

January 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Alaska State FSA Newsletter

- [Alaska FSA State Director News](#)
- [County Committee Election Results](#)
- [FSA Officer Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [Disaster Set-Aside \(DSA\) Program](#)
- [USDA Processing Pending Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment Offers](#)
- [2018 Livestock Losses](#)
- [Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area Eligible for Emergency Loans Following Presidential Disaster Declaration](#)
- [USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Alaska County Producers](#)

Alaska State Farm Service Agency

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State Executive Director

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Alaska FSA State Director News

The Holidays are now past and work planning for the coming summer is completed for the summer farming season. Timing of many of these actions are critical to the success of the seasonal operation. If your farm needs operating loans, please contact the County Executive Director in Palmer or Delta and get started today. New loans can take up to 60 days from a completed application to receive final approval. We work diligently to approve in less days, wanting you to have money available when you need it for your farm management plan.

Northern County Office
PO Box 585
Delta Junction, AK 99737

**County Executive
Director/Farm Loan
Manager**

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Southern County Office
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**County Executive
Director/Farm Loan
Manager**

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

Committee Meetings:
Northern Co Jan. 25 10:00 am
Southern Co TBA

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

Secretary Perdue just announced Jan. 4, our new State Committee (STC). We welcome Scott Murgage from Delta to serve as chair, Joe Orsi from Juneau, Richelle Plummer from Wasilla and Al Poindexter from the Kenai Peninsula as members. We look forward to working with these producers as they perform their duties in our FSA decisions. Many thanks to the prior State Committee, Mike Schultz and Nathan Soboleff for their years of service.

I have been out to visit several of our producers in their operations on the farm. It is encouraging to see you and hear about all you do. There are two common elements that came to me from these farm visits. Number one is marketing of agriculture products. Number two is the optimism from each farm producer in the same economy.

Our agriculture economy in Alaska is a very young economy in that there is little in the way of historical and established markets ready to purchase the agriculture products you can grow. Each producer must carefully consider where the product will be sold, long before production begins. It takes trust and commitment from producer and retailer alike to grow the market. There is lots of market share available for the taking, like additional shelf space at the grocery store or farmers market and private sale. Residents and tourists alike want to consume our Alaska grown products and often take some home. The State Division of Agriculture's \$5.00 challenge completed in December proves this point. There is a huge cheering section from USDA, State Div. of Agriculture and UAF Extension service to help each of you along the way.

County Committee Election Results

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

Northern County: Dani Lane of Delta Junction was elected to represent LAA 2 and Steven Helkenn of Delta Junction will serve as the first alternate.

Southern County: Janet Dinwiddie of Palmer was elected to represent LAA 3 and Susan Crosby of Palmer will serve as the first alternate.

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 was effective on January 1, 2018, 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.

FSA Officer 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>.

Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) Program

FSA borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment/s needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale.

Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

For more information, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

USDA Processing Pending Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment Offers

Acceptance of Most 2018 Offers Temporarily Suspended

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will process many pending eligible offers for land enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and will temporarily suspend accepting most new offers until later in the 2018 fiscal year.

All current, eligible CRP continuous enrollment offers made through Sept. 30, 2017, except for those made under the Pollinator Habitat Initiative (CP42), will be approved. Additionally, FSA is temporarily suspending acceptance of most offers going forward to provide time to review CRP allocation levels, and to avoid exceeding the statutory cap of 24 million acres.

The CRP acreage cap is a provision of the 2014 Farm Bill. Current enrollment is about 23.5 million acres nationwide. USDA is accepting all pending continuous enrollment offers that were made beginning on May 4, 2017, and extending through Sept. 30, 2017, except Pollinator Habitat Initiative offers. Pollinator acreage offers are being declined because the program has met its acreage enrollment goal. Effective immediately, USDA is suspending acceptance of all new CRP continuous offers received or submitted after Sept. 30, 2017. The suspension will continue until later in the 2018 fiscal year.

However, FSA will continue to accept eligible offers for state-specific Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP Grasslands enrollment. Offers received on or after Oct. 1, 2017, are subject to fiscal year 2018 rental rates which have been adjusted to reflect current market conditions and were established after careful review of the latest USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) cash rent data.

In return for enrolling in CRP, USDA, through FSA, provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP pays farmers and ranchers who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat. Payment totals for 2017 were announced earlier this week totaling over \$1.6 billion.

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

2018 Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2018, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2018, and no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event or attack. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under "normal" conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2018 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent
- An application for payment by March 31, 2019.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area Eligible for Emergency Loans Following Presidential Disaster Declaration

Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area was declared a contiguous disaster due to severe storms that occurred from September 28th to September 30th, 2017. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Alaska County Producers

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates

Alaska State USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Bryan Scoresby reminds farmers and ranchers in Alaska that they can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Producers can text AKDeltaJunction or AKPalmer to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from the Northern and Southern County Offices. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Please contact Lloyd Wilhelm, Northern County Executive Director, at (907) 895-4242, lloyd.wilhelm@ak.usda.gov, or Erin Sturdivant, Southern County Executive Director, at (907) 761-7754 erin.sturdivant@ak.usda.gov if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or text message option.

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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