

June 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

- [Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates](#)
- [Seeking Nominations for USDA Advisory Committees](#)
- [New Actively Engaged Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities](#)
- [Update Your Records](#)
- [Enrollment Period for 2017 Safety Net Coverage Continues Through Aug. 1](#)
- [Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres](#)
- [USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property](#)
- [Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers](#)
- [FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal](#)
- [Selected Interest Rates for June 2017](#)

Louisiana FSA Newsletter

Louisiana Farm Service Agency

3737 Government Street
Alexandria, LA 71302

www.fsa.usda.gov/la

Acting State Executive Director:

T. Christine Normand

Next State Committee Meeting:

To be determined

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

To find contact information for your local office go to

Upcoming Deadlines and Important Dates

- 2017 Census of Agriculture Begins for America's Farmers and Ranchers. June 30 is the deadline to sign up to be counted
- June 15 - FSA County Committee Election nomination period begins
- July 4 - USDA Service Centers will be closed in observance of the Independence Day Holiday
- July 15 - Acreage reporting deadline for most spring-seeded crops
- Aug. 1 - FSA County Committee Election nomination period ends
- Aug. 1 – final day to enroll 2017 ARC/PLC contracts
- Aug. 1 - final date to request a reconstitution-combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on farming operation

Seeking Nominations for USDA Advisory Committees

Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers and the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers

The USDA Secretary of Agriculture is soliciting nominations for membership for the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers and the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers.

The **Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers** advises the Secretary of Agriculture on matters broadly affecting new farmers and ranchers including strategies, policies, and programs that will enhance opportunities and create new farming and ranching operations. The **deadline for applications is June 15, 2017**.

For additional information about the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, please visit <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/31/2017-11214/advisory-committee-on-beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-acbfr-request-for-nominations>.

The **Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers** works in the interest of the public to ensure socially disadvantaged farmers have equal access to USDA programs. The **deadline to apply is June 16, 2017**.

For additional information about the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers, please visit <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/01/2017-11216/advisory-committee-on-minority-farmers-request-for-nominations>.

Prior applicants under the previous solicitations are not required to reapply. An organization may nominate individuals from within or outside its membership. Alternatively, an individual may nominate herself or himself. Nomination packages should include a nomination form along with a cover letter or resume that documents the nominee's background and experience. Nomination forms are available on the Internet at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-755>.

Deadlines for other agency advisory boards:

- [Nomination Deadline: June 30, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominations for National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: June 30, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for the National Watermelon Promotion Board](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: July 1, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for the U.S. Potato Board](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: July 14, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for American Egg Board](#)
- [Nomination Deadline: August 7, 2017 – USDA Seeks Nominees for National Organic Standards Board \(NOSB\)](#)

New Actively Engaged Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities

Many Farm Service Agency programs require all program participants, either individuals or legal entities, to be “actively engaged in farming”. This means participants provide a significant

contribution to the farming operation, whether it is capital, land, equipment, active personal labor and/or management. For entities, each partner, stockholder or member with an ownership interest, must contribute active personal labor and/or management to the operation on a regular basis.

The 2014 Farm Bill established additional payment eligibility provisions relating to the farm management component of meeting “actively engaged in farming”. These new provisions apply to joint operations comprised of non-family members or partners, stockholders or persons with an ownership in the farming operation. Effective for 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations are afforded to one member that may use a significant contribution of active personal management exclusively to meet the requirements to be determined “actively engaged in farming”. The person or member will be defined as the Farm Manager for the purposes of administering these new management provisions.

In some instances, additional persons or members of a non-family member joint operation who meet the definition of Farm Manager may also be allowed to use such a contribution of active personal management to meet the eligibility requirements. However, under no circumstances may the number of Farm Managers in a non-family joint operation exceed a total of three in any given crop and program year.

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address or zip code or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

Enrollment Period for 2017 Safety Net Coverage Continues Through Aug. 1

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit their local FSA office to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs.

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Contact your local FSA office for a list of final planting dates by crop.

If a producer is unable to report the prevented planting acreage within the 15 calendar days following the final planting date, a late-filed report can be submitted. Late-filed reports will only be accepted if FSA conducts a farm visit to assess the eligible disaster condition that prevented the crop from being planted. A measurement service fee will be charged.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report failed acres.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576 by email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

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.

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating purposes and/or to purchase or improve farms or ranches. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for underserved applicants. An underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as underserved, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has launched a new tool to provide farmers and ranchers with remote access to their personal farm information using their home computers. Farmers and ranchers can now view, print or export their personal farm data all without visiting an FSA county office.

The program, known as **FSAfarm+**, provides you with secure access to view your personal FSA data, such as base and yields, Conservation Reserve Program data, other conservation program acreage, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation status information, field boundaries, farm imagery, name and address details, contact information and membership interest and shares in the operation. This data will be available in real time, at no cost to the producer and allow operators and owners to export and print farm records, including maps. Producers also can electronically share their data with a crop insurance agent from their own personal computer.

Farm operators and owners first will need "Level 2 eAuthentication" to access the webportal. This level of security ensures that personal information is protected for each user. Level 2 access can be obtained by going to www.eauth.usda.gov, completing the required information and then visiting your local FSA office to finalize access.

For more information on **FSAfarm+**, the customer self-service portal, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, click <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Selected Interest Rates for June 2017

- Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.875%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.875%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher — 1.50%
- Emergency Loans — 3.750%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years) — 1.500%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years) — 1.875
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) — 2.125%

- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) — 2.375%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) — 2.375%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans (15 year term) — 2.500%
- Commodity Loans — 2.125%

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).