



Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

OVERVIEW

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program provides low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA).

A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan, with a minimum down payment of 15 percent. Loan terms are up to 12 years, depending on the amount of the loan. Producers must demonstrate storage needs based on three years of production history.

FSFL MICROLOAN OPTION

Producers who select the FSFL microloan option can borrow up to \$50,000, with the minimum down payment reduced to five percent and shorter loan terms. Producers can self-certify the storage needs of the eligible commodity and are not required to demonstrate storage needs based on production history.

Applicants for all loans will be charged a nonrefundable \$100 application fee.

ELIGIBLE COMMODITIES

The following commodities are eligible:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain;
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain;
- Other grains (triticale, speltz and buckwheat);
- Pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas);
- Hay;
- Honey;
- Renewable biomass;
- Fruits (includes nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities;
- Floriculture;
- Hops;
- Maple sap;
- Milk;
- Cheese;

- Butter;
- Yogurt;
- Eggs;
- Meat/poultry (unprocessed);
- Rye; and
- Aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water).

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

These loans must be approved by the local FSA state or county committee **before** any site preparation and/or construction can be started.

All loan requests are subject to an environmental evaluation. Accepting delivery of equipment, starting any site preparation or construction before loan approval may impede the successful completion of an environmental evaluation and may adversely affect loan eligibility.

ELIGIBLE FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND UPGRADES

The following types of new/used facilities and upgrades are eligible and must have a useful life for at least the term of the loan:

- Conventional cribs or bins;
- Oxygen-limiting structures and remanufactured oxygen-limiting structures;
- Flat-type storage structures;
- Electrical equipment and handling equipment, excluding the installation of electrical service to the electrical meter;
- Safety equipment, such as interior and exterior ladders and lighting;
- Equipment to improve, maintain or monitor the quality of stored grain;
- Concrete foundations, aprons, pits and pads, including site preparation, off-farm labor and material, essential to the proper operation of the grain storage and handling equipment;
- Renovation of existing farm storage facilities, under certain circumstances, if the renovation is for maintaining or replacing items;

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- Grain handling and grain drying equipment determined by the Commodity Credit Corporation to be needed and essential to the proper operation of a grain storage system (with or without a loan for the storage facility);
- Structures that are bunker-type, horizontal or open silo structures, with at least two concrete walls and a concrete floor;
- Structures suitable for storing hay built according to acceptable design guidelines;
- Structures suitable for storing renewable biomass;
- Bulk tanks for storing milk or maple sap;
- Cold storage buildings, including prefabricated buildings that are suitable for eligible commodities. Also may include cooling, circulating and monitoring equipment and electrical equipment, including labor and materials for installation of lights, motors and wiring integral to the proper operation of a cold storage facility; and
- Storage and handling trucks, including refrigerated trucks.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An eligible borrower is any person who is a landowner, landlord, leaseholder, tenant or sharecropper. Eligible borrowers must be able to show repayment ability and meet other requirements to qualify for a loan. Contact an FSA office for more details.

WHERE TO FILE THE APPLICATION

Loan applications should be filed in the administrative FSA office that maintains the farm's records.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes; other eligibility requirements or restrictions may apply. For more information about FSFLs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Other examples of equipment include but are not limited to the following:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • baggers • boxers • brush polishers • bulk bin tippers • case palletizers • cement flooring • circulation fans • cold dip tanks • conveyors • drying tunnels • dumpers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electrical equipment • food safety-related equipment • hoppers • hydrocoolers • hydrolifts • ice machines • quality graders • refrigeration units or systems • roller creepfeeders • roller spray units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety equipment meeting Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements • sealants • sizers • sorting bins and/or tables • storage and handling trucks • washers • waxers • weight graders

Note:

- Eligible storage structures and handling equipment may be permanently affixed or portable.
- Facilities built for commercial purposes and not for the sole use of the borrower(s) are not eligible for financing.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
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Microloans

OVERVIEW

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the microloan program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of new, niche and small to mid-sized family farm operations.

Microloans offers more flexible access to credit and serves as an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations, like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA). These smaller farms, including non-traditional farm operations, often face limited financing options.

TYPES OF MICROLOANS

Two types of microloans are available: Farm Operating Loans and Farm Ownership Loans. The microloans are issued to the applicant directly from the USDA FSA.

