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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Arizona FSA Newsletter

Arizona Farm Service Agency

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Nominations Open for the 2018 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

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open for election each year. County committees may have an appointed advisor 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 2018 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2018. 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 to Help Producers Prepare for Addition of Seed Cotton to Two Key Safety Net Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is sending acreage history and yield reports to agricultural producers with generic base acres covered by the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\) programs](#).

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 amended the 2014 Farm Bill, adding seed cotton as a covered commodity under the ARC and PLC programs. This week, FSA will start sending information on current generic base acres, yields and 2008-2012 planting history.

The updates are an important part of preparing agricultural producers to make decisions on allocating generic basic acres and updating yields for seed cotton. This summer, producers will have an opportunity to allocate their generic base acres and update their seed cotton yield.

All producers electing to participate in either the ARC or PLC program will be required to make a one-time, unanimous and irrevocable election, choosing between price protection and county revenue protection for the 2018 crop year for seed cotton only. Producers who elected ARC with the individual farm option will continue with that option since that election is applicable to all base acre on the farm. The final step to participate requires producers with farms with seed cotton base acres to sign contracts for ARC or PLC for 2018 this summer.

The anticipated timeline is:

- June 29: Producers are mailed letters notifying them of current generic base acres and yields and 2008 to 2012 planting history.

- July: An online decision tool for ARC and PLC becomes available. Producers have opportunity to update yields and allocate generic base acres for ARC and PLC.
- Late July: ARC and PLC one-time elections occur for seed cotton.
- Late July: ARC and PLC sign-up for 2018 starts for farms with seed cotton base acres.

For more information, contact your local Farm Service Agency. To find an FSA office near you, visit: <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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 or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

ELAP Covers Losses from Additional Cost of Transporting Water to Livestock

Assistance is available to livestock producers through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) for producers who have incurred additional operating costs for transporting water to livestock due to an eligible drought.

An eligible drought means that part or all of a county is designated D3 (extreme drought) or higher as indicated by the U.S. Drought Monitor (www.droughtmonitor.unl.edu). Producers must file a notice of loss on form CCC-851 the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the

producer, or by Nov. 1, 2018. Additionally, the deadline to submit an application for payment for 2018 ELAP assistance is Nov. 1, 2018.

To qualify for ELAP, eligible livestock must be: adult or non-adult dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo and beefalo, as well as alpacas, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, reindeer, or sheep.

Additionally, the livestock must have been owned 60 calendar days prior to the beginning of the drought and be physically located in the county designated as a disaster area due to drought. Adequate livestock watering systems or facilities must have existed before the drought occurred and producers are only eligible if they do not normally transport water to the livestock.

Livestock that were or would have been in a feedlot are not eligible for transporting water. ELAP covers the additional cost of transporting water and does not cover the cost of the water itself.

Producers will have to provide documentation to FSA that shows the method used to transport the water, the number of gallons of water transported and the number of eligible livestock to which water was transported.

Livestock producers should contact FSA to make an appointment to sign up for ELAP and to learn more about eligibility, application and documentation requirements.

Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

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

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.

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).
