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## Tennessee FSA Newsletter

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### Tennessee Farm Service Agency

579 Federal Building  
Nashville, TN 37203

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

#### State Committee:

Eddie Anderson, Chairman  
Robert Collier  
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William Lyons  
Jack Whittenburg

#### State Executive Director:

Gene Davidson

#### Division Chiefs:

Frank Rodgers  
Farm Loan Programs

Patty Taylor  
Farm Programs

### FSA Issues Fiscal Year 2015 Impacts Report

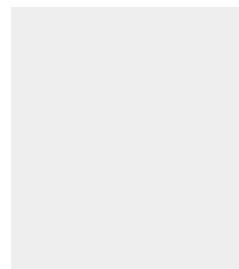
2015 marks the 20th anniversary of USDA's Farm Service Agency, but FSA's roots date back nearly 80 years, to the days of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, when the rural economy was in crisis and America's farmers and ranchers needed assistance. At that time, Congress empowered USDA to provide a strong safety-net for farm families, helping them navigate the unpredictability of natural disasters and volatile market conditions.

Today, technological advancements in equipment, crop and veterinary sciences, soil and water conservation, and pest and nutrient management, all have resulted in agriculture becoming stronger than we've ever known - - certainly far stronger than the days of our grandparents and great-grandparents. But the unpredictability of weather and markets remain. That means the FSA mission is as important as it's ever been to ensure the domestic agriculture sector continues to deliver an abundant, safe, and affordable food and fiber supply for the American people.

Tyeisha Samples  
Administrative Officer

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

The [FSA Impacts Report](#) shows selected highlights for fiscal year 2015. This report highlights the achievements of FSA and will ensure that the path forward continues to demonstrate our commitment to rural America.



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## 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) will begin offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans will be 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](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans), or contact your local FSA office. To find your nearest office location, please visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA To Offer Certificates for Farm Commodities Pledged to Marketing

Producers who have crops pledged as collateral for a marketing assistance loan can now purchase a commodity certificate that may be exchanged for the outstanding loan collateral. The authority is provided by the 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, legislation enacted by Congress in December. Commodity certificates are available beginning with the 2015 crop in situations where the applicable marketing assistance loan rate exceeds the exchange rate. Currently, the only eligible commodity is cotton.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) routinely provides agricultural producers with marketing assistance loans that provide interim cash flow without having to sell the commodities when market prices are at harvest time lows. The loans allow the producer to store and delay the sale of the commodity until more favorable market conditions emerge, while also providing for a more orderly

marketing of commodities throughout the marketing year.

These loans are considered “nonrecourse” because the loan can be redeemed by delivering the commodity pledged as collateral to the government as full payment for the loan upon maturity. Commodity certificates are available to loan holders having outstanding nonrecourse loans for wheat, upland cotton, rice, feed grains, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, large and small chickpeas), peanuts, wool, soybeans and designated minor oilseeds. These certificates can be purchased at the posted county price (or adjusted world price or national posted price) for the quantity of commodity under loan, and must be immediately exchanged for the collateral, satisfying the loan.

Producers may contact their FSA office that maintains their loan or their loan service agent for additional information. Producers who do business with Cooperative Marketing Associations (CMA) or Designated Marketing Associations (DMA) may contact their respective associations for additional information. To learn more about commodity certificates, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).

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## **NASS To Gather New Data on Organic Agriculture Production**

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has begun conducting the 2015 Certified Organic Survey to gather up-to-date data on certified organic crops and livestock in the United States. This special survey effort is critical to help determine the economic impact of certified organic agriculture production in the United States.

NASS is mailing the survey to all known organic farms in the United States. The form asks farmers to provide information on acreage, production, and sales for a variety of certified organic crop and livestock commodities. In addition, NASS is gathering information about organic farmers' production and marketing practices. The agency urges all participants to respond by February 19. After this date, NASS will follow up by mail, phone and personal interviews with those who have not responded. Producers can return their forms by mail or complete the survey online at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov).

Agriculture statistics are frequently used by business and policy decision makers, and in this case farmers themselves stand to reap the most benefits. The 2015 Certified Organic Survey will provide data for USDA's Risk Management Agency to evaluate crop insurance coverage to help provide adequate pricing for organic producers. The report, to be released September 2016, will also assist farmers, suppliers and others in the private sector in planning the production and marketing of new products to help sustain industry growth.

This is a voluntary survey, and as is the case with all NASS surveys, information provided is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified, as required by federal law. For more information about the 2015 Certified Organic Survey visit [www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide\\_to\\_NASS\\_Surveys/Organic\\_Production/index.php](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Organic_Production/index.php).

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## **Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) Program**

FSA borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program. DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment/s needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale. Borrowers

must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan. For more information, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

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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).

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