

July 19, 2016



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Florida FSA Newsletter

Florida Farm Service Agency

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State Committee:

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Farm Program

FSA Unveils Monthly Webinar Series

The FSA Outreach and Education Division will host a series of webinars each month to inform producers about FSA programs and initiatives. To register for any of the below listed webinars, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach and click on "Outreach Webinars."

July 19 @ 2 p.m. EDT

Understanding Receipt for Service

To ensure that all USDA customers and potential customers are being served properly in local offices, the 2014 Farm Bill requires that a receipt be provided. Learn more about Receipt for Service, how it affects you and what you can expect when you visit a local Farm Service Agency county office.

Aug. 9 @ 2 p.m. EDT

Need Commodity Storage? The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Can Help

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade permanent or portable facilities to store commodities. Learn how this program may be able

Tom Hockert

to help your operation.

Farm Loans

Justin Teuton

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

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these webinars should contact Tanya Brown at 202-690-1700 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 at least three business days prior to the webinar.

The webinars will be recorded for future viewing and can be accessed on www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach.

Dairy Producers Can Enroll to Protect Milk Production Margins

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Florida announced that dairy producers can enroll for 2017 coverage in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy) starting July 1. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer.

The Margin Protection Program gives participating dairy producers the flexibility to select coverage levels best suited for their operation. Enrollment began July 1 and ends on Sept. 30, 2016, for coverage in calendar year 2017. Participating farmers will remain in the program through 2018 and pay a minimum \$100 administrative fee each year. Producers have the option of selecting a different coverage level during open enrollment each year.

USDA has a web tool to help producers determine the level of coverage under the Margin Protection Program that will provide them with the strongest safety net under a variety of conditions. The online resource, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool, allows dairy farmers to quickly and easily combine unique operation data and other key variables to calculate their coverage needs based on price projections. Producers can also review historical data or estimate future coverage needs, based on data projections. The secure site can be accessed via computer, Smartphone or tablet 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To complete enrollment, producers must make coverage elections during the enrollment period and pay the annual \$100 administrative fee that provides basic catastrophic protection that covers 90 percent of milk production at a \$4 margin coverage level. For additional premiums,

operations can protect 25 to 90 percent of production history with margin coverage levels from \$4.50 to \$8, in 50 cent increments. Once enrolled, dairy operations are required to participate through 2018 by making coverage elections each year. Producers can mail the appropriate form to the producer's administrative county FSA office, along with applicable fees without necessitating a trip to the local FSA office. If electing higher coverage for 2017, dairy producers can either pay the premium in full at the time of enrollment or pay 100 percent of the premium by Sept. 1, 2017. Premium fees may be paid directly to FSA or producers can work with their milk handlers to remit premiums on their behalf.

Also beginning July 1, 2016, FSA will begin accepting applications for intergenerational transfers, allowing program participants who added an adult child, grandchild or spouse to the operation during calendar year 2014 or 2015, or between Jan. 1 and June 30, 2016, to increase production history by the new cows bought into the operation by the new family members. For intergenerational transfers occurring on or after July 1, 2016, notification to FSA must be made within 60 days of purchasing the additional cows.

Dairy operations enrolling in the new program must meet conservation compliance provisions and cannot participate in the Livestock Gross Margin Dairy Insurance Program.

For more information, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop by a local FSA office to learn more about the Margin Protection Program. To find a local FSA office in your area, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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>.

During National Pollinator Week, USDA Announced Key Measures to Improve Pollinator Health

USDA's Conservation Reserve Program Currently Provides 15 Million Acres of Healthy Forage for Pollinators, and New Partnership Will Ensure Additional High-Quality Habitat in the Future

During National Pollinator Week, USDA announced two initiatives in support of the [President's National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honeybees and Other Pollinators](#), announced just over one year ago. A review of USDA's most popular conservation program found that farmers and ranchers across the country are creating at least 15 million acres of healthy forage and habitat for pollinators, and the department has also entered into a new partnership with leading honey bee organizations that will help to ensure future conservation projects continue to provide benefits to these important species.

USDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with two honey bee organizations, the American Honey Producers Association and the American Beekeeping Federation, to facilitate an ongoing partnership that will ensure USDA's conservation initiatives are as advantageous as possible to pollinators and that beekeepers understand how they can benefit from USDA's conservation and safety net programs.

FSA plays a critical role in the delivery of programs that provide a safety net for beekeepers who experience losses due to natural disasters, and the agency administers the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program, which provides assistance for the loss of honeybee colonies, in excess of normal mortality, due to Colony Collapse Disorder or other natural causes. These groups have helped to ensure that these safety net programs work well, and they have helped focus research to learn more about the impacts of USDA programs and make continuous improvements. This MOU creates a framework to ensure ongoing, meaningful information sharing to help beekeepers and honey bees into the future.

