

January 2017



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## Connecticut FSA Newsletter

### Connecticut Farm Service Agency

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

**State Executive Director:**  
Bryan Hurlburt

**State Committee:**  
Vincent Malerba, Chair  
Theresa Freund, Member  
Stephen Jarmoc, Member  
Edward Kasheta, Member

### County Committee Election Results

County committee elections are over, the ballots are counted and the results are in. Each county office will be sending out a GovDelivery e-mail bulletin to highlight who your County Committee members are.

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity, and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues.

County committee members are a valuable asset because they are comprised of local producers who participate in FSA programs themselves and have a direct connection to farmers and ranchers in the community. All recently elected county committee members and alternates took office on January 1, 2017, and will be part of the committee for a three year term.

**Office Staff:**  
Ross Eddy, District Director

Randy Kleiner, Farm Loan  
Chief

Doris Ostrowski,  
Administrative Officer

Dawn Pindell,  
Outreach Specialist

**Find your local office at:**  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/ct](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ct)  
Click on County Offices on  
right side column.

For more information about county committees and the election process, please contact your local FSA Office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Connecticut Dairy Summit

On January 3, 2017, a group of 80 dairy farmers, agriculture agencies, USDA, state representatives and others met at the Legislative Building in Hartford to discuss the current challenging economic conditions for Connecticut's Dairy farmers. Presentations were given on the status of dairy and milk marketing, a panel of farmers talked about their farm operations and a question and answer period was held.

Bryan Hurlburt, State Executive Director, spoke about the Dairy Margin Protection Program and how farmers can look at options available to help protect their income.

Robert Wellington, Agri-Mark Inc. Economist, shared that Connecticut Dairy farmers produce 46 million gallons of milk per year. He noted that Connecticut consumers purchase two times this amount in fresh milk and four times this amount in cheese, ice cream and other dairy products.

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## USDA Farm Service Agency Offers Text Alerts to County Producers

*Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates*

Farmers and ranchers in Connecticut can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers who sign up will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Please contact your local FSA office regarding FSA's email news service or how to sign up for the new text message option. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your data plan. You may unsubscribe at any time.

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## USDA Climate Hub 'Energy Generation and Efficiency' Building Block

Through the Agricultural Act of 2014, USDA has several authorities that encourage the adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. The Energy Generation and Efficiency Building Block supports energy efficiency improvements in rural homes and on farm operations, for example, through EQIP's National On-Farm Energy Initiative. This Building Block also provides

opportunities to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from energy generation and use, for example, through the Rural Energy for America Program. To learn more about energy generation and efficiency opportunities from USDA click the following link:

[http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate\\_change/building\\_blocks/10\\_EnergyGenerationEfficiency.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/building_blocks/10_EnergyGenerationEfficiency.pdf)

For more information about the USDA Climate Hubs click here:

<http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.

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## Connecticut Producers Urged to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to review available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the crop deadline of March 15, 2017.

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.

USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) that allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for their operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price available, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers. Crops intended for grazing are not eligible for additional NAP coverage.

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.

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## Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery. If an on-site visit is not required producers are charged a reduced rate.

The measurement fee approved by the Connecticut State Committee in July 2016 is \$30 for the Basic Farm Fee and \$16 for the first hour with \$8 every 30 minutes after the first hour. Minimum of 1 hour. No charge for mileage; it is included in the basic farm rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty or loss of eligibility.

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## **USDA Announces Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2017**

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, began visiting FSA county offices starting Nov. 1, 2016, to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until **Aug. 1, 2017**.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. 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 grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## **USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators**

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).

Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers. The program, called EZ Guarantee Loans, uses a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to \$100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

USDA today also unveiled a new category of lenders that will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to \$50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to \$100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

USDA is providing a 90-day period for the public to review and comment on program improvements. To review program details, visit [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), reference RIN 0560-AI34 and follow the instructions to submit comments.

More than half of all FSA loans go to new farmers and more than a quarter to underserved borrowers. FSA also offers loans of up to \$5,000 to young farmers and ranchers through the Youth Loan Program. Loans are made to eligible youth to finance agricultural projects, with almost 9,000 young people now participating. More information about the available types of FSA farm loans can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans) or by contacting your local FSA office. To find your nearest office location, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

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## Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

### Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

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## January Loan Interest Rates

\* Farm Operating - Direct 2.375%                      \* Farm Ownership: Direct 3.625%

\* Farm Ownership: Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%

\* Farm Storage Facility Loan (7 years) 2.250%

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## Agriculture Meetings & Deadlines

**January 15th** - Crop Acreage Reporting deadline for Apples, Peaches. Accurate reporting of acreage is essential for Non-insured Disaster Assistance Program and Crop Insurance Programs. Visit your county FSA office.

**January 25th** - Solid Ground Farmer Trainings: Strengthening Our Farms Across Connecticut: BF 101: New Farmer Business Planning, 4 to 7 pm at Killingly Agricultural Education Center, Killingly, <http://newfarms.extension.uconn.edu/>

**January 28th** - 2017 Beekeeping School at CT Agriculture Experiment Station, New Haven, 9 to 3:30, [www.ctbees.org/bee-school](http://www.ctbees.org/bee-school)

**February 14th** - Vegetable Crop Pests You Need to Know, 9 to 12:30 at Windham County Extension, Brooklyn, [Sharon.narotsky@uconn.edu](mailto:Sharon.narotsky@uconn.edu)

**February 15th** - Fruit Production and Small Scale Farming, Common Ground High School, New Haven, 4 to 7 pm

**February 21st** - Annual Meeting for Growing Wrapper Tobacco in the Connecticut River Valley, February 21st, 9 to 1 at Scout Hall, Windsor. Snow date is February 22nd if East Windsor schools are closed on the 21st.

**March 15th** - Deadline to enroll in Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for annual crops. Visit your county FSA office.

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