- Operating microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses authorized by the FSA Operating Loan (OL) Program, including but not limited to: initial start-up expenses; annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents; marketing and distribution expenses; family living expenses; purchase of livestock, equipment and other materials essential to farm operations; minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers; hoop houses to extend the growing season; essential tools; irrigation; and delivery vehicles.
- Ownership microloans can be used for all approved expenses authorized by the FSA Farm Ownership (FO) Loan Program, such as to purchase a farm or farm land, enlarge an existing farm, construct new farm buildings, improve existing farm buildings, pay closing cost and implement soil and water conservation and protection practices.

SIMPLIFIED APPLICATION PROCESS

The microloan application process is simpler, requiring less paperwork to complete, consistent with a smaller loan amount. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to

accommodate veterans, smaller farm operations and beginning farmers.

- Microloan applicants for operating loans will need to have some farm experience; however, FSA will consider an applicant's small business experience as well as any experience with a self-guided apprenticeship as a means to meet the farm management requirement. This will assist applicants who have limited farm skills by providing them with an opportunity to gain farm management experience while working with a mentor during the first production and marketing cycle.
- Microloan applicants for ownership loans need to have three years of farm experience out of the last 10 prior to the date of the application being submitted. One of the years can be substituted with any of the following experience:
 - o Post-secondary education, that is at least 16 semester hours in agriculture business, horticulture, animal science, agronomy or other agriculture-related fields
 - o Significant business management, that is at least one year of management experience in a non ag-related field where the applicant's day-to-day responsibilities included direct management experience, such as personnel decisions, payroll and inventory ordering; however, not an individual who is a manager in title only
 - o Military leadership or management that is, as a general rule, any officer or E5 or above will have completed an acceptable military leadership course
 - o If an applicant has successfully repaid an FSA youth loan, the term of that loan may be used towards the three years of management experience required for an ownership loan.

SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

Operating microloans for annual operating expenses must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount, and up to

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150 percent, when available. Operating microloans made for purposes other than annual operating expenses must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products purchased with loan funds and having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount.

Ownership microloans are secured by the real estate being purchased or improved. The value of the real estate must be at least 100 percent of the loan amount.

RATES AND TERMS

For operating microloans, eligible applicants may obtain up to \$50,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular FSA operating loan rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less.

For ownership microloans, eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$50,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed 25 years. Interest rates are the regular FSA farm ownership rates in effect at the time of the loan approval or closing.

OBTAINING FORMS AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

FSA microloan application forms can be obtained from the local FSA office or can be downloaded and printed from the USDA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans. Applicants who are having problems gathering information or completing forms should contact their local FSA office for help. After completing the required paperwork, an applicant should submit the farm loan application to their local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A LOAN APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED?

After a loan application is submitted, FSA reviews the application and determines if the applicant is eligible for the requested loan. The applicant will receive written notification of each step in the process, such as when the application is received, when more information is needed, when an eligibility

determination is made and when a final decision is made. If the application is approved, FSA makes the loan and funds are distributed as needed. If the application is denied, the applicant is notified in writing of the specific reasons for the denial, and provided reconsideration and appeal rights.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To qualify for assistance, the applicant must not be larger than a family-sized farmer, have a satisfactory history of meeting credit obligations, be unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms and meet all other loan eligibility requirements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only, other restrictions may apply. Additional information on the FSA microloan program may be obtained at www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans or at local FSA offices. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. For more information on other FSA loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

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2014 Farm Bill

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Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy)

The Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy) is a voluntary risk management program for dairy producers authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill through Dec. 31, 2018. The MPP-Dairy offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

ELIGIBLE DAIRY OPERATIONS

To be eligible for MPP-Dairy, a dairy operation must:

- Produce and commercially market milk from cows located in the United States;
- Provide proof of milk production at the time of registration;
- Not be enrolled in the Risk Management Agency's Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy program (LGM-Dairy).

Dairy operations may consist of one or more dairy producers that are in the business of commercially producing and marketing milk as a single unit.

Dairy producers who are members of the dairy operation must share in the risk of producing milk and make contributions to the dairy operation that are at least commensurate with their share of the proceeds of the operation.

