

November 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Alaska State FSA Newsletter

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### Alaska State Farm Service Agency

800 W Evergreen, Ste 216  
Palmer, AK 99645  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/ak](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak)

#### State Executive Director

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#### Northern County Office

PO Box 585  
Delta Junction, AK 99737

### Alaska FSA State Director News

The month of November brings the joys of the Thanksgiving Holiday. The holiday we celebrate today with family, turkey and football is not the same as the pilgrims and Wampanoag tribe did in 1621 with a 3 day feast. It is however a great time to give thanks and reflect on the blessings that came our way during the past year. In 1789, George Washington set aside a national day of thanks. Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation in 1861 calling for a federal Thanksgiving holiday in 1861. Franklin Roosevelt set the holiday for the fourth Thursday in November. Turkey became the centerpiece in the 1800's and green bean casserole was popularized in 1955. The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade started in 1924 with about 10,000 spectators. This year, some three million people will watch in person.

**County Executive  
Director/Farm Loan  
Manager**

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**Southern County Office**

800 W Evergreen, Ste 216  
Palmer, AK 99645

**County Executive  
Director/Farm Loan  
Manager**

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

Committee Meetings:  
Northern Co Dec 6, 10:00 am  
Southern Co Dec 6, 2:00 pm

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

This year, my family and yours will gather with a traditional dinner of Turkey, green bean casserole and pumpkin pie. Today, I invite all who can, to include Alaskan Grown items to your dinner meal. How many local foods can you include in your Thanksgiving? Choosing local Alaskan grown foods for your dinner has a marked increase in our Alaskan agricultural economy. All in Alaskan agriculture work hard to produce our best products and our local customers appreciate those products more than anyone else. I hope each of you have much to be grateful for this year.

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## Job Opening at Delta Junction, Alaska

Alaska State Farm Service Agency is currently advertising for a permanent full-time Loan Assistant/Specialist (Agricultural) vacancy located in the Northern Service Center in Delta Junction, Alaska. The Loan Assistant/Specialist vacancy is being advertised under Job Announcements FSA-19-0151-AK-MS, FSA-19-0155-AK-MS, FSA-19-0157-AK-MS and FSA-19-0158-AK-MS. Applicants wishing to be considered for all announcements must submit separate and complete application packages for each vacancy announcement. The closing date is November 23, 2018. If you are interested and meet the qualifications for the position, you are encouraged to apply. Please go to the Federal Government's Official Job site USAjobs to view this vacancy announcement <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

We are looking for applicants with a passion for helping Alaska farmers succeed, and an interest in working with a great team of USDA professionals. For more information on Alaska Farm Service Agency, please see our website [www.fsa.usda.gov/ak](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak)

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## FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2018 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on November 5, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is December 3, 2018.

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 3 and the Southern County local administrative area 1, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center. Dec. 3, 2018, 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. 3. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2019.

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-3** which includes the area beginning at the SE corner of the Matsu Borough proceeding north to NW corner of SE Fairbanks Census area, east to line following Clearwater road intersecting AK Hwy, proceeding SE to AKGREAA line, south then SE following line to Canadian border, south following Canadian border to Chugach Mtn. Range, turning west following Chugach Mtn. west to SW corner of Matsu Borough. (Includes Delta Junction, Glennallen, and Kenny Lake.)

**Robert Green** moved to the Delta area in 1965. The family was highly involved with all stages of bringing land into production in the Delta area. In 1971 the first crops were planted, and since then they have raised hay, grain, and have had up to 450 head of livestock at a time. Currently the farm is actively producing hay and grain with all crops processed and marketed throughout the state. Bob is involved with many aspects of farming and wants to see agriculture remain strong throughout the state.

**Joshua Scott** resides in LAA-3 and has cleared and put into production over 30 acres of cropland, producing brome hay, bees/honey, constructed a high tunnel, and raises a variety of vegetables that have been sold through the local farmers market for over 8 years. Joshua is active with Copper River Valley Soil and Water Conservation District and serves as President. Joshua also works with the Kenny Lake Soil and Water Conservation, Alaska State Soil and Water Conservation, has organized Ag Forum for Kenny Lake area, and instrumental in expanding SWCD to the whole copper valley area, works with the local Alaska Native Corporations, and is vocal in raising local farming issues with legislatures. Participates with FSA in several programs.

**Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Northern County FSA Office at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 6, 2018.**

**Southern County LAA -1** which Includes all of the following boroughs and census areas: Wade Hampton, Bethel, Dillingham, Bristol Bay, Lake & Peninsula, Aleutians East and West, Kodiak Island and the Kenai Peninsula Borough south of the Kasilof river (includes Homer and surrounding area).

