Hay and Grazing Acres Locator Tool

For many years, FSA's **Hay Net** website www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet has been the "go to" online resource for agricultural producers to list information concerning the need for hay or the availability of hay.

Now, in response to requests from livestock producers and landowners, FSA has expanded the site to include the option to list a need for grazing acres or to list acres available for grazing.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, producers are in need of hay and/or grazing acres to support livestock, please use **Hay Net** to post an advertisement seeking these resources. Likewise, landowners who have hay and/or grazing acres available for livestock producers should post a Hay Net advertisement as well.

A few things to remember when using the **Hay Net** website:

- There is a one-time registration process that should be completed by all users who want to post an ad online.
- Users who just want to browse ads DO NOT NEED to have an eAuthentication user id.
- Hay and grazing acre ads will be automatically removed after a period of 13 months.
- Please help your fellow farmer and rancher by keeping ads current and up to date and remove ads you no longer need or want advertised on **Hay Net**. Please, no corporate advertisements on this site.

Hay Net is brought to you by FSA as a public service. The sole purpose of this online resource is to provide a site for the exchange of information. FSA does not endorse, guarantee, or otherwise make representations of

any kind regarding any user of this site and FSA is not responsible for defining the terms of grazing agreements or lease contracts.

For more information about **Hay Net** and other FSA services and programs, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

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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 Facility Loan security requirements have been eased for loans up to \$100,000. Previously, all loans in excess of \$50,000 and any loan with little resale value required a promissory note/security agreement and additional security, such as a lien on real estate. Now loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by only a promissory note/security agreement and some loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will no longer require additional security.

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

Save Time-Make an Appointment with FSA

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with 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>.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

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).



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If you have questions about FSA activities, please view our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page or you may also [Search](#) our web site. These features are designed to assist you in obtaining the information you are seeking.

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