Dairy operations must be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and wetland conservation provisions. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/compliance. Adjusted Gross Income provisions do not apply to MPP-Dairy.

Producers may have more than one dairy operation, but they must be separate and distinct in order to have a separate contract.

Dairy operations, as constituted for the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) Program, are eligible for the MPP-Dairy program.

REGISTRATION

Eligible dairy operations must register for coverage at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office where their farm records are maintained by:

- Establishing a production history by completing and submitting form CCC-781, "Production History Establishment";
- Completing and submitting form CCC-782, "Contract and Annual Coverage Election";
- Paying the \$100 administrative fee and;
- Paying the premium, if any.

A minimum administrative fee of \$100 is required to be paid for each covered year through the duration of the program.

Note: The registration period for coverage year 2016 will begin July 1, 2015 and continues through Sept. 30, 2015.

Registration periods for subsequent years are as follows:

Coverage Year	Registration Periods
2017	July 1 - Sept. 30, 2016
2018	July 1 - Sept. 29, 2017

A new dairy operation that has been established after a registration period closes is required to submit a contract within the first 90 calendar days in which the dairy operation first commercially markets milk for the calendar year, or wait until the registration period for the next calendar year of coverage. Coverage for dairy operations registering within the first 90 days of marketing milk will become effective beginning the next full two-month marketing period after registration.

PRODUCTION HISTORY ESTABLISHMENT

Participating dairy operations establish their production history upon initial registration and all producers in the participating dairy operation must provide adequate proof of the dairy operation's

quantity of milk marketed commercially. All information provided is subject to verification and spot checked by FSA.

For existing dairy operations, the production history is established using the highest annual milk production marketed during the full calendar years of 2011, 2012 or 2013.

Dairy operations without 12 full months of milk marketings as of Feb. 7, 2014, may be considered new dairy operations.

New dairy operations may establish their production history using one of the following methods:

- Available full month's marketed milk production for the calendar year the operation first began to market milk, calculated to a yearly amount using a national index based on seasons, or
- Estimated actual marketed milk production based on the actual herd size of the dairy operation relative to the national rolling herd average

In subsequent years, the production history of a participating dairy operation will be adjusted to reflect any increase in the national average milk marketing production; no change in production history is otherwise allowed. Additionally, there will be no change in production history through the expansion or reduction in herd size of the participating dairy operation.

COVERAGE ELECTION

Catastrophic Coverage (CAT) of \$4 margin coverage level at 90 percent of the established production history requires no premium payment, but the dairy operation must pay the \$100 administrative fee.

For increased protection, dairy operations may annually select a percentage of coverage from 25 to 90 percent of the established production history in five percent increments and a coverage level threshold from \$4.50 to \$8 in 50 cent increments.

Coverage election must be made prior to the end of the annual election period. After the initial year of registration, failure to make an election results in the coverage level defaulting to the CAT level of 90 percent at \$4 margin. Dairy operations may only

select one coverage level percentage and coverage level threshold for the applicable calendar year. All producers in the participating dairy operation with a share and risk in the milk marketing must agree to the coverage elected on the contract.

A new web tool is available that will allow dairy producers to use data unique to their specific operation, combined with other variables, to test a variety of financial scenarios before eventually enrolling in the new MPP-Dairy. The web tool is located at: www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool

PREMIUMS

A participating dairy operation will pay a premium based on the level of coverage elected. Premiums will be calculated by multiplying the coverage percentage selected (from 25 percent to 90 percent) multiplied by the production history of the dairy operation to obtain the covered milk marketings. The covered milk marketings in hundredweight (cwt.) are multiplied by the premium per cwt. applicable to the coverage level selected. Premiums will be calculated from Tier 1 for covered production history up to 4 million pounds and from Tier 2 for covered production history exceeding 4 million pounds.

For calendar years 2016 through 2018, at least 25 percent of the calculated premium is due by Feb. 1 of the calendar year of coverage and the balance is due before June 1 for dairy operations that elect coverage above the \$4 level.

An operation must pay: (1) the premium in full at the time of annual coverage election; or (2) a minimum of 25 percent of the premium by Feb. 1 of the applicable calendar year of coverage, with the remaining balance due no later than June 1 of the applicable calendar year of coverage.

Premium balances due, but not in arrears by June 1, will be deducted from any MPP-Dairy payments made to the participating dairy operation during the applicable calendar year of coverage.

