

July 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

- [Nominations Open for the 2017 County Committee Elections](#)
- [USDA Financial Assistance Available to Help Organic Farmers Create Conservation Buffers](#)
- [2017 Acreage Reporting Dates](#)
- [USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property](#)
- [USDA Expands Farm Loans for Native Americans Farming and Ranching on Tribal Land](#)

Arizona FSA Newsletter

Arizona Farm Service Agency

230 N 1st Ave, Phoenix, AZ
85003, Phone: 602-285-6300
Fax: 602-285-6325

State Executive Director:
Grace Lamas (Acting)

Farm Loan Manager: Sharon
Kinnison

Program Specialist: Ryan
Hunt, Carla Hill

To find contact information for
your local office go to
www.fsa.usda.gov/az

Nominations Open for the 2017 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the County Committee election nomination process. FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs. Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process. A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year. County committees may have one or more appointed advisors to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and land owners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other

minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved. All nomination forms for the 2017 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2017. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

USDA Financial Assistance Available to Help Organic Farmers Create Conservation Buffers

USDA is assisting organic farmers with the cost of establishing up to 20,000 acres of new conservation buffers and other practices on and near farms that produce organic crops. The financial assistance is available from the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. For conservation buffers, funds are available for establishing shrubs and trees, or supporting pollinating species, and can be planted in blocks or strips. Interested organic producers can offer eligible land for enrollment in this initiative at any time. Other USDA FSA programs that assist organic farmers include:

-The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program that provides financial assistance for 55 to 100 percent of the average market price for organic crop losses between 50 to 65 percent of expected production due to a natural disaster.

-Marketing assistance loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell crops during harvest when market prices are low, and deficiency payments to producers who forgo the loan in return for a payment on the eligible commodity.

-A variety of loans for operating expenses, ownership or guarantees with outside lenders, including streamlined microloans that have a lower amount of paperwork.

-Farm Storage Facility Loans for that provide low-interest financing to build or upgrade storage facilities for organic commodities, including cold storage, grain bins, bulk tanks and drying and handling equipment.

Services such as mapping farm and field boundaries and reporting organic acreage that can be provided to a farm's organic certifier or crop insurance agent. Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic to learn more about how FSA can help organic farmers. For an interactive tour of CRP success stories, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30 or follow #CRPis30 on Twitter. To learn more about FSA programs visit a local FSA office or www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

2017 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline. Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific deadlines. The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

-If the crop has not been planted by the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

-If a producer acquires additional acreage after the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

-If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the applicable dates or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins. For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline. Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection." Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops. Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser2017/CropCriteria.aspx>.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their

expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers. Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

Producers, including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations. The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers. Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office.

USDA Expands Farm Loans for Native Americans Farming and Ranching on Tribal Land

USDA has approved and obligated the first loan under the Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan program (HFIL). The program, made possible by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides revolving loan funds to qualified intermediary lenders, allowing qualified tribes and individuals the ability to purchase tribal farmland that has multiple owners. The first recipient, the Native American Community Development Corporation Financial Services, Inc. (NACDCFS) of Browning, Mont., will lend funds directly to tribal members through a \$10 million intermediary HFIL loan from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). NACDCFS addresses critical needs in Native American communities related to the growth of family assets, supports economic development, and enhances the quality of life for communities and residents located on or near Montana's seven Indian reservations. NACDCFS provides one-on-one technical assistance to Native American entrepreneurs and agricultural producers. NACDCFS is a 501(c) (3), certified Native Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), through the U.S. Department of Treasury. Under the [1887 Dawes Act](#), Indian reservation land was divided and allotted to individual tribal members such that with the passing of each generation, title ownership was divided and parceled among heirs, while the land was not. As a result, land once owned by a single person could today be owned by hundreds or thousands of individuals, resulting in what is known as "highly fractionated Indian land." In many instances, landowners are unknown or cannot be located, which complicates the coordination of ownership or prevents the use of the property altogether. There are more than 245,000 owners of three million fractionated land interests, spanning approximately 150 Indian reservations. Under HFIL, tribes and

tribal members can submit an application directly to an intermediary lender. To participate, intermediary lenders first must be approved by USDA. The lenders may be private and tribal nonprofit corporations, public agencies, Indian tribes or lenders subject to federal or state regulation (such as a credit union or other financial institution). FSA will lend to the intermediary, which will relend to the applicant. The intermediary lender also will administer the loan for the applicant. For more information on the program, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or contact the local FSA county office. To find the local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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).