The National Strategy called for seven million acres of land to be enhanced or restored for pollinators. Since then, USDA has more than tripled the acreage enrolled in CRP's pollinator initiative, through which USDA helps to cover the cost of planting pollinator-friendly wildflowers, legumes and shrubs, and USDA has increased the limit on this initiative in response to landowner demand so that more acres can be enrolled in the future.

This [fact sheet](#) contains more information about USDA's work to keep pollinators buzzing and contributing to a diverse domestic and global food supply.

To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Provides Targeted Assistance to Cotton Producers to Share in the Cost of Ginning

One-time Payments to Begin in July to Assist with 2016 Ginning Season

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide an estimated \$300 million in cost-share assistance payments to cotton producers through the new Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program, in order to expand and maintain the domestic marketing of cotton.

The Cotton Ginning Cost Share program will offer meaningful, timely and targeted assistance to cotton growers to help with their anticipated ginning costs and to facilitate marketing. The program will provide, on average, approximately 60 percent more assistance per farm and per producer than

the 2014 program that provided cotton transition assistance.”

Through the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program, eligible producers can receive a one-time cost share payment, which is based on a producer’s 2015 cotton acres reported to FSA, multiplied by 40 percent of the average ginning cost for each production region. With the pressing need to provide assistance ahead of the 2016 ginning season this fall, USDA will ensure the application process is straight-forward and efficient. The program estimates the costs based on planting of cotton in 2015, and therefore the local FSA offices already have this information for the vast majority of eligible producers and the applications will be pre-populated with existing data. Sign-up for the program began June 20 and runs through Aug. 5, 2016 at the producer’s local FSA office. Payments will be processed as applications are received, and are expected to begin in July.

Since 2011, cotton fiber markets have experienced dramatic changes. As a result of low cotton prices and global oversupply, cotton producers are facing economic uncertainty that has led to many producers having lost equity and having been forced to liquidate equipment and land to satisfy loans. The ginning of cotton is necessary prior to marketing the lint for fiber, or the seed for oil or feed. While the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program makes payments to cotton producers for cotton ginning costs, the benefits of the program will be felt by the broader marketing chain associated with cotton and cottonseed, including cotton gins, cooperatives, marketers and cottonseed crushers and the rural communities that depend on them.

The program has the same eligibility requirements as were used for the 2014 Cotton Transition Assistance Program, including a \$40,000 per producer payment limit, requirement to be actively engaged in farming, meet conservation compliance and a \$900,000 adjusted gross income limit.

To learn more about the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/cgcs or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

USDA Expands Microloans to 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, which celebrates its third anniversary this week, 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).

This microloan announcement is another USDA resource for America's farmers and ranchers to utilize, especially as [new and beginning farmers and ranchers](#) look for the assistance they need to get started. To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local FSA office. To find your nearest office location, please visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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 type loans and/or to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted 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, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Firearms and Dangerous Weapons Forbidden In Federal Facilities

USDA Service Centers and Farm Service Agency Offices are Off Limits for Firearms

This is an important reminder to all customers and patrons of USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices and USDA Service Centers statewide that **firearms are forbidden (even with a permit/license) in Federal Buildings**. A Federal Building by definition is any building owned, leased or rented by the Federal Government, where Federal employees are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official duties.

The items that are prohibited in Federal facilities include any item prohibited by any applicable Federal, State, local, and tribal law and/or ordinance, as well as firearms, dangerous weapons, explosives, or other destructive devices (including their individual parts or components) designed, redesigned, used, intended for use, or readily converted to cause injury, death, or property damage. Possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in Federal facilities as outline above is a crime punishable by fines and imprisonment.

For a complete list of items prohibited in Federal facilities, please view and/or download the document titled, **Items Prohibited from Federal Facilities: An Interagency Security Committee Standard**: <http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/isc-items-prohibited-federal-facilities-feb-2013-508.pdf>. **The lists of prohibited items outlined in this document apply to all facility occupants, contractors, and the visiting public.**

If you have questions or concerns regarding this notification, please contact your local Farm Service Agency Office—<http://offices.usda.gov>.

Selected Interest Rates for July 2016

90-Day Treasury Bill
.250%

Farm Operating Loans — Direct
2.25

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct
3.50

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher
1.50

Emergency Loans
3.25

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)
1.50%

Sugar Storage Facility Loans
2.00%

Commodity Loans 1996-Present
1.625%

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).