New dairy operations formed after the annual registration period will have their premiums prorated for that year based on the portion of the calendar year for which they purchase coverage.

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Coverage Level (Margin) per cwt.	Tier 1 Premium for 2016-2018 Covered production history LESS THAN 4 million lbs.	Tier 2 Premium for 2014-2018 Covered production history GREATER THAN 4 million lbs.
\$4.00	None	None
\$4.50	\$0.010	\$0.020
\$5.00	\$0.025	\$0.040
\$5.50	\$0.040	\$0.100
\$6.00	\$0.055	\$0.155
\$6.50	\$0.090	\$0.290
\$7.00	\$0.217	\$0.830
\$7.50	\$0.300	\$1.060
\$8.00	\$0.475	\$1.360

MARGIN CALCULATIONS

The “production margin” is the difference between the national all-milk price and the national average feed cost.

The all milk price is the average price of milk marketed in the United States as reported by NASS.

The average feed cost is calculated by using the sum of:

- 1.0728 times the price of corn per bushel, plus
- .00735 times the price of soybean meal per ton, plus
- .0137 times the price of alfalfa hay per ton.

The corn and alfalfa hay prices are those reported in the monthly NASS Agricultural Prices report. The price of soybean meal is the Central Illinois soybean meal price delivered by rail as reported in the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Market News-Monthly.

The production margin will be calculated each consecutive two-month period consisting of the months of January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October and November/December.

PAYMENTS

A participating dairy operation will receive a margin protection payment whenever the average actual dairy production margin for a consecutive two-month period is less than the coverage level threshold selected by the participating dairy operation.

The margin protection payment calculation is the:

- Coverage level threshold selected by the participating dairy operation, minus
- Actual dairy production margin for the consecutive two-month period, multiplied by
- Coverage percentage selected by the participating dairy operation, multiplied by
- Established production history in cwt of the participating dairy operation, divided by six.

Example: A dairy operation has an established production history of 3 million pounds (30,000 cwt). The participating dairy operation selected the 50 percent coverage level at the \$7.00 threshold. For the two-month marketing period, the actual production margin is \$5.00. The actual production margin is less than the threshold selected. Therefore, a payment will be earned as calculated below:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \$7 \text{ threshold minus } \$5 \text{ margin} = \$2 \text{ difference} \\
 & \$2 \text{ times } 50 \text{ percent times } 5,000 \text{ cwt } (30,000 \text{ cwt} / 6) \\
 & = \$5,000.
 \end{aligned}$$

Payments under the MPP-Dairy program may be reduced by a certain percentage due to a sequester order required by Congress and issued pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Should a payment reduction be necessary, FSA will reduce the payment by the required amount.

CONTRACT MODIFICATIONS

Dairy operations must immediately notify FSA of any modifications that may affect their participation in MPP-Dairy. Contract modifications include, but are not limited to, the death of a producer on the contract; producer joining the operation; member exiting the operation; relocation of the dairy operation; transfer of shares by sale or other transfer action or dairy operation reconstitutions resulting in a change in the

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organizational structure of the participating dairy. Changes are subject to review by FSA to determine if the changes were made solely to circumvent the purpose of the program.

In general, if premiums are paid in full, modifications will take effect the next consecutive two-month marketing period. Otherwise, modifications will not be recognized until the following open election period when all associated premiums from any previous calendar year of coverage have been paid in full.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for MPP-Dairy, dairy operations must submit form CCC-781 "Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers Production History Establishment" and form CCC-782 "Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers Contract and Annual Coverage Election" to their local FSA county office.

These forms are available at FSA county offices and online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Dairy operations can obtain more information on MPP-Dairy at FSA county offices and online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy. The MPP-Dairy webtool is available online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

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Information Access

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FSAfarm+ FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal

OVERVIEW

The 2014 Farm Bill mandated that USDA, upon request of the producer, electronically share with the producer (or representative/agent) in real time and without cost, the common land unit (CLU) data, related farm level data and other information of the producer's.

GOALS

With FSAfarm+, producers will have web access to view their stored FSA data, such as the CLU data, related farm data and other producer information. Other producer information would include address, contact information and participation demographics.