**Rita Jo Shoultz** is the managing partner of Alaska Perfect Peony (APP) a family owned business. APP was the first commercial peony cut flower farm in Alaska. In 2017 APP harvested over 50,000 stems. Past experiences include owner of Fritz Creek Gardens, a small retail nursery in Homer; 40 plus years in marketing positions, finance, 25 years in Commercial Real Estate Development and just finished 4 years as President of the Kenai Peninsula Farm Bureau. Rita Jo was a nominee for 'Champions of Change for the Future of Agriculture' and invited to the White House and was just recently named the 'Small Business Champion' for Alaska.

**Paulette Selkirk** is a farmer originally from New Mexico. Her dad and uncle taught her about farming and running the business at a young age. Her passion was to grow up and have her own farming business one day. Her and her husband moved to Kodiak in 2009. She has been in the poultry business for over 15 years. She is the owner of Beaks n Feathers. Her husband, children and grandchildren help with the operations, building the next generation of farmers. She sells fresh eggs and adult meat chickens. Along with poultry she raises and sells mealworms for poultry, wild birds, reptiles and amphibians on the Island. Great source of protein and treat as well.

**Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Southern County FSA Office at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 6, 2018.**

More information on county committees, such as the new 2018 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections) or at a local USDA Service Center <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Sign In/Sign Up!

Farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers have new online options to access U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. Through USDA's new streamlined process, producers doing business as an individual can now register, track and manage their applications for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) and 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (2017 WHIP) on the secure and convenient [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov). USDA eAuthentication does not have the mechanism to issue login accounts to businesses, corporations, other entities, or for anyone acting on behalf of another individual or entity. Producers, doing business as an individual, first need to sign up for Level 2 eAuthentication access.

- Step 1: Create an online account at [www.eauth.usda.gov](http://www.eauth.usda.gov)
- Step 2: Complete identity verification by either using the online self-service identity verification method or by completing the identity verification in-person at your USDA Service Center.
- Step 3: Contact your local USDA Service Center to have your new Level 2 account linked with your USDA customer record
- Step 4: You're enrolled and ready to log in

Users with a secure Level 2 eAuthentication ID, linked to their USDA customer record, can apply for select USDA programs, view and print farm maps and farm records data. Enrolling is easy! Visit [www.farmers.gov/sign-in](http://www.farmers.gov/sign-in) to learn more.

To locate a service center near you or use online services not requiring eAuthentication access, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov). For technical assistance, call the eAuthentication help desk at 1-800-457-3642.

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## USDA Acreage Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage Changes to July 15

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has established a new acreage reporting deadline for perennial forage for 2019 and subsequent years. Previously set in the fall, the new deadline is July 15 for all states, except for Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Timely and accurate acreage reports for all crops and land uses, including prevented planting or failed acreage, are the foundation for many FSA program benefits, including disaster programs for livestock owners. Producers must report their acreage to maintain program eligibility.

Producers who have coverage for perennial forage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must report their crop acreage by the earlier of any of the following:

- the established acreage reporting date (July 15)
- 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported
- the established normal harvest date for the end of the coverage period.

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## Changing Bank Accounts

FSA program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for whatever reason (such as your financial institution merging or being purchased). Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

For some programs, payments are not made until the following year. For example, payments for crop year 2017 through the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program aren't paid until 2018. If the bank account was closed due to the death of an individual or dissolution of an entity or partnership before the payment was issued, please notify your local FSA office as soon as possible to claim your payment.

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## USDA and SCORE Joining Forces to Find Mentors

If you are a farmer or rancher, or have agricultural or business experience, join us in supporting the next generation and in investing in your local community! Your experiences and knowledge as a business owner, agricultural professional, or farmer can provide vital support to the community you live in.

USDA is collaborating with SCORE – [www.score.org](http://www.score.org) - the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors in an effort to expand the field of available agricultural mentors and provide free business mentoring to farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural and rural business owners. SCORE is currently looking for volunteers with experience in an agriculture-related field who would like to become a part of an extended field of volunteers. The organization's Orientation and Mentoring Certification program provides volunteers with everything needed to be a successful volunteer. Training includes background about SCORE's mission and services, as well as guidance on how to be a business mentor, including enhancement of listening, interviewing and problem-solving skills.

Current SCORE volunteer mentors have backgrounds in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, business and financial planning. The mentors provide local expertise and free one-on-one business mentoring to new and existing farmers and business owners. Together they work through the process of starting up or maintaining agricultural and rural businesses. No matter what stage a business is in, SCORE volunteer mentors can help in developing business plans, navigating

financing and legal issues, identifying new markets, and other topics, in order to help their clients succeed. FSA invites you to learn more and sign up to become a mentor today at <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship>.

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## Farm Storage Facility Loans

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security. Loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport) or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Direct Loans

FSA offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating Loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. FSA loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

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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.

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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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