

December 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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REQUIRED: Insert Table of Contents Here

- [Alaska FSA State Director News](#)
- [The Census of Agriculture is a Producer's Voice, Future, and Opportunity](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [Communication is Key in Lending](#)
- [Farm Loan Graduation Reminder](#)
- [Marketing Assistance Available for 2017 Barley, Oats, Canola and Wheat in Delta County](#)

Alaska State FSA Newsletter

Alaska State Farm Service Agency

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Alaska FSA State Director News

December brings the joys of Christmas, time with family and friends and hopefully some days of rest and relaxation to you and your family. There are many holiday traditions that families participate in as they celebrate in their own special way. Decorations to put up, parties to attend, musical recitals and concerts to enjoy and community events to participate in, adding to your joyous holiday celebration.

Growing up in Idaho, I had an uncle who was a professor of theatre at the local college and owned a theatre that operated during the summer. He instilled in my family a love for the theatre and appreciation for the talents of those who perform. One of my favorite holiday traditions is to attend a theatre production of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." If I could see the play in more than one venue, from community theatre locally like our Valley Performing Arts in Wasilla or on Broadway at the Atwood theatre in Anchorage, I would go. I love the message in the story, how Scrooge changed from his miserly ways to one who practiced happiness, generosity, and giving, lifting others by his anonymous and charitable actions.

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

Committee Meetings:
Northern Co TBA
Southern Co TBA

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

On the farm, there is much to do during these cold, dark and windy days of winter. For the vegetable farmers and gardeners, seed catalogs begin to come in the mail. Thoughts of spring planting and making plans for summer growing take space in our work day to minimize the effects of winter. It is a good time to reflect on the past year, to consider what worked well and what did not. From modifying management decisions to implementing new ideas to make improvements for the coming year.

In addition to planning for next year, there are crops still in storage to be sold. There is equipment that needs repaired and tuned up for the coming year and management plans and farm records to review and update.

May your December be filled with careful considerations, joyous family celebrations and time to rest and relax from the work of the past year. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year.

The Census of Agriculture is a Producer's Voice, Future, and Opportunity

In December farmers and ranchers across the nation will receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web questionnaire. The online questionnaire has been revised extensively to make it more convenient for producers.

Conducted once every five years, the census of agriculture is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them; it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.

Farmers and ranchers, trade associations, government, extension educators, researchers, and many others rely on census of agriculture data when making decisions that shape American agriculture – from creating and funding farm programs to boosting services for communities and the industry. The census of agriculture is a producer's voice, future, and opportunity.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

Communication 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.

Farm Loan Graduation Reminder

FSA Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

FSA periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower's ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower's financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer's operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower's potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower's name, loan type, balance sheet and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower's loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders that are interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA farm loan office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, FSA's intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

Marketing Assistance Available for 2017 Barley, Oats, Canola and Wheat in Delta County

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized 2014-2018 crop year Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for barley, oats, canola and wheat, as well as other commodities such as feed grains, soybeans and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows.

A producer who is eligible to obtain an MAL, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

To be eligible for an MAL or an LDP, producers must have a beneficial interest in the commodity, in addition to other requirements. A producer retains beneficial interest when control of and title to the commodity is maintained. For an LDP, the producer must retain beneficial interest in the commodity from the time of planting through the date the producer filed [Form CCC-633EZ \(page 1\)](#) in the FSA County Office. For more information, producers should contact their local FSA county office or view the [LDP Fact Sheet](#).

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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