This functionality allows producers to view, export and print farm records data, including maps, from their own home through a public facing web portal. This will permit the producer to electronically share their data, which could include maps, with a crop insurance agent, from their own home or other remote locations.

BENEFITS

Direct access to farm-related information, including field boundaries and imagery, will allow operators and owners to view, print and/or export their farm information for sharing with other individuals or agencies.

In addition, operators and owners will be able to export their CLU field boundaries and share with crop insurance companies and other third parties that offer assistance with precision agriculture-related activities.

Future enhancements will allow producers to view existing program contracts, acreage reports and financial information.

ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS

The initial launch of FSAfarm+ will allow farm operators and farm owners to access their personal and farm information. Operators and owners that are business entities can be accessed by entity members.

A future release will allow access to agents or representatives of farm operators and owners, in addition to allowing other tenants access to information related to the land they lease.

ACCESSING THE CUSTOMER SELF-SERVICE PORTAL

FSAfarm+ can be accessed via a FSA Online Services link at www.fsa.usda.gov/online-services/farm-plus/ or directly from www.fsa.usda.gov/Farmplus.

AUTHORIZED ACCESS

Producers must obtain Level 2 eAuth access, which allows the user to enter USDA website portals and applications. These websites have been determined to have the need of higher security requirements or restrictions and the need of a verified identity for each user ID and profile.

Level 2 access can be obtained from the USDA eAuthentication website at www.eauth.usda.gov.

At this time, eAuthentication is only available to sole proprietors/individuals. Registration for representatives of a business or entity will be available at a future date.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on FSAfarm+, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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USDA Farm Service Agency 2016 County Committee Election

OVERVIEW

Every eligible agricultural producer should participate in Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees elections -- whether you are a beginning or longtime producer, historically disadvantaged producer, or whether you have a large or small operation -- because FSA county committees are your link with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Farmers and ranchers who are elected to serve on FSA county committees apply their judgment and knowledge to help with the decisions necessary to administer FSA programs in their counties, ensuring the needs of local producers are met. FSA county committees operate within official federal regulations and provide local input on:

- Income safety-net loans and payments, including setting county average yields for commodities;
- Conservation programs;
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities;
- Emergency programs; and
- Payment eligibility.

ELECTION PERIOD

June 15, 2016 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local FSA county office or obtain online at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Aug. 1, 2016 – Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.

Nov. 7, 2016 – Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 5, 2016 – Last day to return voted ballots to the FSA county office.

Jan. 1, 2017 – Newly elected county committee members take office.

WHO CAN VOTE

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting

age, but supervises and conducts the operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. Members of American Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote if voting requirements are met. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member" located at www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/county-committee-elections/index. Producers may contact their local FSA county office for more information. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

NOMINATIONS

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. In addition, organizations representing underserved (minority and women) farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates.

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. Nomination forms are filed in the FSA office that administers a producer's farm records and is available at the FSA county office, or online at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Nomination forms for the 2016 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA county office by close of business on Aug. 1, 2016.

DON'T MISS OUT ON VOTING

Ballots will be mailed to voters by Nov. 7, 2016, and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by Dec. 5, 2016. Eligible voters must contact their local FSA county office before the final date if they did not receive a ballot.

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

USDA issued uniform guidelines for county committee elections to help ensure that FSA county committees fairly represent the agricultural producers

FACT SHEET

FSA 2016 County Committee Election

June 2016

of a county or multi-county jurisdiction, especially underserved (minority and women) producers. Targeted underserved producers are African-Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders. In addition to minority and women producers, USDA strongly encourages beginning farmers to actively seek a position on a county committee. The guidelines govern the FSA county committee election process and are designed to increase participation of underserved (minorities and women).

The following are just some of the specifics of the guidelines:

- If no valid nominations are filed, the Secretary of Agriculture may nominate up to two individuals to be placed on the ballot.
- FSA county committees annually review local administrative area boundaries to ensure the fair representation of minority and women producers in their county or multi-county jurisdictions.
- FSA county offices locate and recruit eligible candidates identified as minority and women farmers and ranchers as potential nominees for the FSA county committee elections through outreach and publicity, including the development of partnerships with community-based organizations.

