

January 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

**GovDelivery**

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [Message from Craig A. McCain, FSA State Executive Director](#)
- [Upcoming Important Dates](#)
- [Financial Hardship and Loan Servicing](#)
- [FSA Encourages Producers to Enroll Soon in Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs](#)
- [Actively Engaged Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early](#)
- [USDA Swine Small Enterprise Study](#)
- [Selected Interest rates for January 2020](#)

---

## Louisiana FSA Newsletter

---

**Louisiana Farm Service Agency**

3737 Government Street  
Alexandria, LA 71302

[www.fsa.usda.gov/la](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/la)

**State Executive Director:**  
Craig A. McCain

**State Committee:**  
Ray Young, Chairperson  
John Earles  
Kristy Jones  
Julie Richard  
Donna Winters

**Message from Craig A. McCain, FSA State Executive Director**

Welcome to 2020!!

During the past several weeks, I have interacted with several producers across the State. These individuals represented all facets of plant and animal agriculture. The common thread in all our discussions was the challenges experienced during 2019. Recognizing that there is little that we can do about the circumstances which we currently face, we have hope for a better set of circumstances and results during the 2020 crop year. The staff of FSA is ready to assist you with programs designed to mitigate risk and compensate for crop losses. FSA direct and guaranteed loans provide capital investment for crop and livestock production, as well as for purchasing agricultural land. You are encouraged to begin now with the financial planning for the 2020

**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 [www.fsa.usda.gov/la](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/la)

**Louisiana FSA now offers SMS texting; receive text message alerts on your cell phone regarding important deadlines, reporting requirements and updates.**

**Contact your local FSA Office for more information.**

crop year, please visit with your local staff to ensure that you are aware of the opportunities available through FSA.

The Farm Service Agency would like to recognize and thank you for the fruits which you have brought forth! If we are known by our fruits, "You" are well known! Thank you for the fruits of your hands and the fruits of your hearts! The Louisiana Farm Service Agency is proud to be a part of this great industry.

Again, on behalf of the staff of the Louisiana Farm Service Agency, please allow me to say "Thank you" for what you do each day to serve the needs of the United States of America and of the entire World and as the Secretary says "Do Right and Feed Everyone"!

---

## Upcoming Important Dates

- **February 17** USDA Service Centers will be closed for the President's Day holiday
- **February 28** is the deadline for CRP General Signup 54
- **March 15** is the ARC/PLC election and enrollment deadline
- **June 30** is the last day to signup for 2020 ARCPLC
- **Sept. 11 - ongoing into 2020** is the signup period for WHIP+

**LA Women in Ag Conference, March 12 & 13 in Alexandria; to pre-register visit <https://www.louisianawomeninag.com/>**

---

## Financial Hardship and Loan Servicing

Many farm loan borrowers' payments were due on Jan. 1. FSA expects and encourages prompt payment. However, for borrowers who cannot make their payments due to adversity such as a natural disaster or production difficulties beyond their control, FSA is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers with the tools necessary to be successful. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from loan or loan servicing application, through the term of your loan, and after. In order for FSA to help, you must alert your local FSA office 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

There are options for FSA loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Service Center to learn about the options available to you.

If past due on payments, FSA will notify you of your options with a Notice of Availability of Loan Servicing. Please pay special attention to this notice as it provides you with your options for FSA servicing programs and outlines specific deadlines that you must meet. Failure to meet these

statutory deadlines may significantly limit your options and FSA's ability to help address your farm's financial difficulties.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). Please contact your local FSA Service Center if you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment to meet with the loan staff to discuss your options.

---

## FSA Encourages Producers to Enroll Soon in Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. **March 15, 2020** is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year.

Although more than 200,000 producers have enrolled to date, FSA anticipates 1.5 million producers will enroll for ARC and PLC. By enrolling soon, producers can beat the rush as the deadline nears.

FSA offices have multiple programs competing for the time and attention of our staff. Because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs; and to ensure FSA meets your program delivery expectations, please do not wait to start the enrollment process. Call your FSA county office and make an appointment soon to ensure your elections are made and contracts signed well ahead of the deadlines.

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Until March 15, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested. Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

### More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our [program fact sheet](#) or our [2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet](#). Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc). To enroll, contact your [FSA county office](#) for an appointment.

---

## 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 that is identifiable and documentable as well as separate and distinct from contributions of any other member. Members of joint operations must have a share of the profits or losses from the farming operation commensurate with the member's contributions to the operation and must make contributions to the farming operation that are at risk for a loss, with the level of risk being commensurate with the member's claimed share on the farming operation.

Joint operations comprised of non-family members or partners, stockholders or persons with an ownership in the farming operation must meet additional payment eligibility provisions. Joint operations comprised of family members are exempt from these additional requirements. For 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations can have 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 management provisions.

Non-family joint operations may request to add up to two additional managers for their farming operation based on the size and/or complexity of the operation. If additional farm managers are requested and approved, all members who contribute management are required to complete form CCC-902MR, Management Activity Record. The farm manager should use the form to record management activities including capital, labor and agronomics, which includes crop selection, planting decisions, acquisition of inputs, crop management and marketing decisions. One form should be used for each month and the farm manager should enter the number of hours of time spent for each activity under the date of the month the actions were completed. The farm manager must also document if each management activity was completed on the farm or remotely.

The records and supporting business documentation must be maintained and timely made available for review by the appropriate FSA reviewing authority, if requested.

If the farm manager fails to meet these requirements, their contribution of active personal management to the farming operation for payment eligibility purposes will be disregarded and their payment eligibility status will be re-determined for the applicable program year.

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.

---

## Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your

project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

---

## Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Farm Loan teams throughout Louisiana are working on operating loans for spring 2020 so it is important that potential borrowers submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm operating and farm ownership loans** can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

**Microloans** are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. The staff at your local FSA office can provide more details on farm operating and microloans and provide loan applications. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

**Marketing Assistance Loans** allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

**Farm Storage Facility Loans** can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, or for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

Please call your local FSA office if you have questions about any of the loans available through FSA.

---

## USDA Swine Small Enterprise Study

From July 2020 through January 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), will conduct its third national study of U.S. small enterprise swine operations.

Louisiana producers are included in this study that will take an in-depth look at small enterprise swine operations (fewer than 1,000 pigs) and provide new information regarding animal health and management practices used on these operations, as well as the alternative marketing strategies they implement.

Approximately 5,000 swine operations from 38 states will be asked to participate in the study. These states account for about 95 percent of U.S. swine operations with fewer than 1,000 pigs.

Participation in any NAHMS study is voluntary. In June 2020, selected producers will be mailed a letter describing the study and be provided with a questionnaire to complete and return. Producers who don't respond to the questionnaire will be called by a NASS representative to arrange a convenient time to complete the questionnaire via a telephone interview.

The privacy of every questionnaire participant is protected. Data will only be presented in an aggregate or summary manner.

For more information, please contact Charles Haley at 970-494-7216 or [charles.a.haley@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:charles.a.haley@aphis.usda.gov).

---

## Selected Interest rates for January 2020

- Farm Operating Loans — Direct 2.625%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.250%
- Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher — 1.50%
- Emergency Loans — 3.625%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years) — 1.625%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years) — 1.625%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) — 1.750%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) — 1.875%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) — 1.875%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans (15 year term) — 2.000%
- Commodity Loans — 2.500%

---

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).