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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

**GovDelivery**

- [Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers](#)
- [Farm Loan & FSFL Interest Rates](#)
- [Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators](#)
- [Agriculture Meetings & Deadlines](#)
- [Payments to Deceased Producers](#)

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## Connecticut FSA Newsletter

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Connecticut Farm Service  
Agency

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**Acting State Executive  
Director:**

Doris Ostrowski

**State Committee:**

Vincent Malerba, Chair

### 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 the purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Theresa Freund, Member

Stephen Jarmoc, Member

Edward Kasheta, Member

**Office Staff:**

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

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## Farm Loan & FSFL Interest Rates

\* Farm Operating - Direct 2.75%

• Farm Ownership - Direct 3.75%

• Farm Ownership: Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer 1.50%

• Farm Storage Facility Loan (3 years) 1.50%

• Farm Storage Facility Loan (7 years) 2.00%

Farm Storage Facility Loan (10 years) 2.125%

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## Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of “idle” and “fallow.”

### Reporting Cover Crops:

FSA made changes to the types of cover crops. Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- **Cereals and other grasses** - Any cover crop that is classified as a grass plant or cereal grain, and would include, but not be limited to, the following cover crops: cereal rye, wheat, barley, oats, black oats, triticale, annual ryegrass, pearl millet, foxtail millet (also called German, Italian or Hungarian millet), sorghum sudan grass, sorghum and other millets and grasses.
- **Legumes** - Any cover crop that is classified as a legume, including, but not limited to, clovers, vetches, peas, sun hemp, cowpeas, lentils and other legumes.
- **Brassicas and other broadleaves** - Any cover crop that is classified as a non-legume broadleaf, including, but not limited to, Brassicas such as radishes, turnips, canola, rapeseed, oilseed rape, and mustards, as well as other broadleaf plants such as phacelia, flax, sunflower, buckwheat, and safflower.

- **Mixtures** - Mixes of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time, for example, oats and radishes.

If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

#### **Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:**

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 days to change the intended use. Producer share interest changes alone will not allow for revisions to intended use after the acreage reporting date. The revision must be performed by either the acreage reporting date or within 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land, or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

#### **Acreage Reports:**

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

#### **Reporting Grazing Allotments:**

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. Producers will use form "FSA-578" to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the "Reporting Unit" field. The local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

#### **Definitions of Terms**

FSA defines "idle" as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row. For example, the balance of a field that could not be planted due to moisture or a turn area that is not planted would be reported as idle.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season. Resting the ground in this manner allows it to recover its fertility and conserve moisture for crop production in the next growing season.

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## **Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but**

**are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

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

*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.

A new category of lenders 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.

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.

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## **Agriculture Meetings & Deadlines**

**October 27** - Crop Insurance Workshop for Farmers, 10:00 to 12:00 at the Litchfield County Extension Center, 843 University Drive, Torrington. Pre-registration required. Contact: [Mackenzie.white@uconn.edu](mailto:Mackenzie.white@uconn.edu) or 860-875-3331

**October 28** - Grazing Cattle When the Rain Doesn't Fall - Farm Tour 9:30 at Firefly Farms LLC in Stonington; then 11:00 am at JW Beef, Stonington. RSVP Joyce Meader at 860-774-9600

**October 28** - Oakridge Dairy Public Farm Tour, 1:00 to 5:00, at 11 Jobs Hill Road, Ellington; [www.oakridgedairy.com](http://www.oakridgedairy.com)

**October 31** - Deadline to apply for Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP); Contact your county office. <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index>

**November 1** - CAHNR Career Night, Wilbur Cross Building, UConn, 5:30 to 7:30; info: Pam Chudzik at 888-822-5861

**November 4** - Widening the Welcome: The Future of Agriculture for Communities of Color; The 224 Ecospace, Hartford, CT; 8:30 to 1:00; <https://www.farmtoinstitution.org/event/widening-welcome-future-farming-communities-color>

**November 15** - Acreage Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage crops.

**November 20** - NAP Deadline for Orchard crops, strawberries, forage, asparagus, cane berries, grapes

"Economic Impacts of Connecticut's Agricultural Industry, Update 2015" from UConn College of Agriculture Health and Natural Resources at: [http://www.are.uconn.edu/news\\_65\\_1329746848.pdf](http://www.are.uconn.edu/news_65_1329746848.pdf)

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## Payments to Deceased Producers

In order to claim a Farm Service Agency (FSA) payment on behalf of a deceased producer, all program conditions for the payment must have been met before the applicable producer's date of death.

If a producer earned a FSA payment prior to becoming deceased, the following is the order of precedence of the representatives of the producer:

- administrator or executor of the estate
- the surviving spouse
- surviving sons and daughters, including adopted children
- surviving father and mother
- surviving brothers and sisters
- heirs of the deceased person who would be entitled to payment according to the State law

In order for FSA to release the payment, the legal representative of the deceased producer must file a form FSA-325 to claim the payment for themselves or an estate. The county office will verify and determine that the application, contract, loan agreement, or other similar form requesting payment issuance was signed by the applicable deadline for such form, by the deceased or a person legally authorized to act on their behalf at that time of application.

If the application, contract, or loan agreement form was signed by someone other than the participant who is deceased FSA will determine whether the person submitting the form has the legal authority to submit the form to compel FSA to pay the deceased participant.

Payments will be issued to the respective representative's name using the deceased program participant's tax identification number. Payments made to representatives are subject to offset regulations for debts owed by the deceased.

FSA is not responsible for advising persons in obtaining legal advice on how to obtain program benefits that may be due to a participant who has died, disappeared, or who has been declared incompetent.

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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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