

November 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Alaska State FSA Newsletter

Alaska State Farm Service Agency

800 W Evergreen, Ste 216
Palmer, AK 99645
www.fsa.usda.gov/ak

State Executive Director

Bryan J. Scoresby
907-761-7750
Cell: 907-707-4819
Email:
bryan.scoresby@ak.usda.gov

Northern County Office

PO Box 585
Delta Junction, AK 99737

County Executive

Alaska FSA State Director News

The month of November gives us reason to reflect on the goodness of our lives and give special thanks on the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. Our minds often look forward to the Thanksgiving dinner, special traditional dishes and being together with friends and family. Every family has their own Thanksgiving traditions, often that surround food, and I would like to share a few of mine. Further, I would like to help you all get acquainted with me and my family.

Pie: While this is a traditional holiday dessert, our family tradition is to count the number of adults coming to the Thanksgiving dinner and then make pies that equal the number of adults. And, I am the pie maker in my family.

Thanksgiving proclamation: When this great country was formed, a day was set aside as a "Day of Thanksgiving". The Continental Congress and in later years, President George Washington all

**Director/Farm Loan
Manager**

Lloyd Wilhelm
907-895-4242 ext 150
Fax: 855-711-9095
Email:

lloyd.wilhelm@ak.usda.gov

Southern County Office

800 W Evergreen, Ste 216
Palmer, AK 99645

**County Executive
Director/Farm Loan
Manager**

Erin Sturdivant
907-761-7754
Fax: 907-761-7789
Email:

erin.sturdivant@ak.usda.gov

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

Committee Meetings:
Northern Co Dec 7, 10:00am
Southern Co Dec 7, 4:00 pm

Please contact your local FSA
Office for questions specific to
your operation or county.

prepared and had read a Thanksgiving Proclamation to the citizens. I select and like to read to my family a Thanksgiving Proclamation from these early years, as we count our many blessings this specific holiday.

4H and wiener pigs: When my 5 kids were growing up, we involved them in 4H and they participated in the 4H Jr. Market Livestock auction every year. They had animals in sell in both Palmer and Fairbanks for many years. We brought in some breeding stock to raise our own show quality pigs. My wife had 6 breeding sows at one time and provided wiener pigs as project animals to our own kids and to other 4-H participants.

Bottle calves: My wife Mary and I currently have several bull calves we acquired from Havemeister Dairy. My grandkids love to help feed them their milk bottle twice each day. Time will tell if farm chores remain a desired thing for the grandkids. Raising these calves through to market keeps us a little closer and grounded to our agriculture roots. Further, it teaches my grandkids where their food actually comes from.

Gardening: At home, we raise a large vegetable garden. With expert neighbors and using their methods we eat many traditional vegetables from late summer through the winter. We continue to experiment and have figured out how to raise strawberries in abundance and onions that last all winter. We have experimented with different onion varieties and found a variety that will store all winter.

Grandkids: Mary and I have 7 grandkids at present, 5 of them live near us in Alaska. Life is full of joy when the grandkids are over. They love to be together and Mary and I love to have them around.

Farming roots: Mary and I were both raised in Idaho, she on a dryland barley farm and myself on a dairy farm. We recently visited her bothers in Idaho on the family farm and are amazed at the latest advances in technology they are applying on their operation. GPS guidance systems are installed that assist in driving their tractors for cultivation, planting and spraying operations, making each one very efficient.

I am personally excited to be back working closer with the agriculture producers in Alaska. Farm Service Agency programs are another tool in the tool box available to agricultural producers. We encourage all producers of all products to report their farm crop and yield results every year. With an established and documented production history, producers are better to utilize the farm programs (tools) to their advantage. Farm programs are here to help each producer be more successful in meeting their own farm business goals.

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2017 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on November 6, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is December 4, 2017.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters in the Northern County local administrative area 2 and the Southern County local administrative area 3, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center. Dec. 4, 2017, is the last day for voters to submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than Dec. 4. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2018.

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 includes where the Clearwater road intersects the AK Hwy NE to north line of Southeast Fairbanks census area, proceeding NE 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.

Dani Lane resides in LAA-2 and has produced Hay, Goats, Garlic, Turkeys, and Chickens for over 7 years. Dani is an active member of the Delta Ag community and while growing up served as State Vice President of FFA for 1 term.

Steven Helkenn resides in LAA-2 and has produced Hay, Oats, Barley and raises pigs and cattle for over 37 years. Steven has served on the FSA County Committee in the past and has lived and farmed the same farm for all these years.

Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Northern County FSA Office at 10:00 a.m. on December 7, 2017.

Southern County LAA-3 Includes the Matanuska Borough.

Janet Dinwiddie grew up in Palmer the heart of Matanuska Valley. She was raised on her family's upick vegetable farm-Pyrah's Pioneer Peak Farm. Pyrah's has been operating for 40 years raising a variety of crops and hosting public events and festivals to help provide a gathering place for the community. After high school Janet graduated from Utah State University. Eventually Janet and her family came back to Alaska, to help run Pyrah's.

Suzy Crosby moved from Montana to Alaska in 1983. Coming from a background in cattle ranching, she found that her real passion came in a smaller package – dairy goats! Suzy and her husband own and operate Cottonwood Creek Farm, where they have been operating a herd-share program and raising show-quality registered Alpine dairy goats since 2002.

Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Southern County FSA Office at 4:00 p.m. on December 7, 2017.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2017 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Announces Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018

FSA today announced that starting Nov. 1, 2017, farmers and ranchers with base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program may enroll for the 2018 crop year. The enrollment period will end on Aug. 1, 2018.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

The producers on a farm that are not enrolled for the 2018 enrollment period will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in previous years must still enroll during the 2018 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

Retired or retiring landowners or operators are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or underserved farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires, provided the transition is not to a family member.

Enrollment in TIP is on a continuous basis. Beginning, veteran or underserved farmers and ranchers and retiring CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning one year before the expiration date of the CRP contract or Aug. 15. For example, if a CRP contract is scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2018, the land may be offered for enrollment in TIP beginning Oct. 1, 2017, through Aug. 15, 2018. The Aug. 15 deadline allows the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) time to complete the TIP sustainable grazing or crop production conservation plans. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands.

New landowners or renters must return the land to production using sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information on TIP, visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation>.

Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan 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.

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$300,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Communications is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation;
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses;
- The development of problem situations;
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings and/or events should contact Lloyd Wilhelm, Northern CED, at (907) 895-4242, Erin Sturdivant, Southern CED, at (907) 761-7754 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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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