

October 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

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

Rhode Island FSA Newsletter

Rhode Island Farm Service Agency

Rhode Island State Office

60 Quaker Lane Suite 62
Warwick, RI 02886

Phone: 401-828-3120 Option 1.

www.fsa.usda.gov/ri

State Executive Director: W. Michael Sullivan

State Committee: Doreen Pezza, David Frerichs, Ellen Puccetti, Kevin Breene, Judith Carvalho

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

Message from the State Executive Director

I hope the rainfall of the last few days has strengthened resolve to continue to farm and believe that next year will be better. It's been a tremendously challenging year. Covid-19 and the fear and disruption caused. A historical drought where ponds and other water sources were lost. Those without irrigation saw things fail to develop and then like all experienced significant increased disease pressure through the hot, humid days of July and early August.

The RI Drought Advisory Board has recommended declaration of Extreme Drought to the Governor. Farmers knew we were there months ago, however the Board's challenge is to address drinking water drought not agricultural drought. So I'm encouraged to report that they have taken the appeal to consider the difference in future situations. I'm been told by the Chair of the Water Resources Board that their 'Technical Committee' will be asked to develop the different criteria and get them presented to the full Board. This action may require RI Legislative actions.

The staff here at FSA are quite busy with Coronavirus programs (see <https://www.farmers.gov/cfap> for program details). **There are significant funds available** to assist you getting through the impacts of Covid.

Major additions to eligible crops were added in the second round so please look at the link and take advantage of the programs. These

Rhode Island County Office
Suite 49

Phone: 401-828-3120 Option 2.

County Executive Director:
Sheryl Michener

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

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

Farm Loan Team Suite 49

Phone: 401-828-3120 Option 3.

District Director: Mathew Richter

Farm Loan Analyst: Patricia Sullivan

FSA Program Deadlines:

October 31st, Deadline to submit applications under OOCSP.

November 2nd, County Committee Election Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters.

November 20th, Deadline to insure your Perennial Crops, Grass, Mixed Forage, Alfalfa, Perennial Forage under NAP.

November 20th, Deadline to insure your Apples, Grapes, Cranberries and Peaches with RMA.

December 7th, Last day to return voted County

are **payments to you NOT loans** which endeavor to assist with the change in farm business climate caused by the virus.

Additional funds are available through RI Department of Commerce for addressing on farm needs. The DOC has a group of IT consultants available to assist with development of online sales platforms, websites and other more necessary services in these new times. Both their 'Take it Outside' and 'Restore RI' programs provide opportunities for assistance.

If you have any questions, please call the office and let us know.

You are a resilient community and one I am proud to have spent my life with. Next year will be better.

W. Michael Sullivan, RI State Executive Director

FSA Encourages Farmers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2020 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections (will begin/began) on Nov. 2, 2020, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 7, 2020.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs, conservation programs, incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities, emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters in local administrative area 3, Washington County RI, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from the Rhode Island County FSA Office located at 60 Quaker Lane Suite 49 Warwick, RI 02886 (401) 828-3120 Option 2..

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2021.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Kim Coulter has been nominated in LAA 3, Washington County to continue her service as a committee member. Coulter resides in

Committee Election Ballots to the County Office.

December 11th, Deadline to submit your applications under the CFAP 2 program.

December 14th, Deadline to submit your applications under the Seafood Trade Relief Program.

December 31st, Deadline to insure your Specialty type crops; Honey, Maple Sap under NAP.

Charlestown RI delivering farm fresh beef, pork and chicken products. She is currently an active member of the following; Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association, Rhode Island Women in Agriculture, Antique Tractor Association and 4-H.

Alan Kinsley has been nominated in LAA 3, Washington County to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Kinsley resides in West Kingston RI where he raises alpaca, honeybees, heritage turkey and chickens. Kinsley serves on the board of Governors for Rhode Island Shriners with his final term ending later this year.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2020 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at the RI County FSA Office 401-828-3120 Option 2.

Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2

Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) began on Sept. 21, 2020 and will continue through Dec. 11, 2020. CFAP 2 provides eligible producers with direct financial assistance due to market disruptions and associated costs because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Check out our [brief video](#) about the program.

CFAP 2 is a separate program from the first round of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, now referred to as CFAP 1. Farmers and ranchers who participated in CFAP 1 will not be automatically enrolled and must complete a new application for CFAP 2. Details on how to apply can be found on farmers.gov/cfap/apply.

CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder

Many more commodities are eligible for CFAP 2 than CFAP 1. Interested in finding the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 payment rates for the eligible commodities you grow or raise? Our new, easy-to-use [CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder](#) makes finding payment rates specific to your operation simple. From yam to alpaca farmers – and everyone in between – the payment rate information you need is just a few clicks away. Try it today on your desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

Call Center

A call center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. The call center can provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers will select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the call center staff.

USDA Supports U.S. Seafood Industry Impacted by Retaliatory Tariffs

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide approximately \$530 million to support the U.S. seafood industry and commercially licensed fishermen impacted by retaliatory tariffs from foreign governments. The funding will be provided through the Seafood Trade Relief Program and funded through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The Seafood Trade Relief Program funding will support the following seafood types:

- Atka mackerel
- Crab (Dungeness, King, Snow, Southern Tanner)
- Flounder
- Geoduck
- Goosefish
- Herrings
- Lobster
- Pacific Cod
- Pacific Ocean Perch
- Pollock
- Sablefish
- Salmon
- Sole
- Squid
- Tuna
- Turbot

Fishermen can sign-up for relief through the program from September 14, 2020 to December 14, 2020. Fishermen should apply through their local USDA Service Center. To find your local Service Center, visit www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator. The application can be found at www.farmers.gov/seafood.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in the office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Submitting Production Losses for Disaster Declarations

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county. You can play a vital role in this process.

If you have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster, you may submit a request to your local FSA county office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the county office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, contact your RI FSA County Office at 401-828-3120 Option 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact the RI FSA Farm Loan Team at 401-828-3120 Option 3 or visit farmers.gov.

Enrollment Begins for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs for 2021

Agricultural producers can now make elections and enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2021 crop year. The signup period opened Tuesday, Oct. 13. These key U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) safety-net programs help producers weather fluctuations in either revenue or price for certain crops, and more than \$5 billion in payments are in the process of going out to producers who signed up for the 2019 crop year.

“Although commodity prices are starting to show a glimmer of improvement, recent depressed prices and drops in revenue compounded by the effects of the pandemic have seriously impacted the bottom line for most agricultural operations,” said Richard Fordyce, Administrator of USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA). “Through safety-net programs like ARC and PLC, we can help producers mitigate these financial stressors and keep the ag industry moving forward. Make time over the next few months to evaluate your program elections and enroll for the 2021 crop year.”

Enrollment for the 2021 crop year closes March 15, 2021.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price.

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 and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

2021 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the entire farm, for the 2021 crop year. Although election changes for 2021 are optional, enrollment (signed contract) is required for each year of the program. If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2021, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2021, the election defaults to the current election for crops on the farm from the prior crop year.

For crop years 2022 and 2023, producers will have an opportunity to make new elections during those signups. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

2019 Crop Year ARC and PLC Payments

FSA began processing payments last week for 2019 ARC-County (ARC-CO) and PLC on covered commodities that met payment triggers on farms enrolled for the 2019 crop year. In addition to the \$5 billion now in process, FSA anticipates it will issue additional payments by the end of November for 2019 commodities covered under ARC-Individual (ARC-IC) and additional commodities that trigger PLC and ARC-CO payments for which rates have not yet been published.

Producers who had 2019 covered commodities enrolled in ARC-CO can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity. For farms and covered commodities enrolled in 2019 PLC, the following crops met payment triggers: barley, canola, chickpeas (small and large), corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, peanuts, seed cotton and wheat.

Oats and soybeans did not meet 2019 PLC payment triggers.

2019 PLC payment rates for the following covered commodities have not been determined: crambe, flaxseed, long and medium grain rice, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sesame seed, sunflower seed and temperate Japonica rice. Payment rates for these commodities will be announced at a later date.

Web-Based Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), the University of Illinois tool that offers farmers the ability to run payment estimate modeling for their farms and counties for ARC-County and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), the Texas A&M tool allows producers to analyze payment yield updates and expected payments for 2021. Producers who have used the tool in the past should see their username and much of their farm data already available in the system.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, including two online decision tools that assist producers in making enrollment and election decisions specific to their operations, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#).

For additional questions and assistance, contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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).