

June 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Table of Contents

- [FSA Releases Signup Information for Tree Assistance Program](#)
- [Maps for Acreage Reporting](#)
- [Farm Service Agency County Committee Nomination Period in Rhode Island to Launch June 15](#)
- [Malted Grains and Maple Syrup Eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loans](#)
- [USDA Improves Access to Capital for Tribal Farmlands with Multiple Owners](#)
- [USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Rhode Island Producers](#)

Rhode Island FSA Newsletter

Rhode Island Farm Service Agency

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www.fsa.usda.gov/ri

State Executive Director:
Michael Sullivan

State Committee: Doreen Pezza, Judith Carvalho, Ellen Puccetti

FSA Releases Signup Information for Tree Assistance Program

USDA's Farm Service Agency recently released signup information for the [Tree Assistance Program](#), a nationwide program that provides orchardists and nursery tree growers with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 prescribed several changes to the program, including the removal of the \$125,000 per person and legal entity payment limitation. The [notice](#) outlined when producers should file applications for any recent losses, given the changes to the program.

Eligible producers should file for TAP assistance by the later of these two dates:

State Committee meets the second Wednesday of every month subject to change.

Rhode Island County Office:
401-828-3120 Option 2.

County Executive Director:
Sheryl Michener

County Committee: Victor Hoogendoorn, Vincent Confreda, Donald Bafoni Jr., Kim Coulter, Joseph Silveira

County Committee meets the first Wednesday of every month subject to change.

Farm Loan Team: 401-828-3120 Option 3.

Farm Loan Manager:
Roxanne S. Boisse

- 90 days of the disaster or when damages from the disaster are noticed; or
- 60 days after the regulation is published on the Federal Register later this summer.

The following producers can file applications:

- Producers who did not previously apply for TAP for 2017 or 2018 losses; and
- Producers who had applied and received an adverse determination that their 2017 or 2018 TAP application was filed late.

Additionally, producers with 2017 losses can also file an application or revise an original application because of the changes made through the Act.

For more information on TAP, producers should contact their [local USDA service center](#).

Maps for Acreage Reporting

Maps are now available at the Rhode Island County FSA Office for acreage reporting purposes. Producers may pick them up any time during office hours. If you wish to receive your maps by e-mail, please call our office or email Sheryl Michener at Sheryl.michener@ri.usda.gov.

Please see the following acreage reporting deadlines for Rhode Island:

- July 15, 2018: Annual Crops
- September 30, 2018: Value Loss
- November 15, 2018: Grass, mixed Forage, Alfalfa and Perennial Forage
- January 2, 2019: Honey and Maple Sap

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Producers are encouraged to file their acreage reports as soon as planting is completed.

Farm Service Agency County Committee Nomination Period in Rhode Island to Launch June 15

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages America's farmers and ranchers to nominate candidates to lead, serve and represent their community on their local county committee. According to USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Rhode Island County Executive Director CED Sheryl Michener will accept nominations for LAA-1 Providence county committee members beginning Friday, June 15, 2018.

Producers across the country are already serving on committees where they play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of FSA, making important decisions on programs dealing with disaster and conservation, emergencies, commodity loan price support, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

"County committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice on federal farm program implementation at the local level," said CED Michener. "It is also important that committees are comprised of members who fairly represent the diverse demographics of production agriculture for their community. I encourage all producers, including women, minority and beginning farmers and ranchers, to participate in the nomination and election process."

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated farmers and ranchers serve on FSA county committees, which consist of three to 11 members and meet once a month, or as needed. Members serve three-year terms.

Producers can nominate themselves or others. Organizations, including those representing beginning, women and minority producers, may also nominate candidates to better serve their communities. To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program and reside in the area where the election is being held.

This year, nominations and elections for Providence County, Rhode Island will be held in local administrative area 1, which includes Burrillville, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Scituate and Smithfield.

To be considered, a producer must sign an [FSA-669A](#) nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections, or from the Name County FSA office. All nomination forms for the 2018 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2018. Visit farmers.gov for more information.

Malted Grains and Maple Syrup Eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loans

Malted small grains and maple syrup are now eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

FSFLs provide 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 eligible commodities have been expanded to include malted small grains and maple syrup. Eligible malted small grains include barley, oats, rice, rye and wheat. Maple sap is used to produce maple syrup.

The low-interest funds can be used for:

- bottler or filling systems for maple syrup, excluding containers
- equipment to improve, maintain, or monitor the quality of stored FSFL commodities, such as cleaners, moisture testers, heat detectors, along with a proposed storage facility
- handling and drying equipment determined by the County Committee to be needed and essential to the proper functioning of a storage system
- electrical equipment, such as pumps, lighting, motors, and wiring, integral to the proper operation of the storage and handling equipment, excluding installing electric service to the electrical meter.

FSFLs are not available for the actual processing of the small grain into the malted commodity or maple sap into maple syrup. Additionally, purchased commodities are not eligible for FSFLs.

The following storage and handling equipment is ineligible for FSFLs:

- boiling equipment
- feed handling and processing equipment
- production and feed facilities
- structures of a temporary nature not having a useful life of the term of the loan
- maple sap tubing and pumping systems.

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 office.

USDA Improves Access to Capital for Tribal Farmlands with Multiple Owners

USDA is expanding the availability of farm loans for Indian tribes and members to purchase tribal farmland that has multiple owners. The improved lending opportunities are possible due to new authority granted by the 2014 Farm Bill, which allows USDA to provide revolving loan funds to qualified intermediary lenders that can relend the funds to qualified tribes and individuals.

USDA is able to implement a solution to a longstanding barrier to financing, which will increase the availability of farm loans to Native Americans who want to start or expand a farming or ranching operation on Indian lands.

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.

USDA will now allow tribes and tribal members to submit a farm loan application 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, 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 Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to Rhode Island Producers

Rhode Island USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director Sheryl Michener announced that farmers in Rhode Island now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Producers can text **RIKent** to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from Rhode Island. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Please contact your local FSA office at 401-828-3120 Option 2 if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the new text message option.

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).