

March 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Rhode Island FSA Newsletter

Rhode Island Farm Service Agency

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Warwick, RI 02886

Phone: 401-828-3120 Option 1.

www.fsa.usda.gov/ri

State Executive Director: W. Michael Sullivan, PhD.

State Committee: Doreen Pezza, Kevin Breene, Judith

Message from the State Executive Director

Greetings to Rhode Island Producers,

Internet and phone communication services were down for approximately 6 business days impacting all USDA Offices in Warwick RI. USDA Staff continued to provide services to our customers but we do apologize for any inconvenience that this may have caused you. The good news is we are back up and running and we look forward to hearing from you once again.

We will carefully consider any situation where a producer may have been adversely impacted by this situation. NAP or ARC/PAC deadlines of March 16th are rapidly approaching and we are still hopeful the work can get done but we will extend the deadline to

Carvalho, David Frerichs,
Ellen Puccetti

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

County Office: 401-828-3120 Option 2.

County Executive Director:
Sheryl Michener

County Committee: Kim Coulter, Joseph Polseno, George Goulart Jr., Gilbert Rathbun Jr., John Sousa

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

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

Dates to Remember:

March 16th, last day to make your election for either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and to sign your annual enrollment contract.

March 16th, signup deadline to enroll your annual crops including Hemp under the NAP Program.

March 23rd in recognition of the communication glitches that the staff was experiencing. Again, we do apologize if you have tried to call or email us about programs or issues.

I want to thank everyone who joined us at the RI Women in Agriculture Conference this past Tuesday. The conference was a huge success having over 240 attendees. We look forward to holding additional meetings and conferences in the future. I want to give a special thank you to the staff at the Crowne Plaza hotel for ensuring that our conference area was kept clean and sanitized throughout the duration of the conference.

We understand that there is great concern over the Corona Virus (COVID-19). We are in the process of developing our own state level pandemic plan to ensure FSA mission critical functions can continue to be performed with minimal interruptions.

So we are off to a most interesting 2020 season! Warmer than normal, dry and at risk of illness. We will be here to assist in any way necessary for our Rhode Island producers.

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 16, 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 16, 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 fsa.usda.gov/arc/plc. To enroll, contact your [FSA county office](#) for an appointment.

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@usda.gov. Please see the following acreage reporting deadlines for Rhode Island:

- July 15, 2020, Annual, Grass, Mixed Forage, Alfalfa, Fruit and Nut Trees and Perennial Crops and Perennial Forage (except Apples, Cranberries and Peaches)
- September 30, 2020, Value Loss Crops such as Aquaculture, Floriculture, Turfgrass sod, Christmas Trees
- January 2, 2020, Honey (beehive colonies) and Maple Sap
- January 15, 2020, Apples Cranberries and Peaches

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.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP 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 deadlines for 2020;

- March 16th Annual Crops including Hemp
- September 1st Value Loss Crops
- November 20th Perennial Crops
- December 1st Specialty Type Crops

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

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/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx>.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

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.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Farm Loan team in Rhode Island is already 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 the Name County 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 the Rhode Island Farm Loan team 401-828-3120 Option 3 if you have questions about any of the loans available through FSA.

The Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

Producers who receive survey questionnaires should respond quickly and online if possible.

The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS data is available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications and through the searchable [Quick Stats database](#). Watch a video on how NASS data is used at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-4zjnh26io&feature=youtu.be>.

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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).