The guidelines are located at FSA County Committee Elections page at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

APPOINTED VOTING MEMBERS

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 provided Secretary Vilsack with authority to appoint targeted underserved committee members with voting privileges to serve on FSA county committees in county or multi-county jurisdictions that lack fair representation from those groups. The Secretarial appointees do not replace elected members, but join them as voting members on the committee. Individuals serving as non-voting minority advisors are encouraged to submit a nomination form. These forms are also accepted from community-based organizations representing targeted underserved producers. Targeted underserved voting members are appointed by the Secretary from the nominations received.

ROLE OF ADVISORS

In addition to elected or appointed members, FSA county committees may also include advisors. Advisors are appointed to county committees in counties or multi-county jurisdictions that have significant numbers of underserved (minority or women) producers, but lack such members on FSA county committees. Advisors play an important role by providing diverse viewpoints and by representing the interests of underserved (minorities and women) in decisions made by county committees. FSA state committees officially appoint advisors who are recommended by county committees or community-based organizations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about FSA county committees, visit a local FSA county office or the FSA county committee website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.asc.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- 3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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USDA Farm Service Agency 2016 County Committee Election

Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member

USDA encourages all eligible producers to vote or hold office as a county committee member, including beginning producers, longtime producers, small operations, large operations, women, African-Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders.

VOTER REQUIREMENTS

A person who meets the requirements in No. 1 or No. 2 below, as well as No. 3, is eligible to vote in the 2016 county committee elections:

1. Be of legal voting age and have an interest¹ in a farm or ranch as either:
 - An individual who meets one or more of the following:
 - o Is eligible to vote in one's own right.
 - o Is a partner of a general partnership.
 - o Is a member of a joint venture.
 - A non-individual who is the authorized representative of a legal entity, such as:
 - o A corporation, estate, trust, limited partnership or other business enterprise, excluding general partnerships and joint ventures.
 - o A state, political subdivision of a state or any state agency.

Only the designated representative may cast a vote for the entity.

OR

2. Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm.

AND

3. Participates or cooperates in any U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) program that is provided for by law.

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

INTERPRETATION OF VOTING ELIGIBILITY FOR SPOUSES IN COMMUNITY PROPERTY STATES

In community property states, the spouse of an eligible voter is also eligible to vote.

AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBAL LANDS

Members of American Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote in an FSA county committee election if the tribal member meets the voting requirements. For purposes of FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned, or held in trust by the United States for the tribe, even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land.

VOTING ELIGIBILITY

Local Administrative Areas

A county or multi-county jurisdiction served by an FSA county committee is divided into three to 11 local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA is represented by one member on the FSA county committee. A person may only vote in one LAA (the LAA in which he or she participates or cooperates in FSA programs or programs administered by FSA).

¹ i.e. have legal documentation of ownership or tenancy of a farm or ranch, with the farm or ranch in FSA records.

FSA 2016 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member

June 2016

Multiple Farm Interests in Same County or Area

Eligible voters who participate or cooperate in FSA programs on separate farms in more than one LAA in the same county or multi-county jurisdiction may only cast one ballot. Such voters must choose only one LAA in which they wish to cast their ballots.

Multi-County Jurisdictions

Eligible voters with separate farming interests in more than one county or in more than one FSA county committee jurisdiction (which may include more than one county) are eligible to vote in each election conducted for each jurisdiction's committee. Voting is limited to one LAA in which farming interests are located per each FSA county committee jurisdiction. Only one vote may be cast in each county or multi-county jurisdiction.

ELIGIBILITY TO HOLD OFFICE

To hold office as an FSA county committee member, a person must meet each of the basic eligibility requirements described below:

1. Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA.
2. Be eligible to vote in an FSA county committee election.
3. Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.²
4. A person must not have been:
 - Removed or disqualified from:
 - o FSA county committee membership or alternate membership, or
 - o FSA employment.
 - Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony.
 - Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

People uncertain about their eligibility to vote in the FSA county committee election should contact their local FSA office. Affirmation of eligibility

to vote must be determined in order for a vote to count in an election.

Any candidate may request that all voted ballots for an individual FSA county committee election be returned to the respective FSA state office in lieu of being returned to the FSA county office. This request must be in writing and submitted to the local FSA county executive director prior to the announced end of the nomination period.

During the election period, individuals not receiving a ballot in the mail may obtain a ballot directly from their FSA county office. The ballot must be cast on or before the election deadline.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about FSA county committees, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or visit a local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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