

November 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Connecticut FSA Newsletter

Connecticut Farm Service Agency

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State Executive Director:

Clark Chapin

State Committee:

Vincent Malerba, Chair

Clark Chapin New State Executive Director

Clark Chapin has been a longtime advocate for Connecticut agriculture and farmland protection. As a state legislator for 16 years, Chapin earned the respect of his colleagues as well as Connecticut's farming community for being a leader in agricultural policy. Since leaving the legislature in January 2017, Chapin has continued to work on agricultural viability issues and farmland protection efforts as Project Director for Working Lands Alliance, a project of American Farmland Trust.

Chapin said "I'm honored to serve in this new position. I've worked with an impressive FSA staff so far. They are clearly committed and dedicated to what they do. I look forward to continue to work with farmers to keep agriculture strong in the state of Connecticut."

Theresa Freund, Member

Stephen Jarmoc, Member

Edward Kasheta, Member

Office Staff:

Doris Ostrowski,
Administrative Officer

Ross Eddy, District Director

Sarah Fournier,
Program Specialist

Dawn Pindell,
Outreach Specialist

Rebecca Palmer,
Administrative Specialist

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2017 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on November 6, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is December 4, 2017.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers 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 and ranchers 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.

County Office Open Houses

Connecticut County Offices are holding open houses for you to meet the candidates, learn about programs, loans, farm storage options, price loss support for crops, connect with SCORE free mentoring, and more. Visit your local office:

November 8: 11 to 4 at the Danielson USDA Service Center, 71 Westcott Road, Danielson; 860-412-5275

November 14: 2:30 to 4:30 at the Norwich USDA Service Center, 238 West Town Street, Norwich; 860-319-8068

November 14: 5 to 7 at the Wallingford USDA Service Center, 97 Barnes Road, Wallingford; 203-303-5527

November 20: 10 to 2 at the Torrington USDA Service Center, 1185 New Litchfield Street, Torrington; 860-618-4509

November 29: 1 to 3 at the Windsor USDA Service Center, 100 Northfield Drive, FL 4, Windsor; 860-902-5358

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current

operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment, and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program, or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$300,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation;
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses;
- The development of problem situations;
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

If a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing options.

Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

Farm Loan & FSFL Interest Rates

- * Farm Operating - Direct 2.75%
- Farm Ownership - Direct 3.625%
- Farm Ownership: Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer 1.50%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan (3 years) 1.625%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan (7 years) 2.125%
- Farm Storage Facility Loan (10 years) 2.375%

Census of Agriculture Countdown Begins for America's Farmers and Ranchers

America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them.

The Census of Agriculture highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and other topics. The 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that over three million farmers operated more than two million farms, spanning over 914 million acres. This was a four percent decrease in the number of U.S. farms from the previous census in 2007. However, agriculture sales, income, and expenses increased between 2007 and 2012. This telling information and thousands of other agriculture statistics are a direct result of responses to the Census of Agriculture.

Producers can visit www.agcensus.usda.gov for information. NASS defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

Agriculture Meetings & Deadlines

November 15 - Acreage Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage crops.

November 15 - Working Lands Alliance Annual Meeting, 12 to 2; Old Judiciary Room (3rd Floor), State Capitol; \$20 includes lunch; wla@farmland.org

November 16 - Would You Like to Produce Organic Vegetables? UCON Urban Agriculture Course weekly on Thursdays, 6 to 8 pm starting Nov. 16; Fee, Classes will be in English and Spanish; Contact Dr. German Cutz at 203-207-8440 or German.Cutz@uconn.edu; for course scholarships contact communitygardens@gogvi.org

November 17 - Connecticut Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, 8 to 9; Fantasia, North Haven, www.cfba.org

November 20 - NAP Deadline for perennial and orchard crops, including strawberries, forage, asparagus, cane berries, grapes

November 27 - Healthy Soils = Healthy Food, 8:30 to 3; Lebanon Fire Safety Complex, 23 Goshen Hill Road, Lebanon; Amanda at 860-345-3977 or ajohnson@ctrctd.org

November 28 - CT Pomological Society Annual Meeting, 8 am, Middletown Elks Lodge, Mary at 860-486-6449 or mary.concklin@uconn.edu

November 29 - The Business of Farming: How USDA & SCORE can Help; 4 to 6; Easton Public Library, 691 Morehouse Road, Easton, CT; Aimee at 860-618-4510; aimee.fusco@ct.usda.gov

December 4 - Return ballots for COC Elections to your local County Office. Each year one of three or more Local Administrative Areas holds elections in your county. You will not be voting every year due to this rotation. Contact your local County office for information. www.fsa.usda.gov/ct

December 6 - New Farm Succession School, all day, at CT Farm Bureau, Wethersfield; Fee; www.landforgood.org/events

December 9 - Greenhouse Vegetable Production in Hydroponic & Soiless Systems; 9:30 to 4; UConn Floriculture Greenhouse, Storrs; rosa.raudale@uconn.edu

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).