



NEWSLETTER



October 2016

Rhode Island Service Agency

60 Quaker Lane Suite 62
Warwick RI 02886

www.fsa.usda.gov/ri

State Committee:

Judith Carvalho,
Anthony Donatelli Jr.
Gilbert Rathbun Jr.
Meeting October 11th.

State Executive Director:

George Goulart Jr.

Rhode Island County FSA Office:

401-828-3120 Option 2

County Committee:

Doreen Pezza
Victor Hoogendoorn
Joseph Silveira
Kim Coulter

Meeting October 5th.

Acting County Executive Director:

Ingrid Fratantuono

Farm Loan Team:

401-828-3120 Option 3.

Farm Loan Manager:

Roxanne S. Boisse

Message from the Rhode Island State Executive Director

Disaster Assistance Programs are available for producers who have suffered losses due to the recent Rhode Island Disaster Declarations that have been declared in the state. Please visit our [Rhode Island FSA Homepage](#) to view the current Rhode Island disaster declarations. If you have any questions about these programs or the disaster declarations contact our office.

USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments to Farmers in Response to 2015 Market Downturn

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that beginning today, many of the 1.7 million farms that enrolled in either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs will receive safety-net payments due to market downturns during the 2015 crop year.

This fall, USDA will be making more than \$7 billion in payments under the ARC-County and PLC programs to assist participating producers, which will account for over 10 percent of USDA's projected 2016 net farm income. These payments will help provide reassurance to America's farm families, who are standing strong against low commodity prices compounded by unfavorable growing conditions in many parts of the country.

Unlike the old direct payment program, which issued payments during both weak and strong market conditions, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized the ARC-PLC safety net to trigger and provide financial assistance only when decreases in revenues or crop prices, respectively, occur. The ARC and PLC programs primarily allow producers to continue to produce for the market by making payments on a percentage of historical base production, limiting the impact on production decisions.

Nationwide, producers enrolled 96 percent of soybean base acres, 91 percent of corn base acres and 66 percent of wheat base acres in the ARC-County coverage option. Producers enrolled 99 percent of long grain rice and peanut base acres and 94 percent of medium grain rice base acres in the PLC option. Overall, 76 percent of participating farm base acres are enrolled in ARC-County, 23 percent in PLC and one percent in ARC-Individual. For other program information including frequently asked questions, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Payments are made to producers who enrolled base acres of barley, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, oats, peanuts, dry peas, soybeans, wheat and canola. In the upcoming months, payments will be announced after marketing year average prices are published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for the remaining covered commodities. These include long and medium grain rice (except for temperate Japonica rice), which will be announced in November, remaining oilseeds and chickpeas, which will be announced in December, and temperate Japonica rice, which will be announced in early February 2017. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

The Budget Control Act of 2011, passed by Congress, requires USDA to reduce 2015 ARC and PLC payments by 6.8 percent. For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips

USDA offers programs to help producers recover from disasters; FEMA can help you prepare ahead of time. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently launched a free mobile app that will instruct the public on what to do before, during and after emergencies. The app is available for download for Apple, Android and Blackberry mobile devices.

Download the app to:

- Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations
- Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters and customize your emergency checklist
- Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone)
- Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders.

For more information about the FEMA app, visit fema.gov/mobile-app. To download the FEMA app from the Apple Store visit <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8>. To download the FEMA app on Google Play for Android visit: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en>.

FSAfarm+, FSA's Customer Self-Service Portal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has launched a new tool to provide farmers and ranchers with remote access to their personal farm information using their home computers. Farmers and ranchers can now view, print or export their personal farm data all without visiting an FSA county office.

The program, known as FSAfarm+, provides you with secure access to view your personal FSA data, such as base and yields, Conservation Reserve Program data, other conservation program acreage, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation status information, field boundaries, farm imagery, name and address details, contact information and membership interest and shares in the operation. This data will be available in real time, at no cost to the producer and allow operators and owners to export and print farm records, including maps. Producers also can electronically share their data with a crop insurance agent from their own personal computer.

Farm operators and owners first will need "Level 2 eAuthentication" to access the webportal. This level of security ensures that personal information is protected for each user. Level 2 access can be obtained by going to www.eauth.usda.gov, completing the required information and then visiting your local FSA office to finalize access.

For more information on FSAfarm+, the customer self-service portal, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, click <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Rhode Island Producers May be Eligible for Emergency Conservation Program Assistance

The drought has caused severe damage in Rhode Island. Farms suffering severe damage may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Rhode Island Farm Service Agency (FSA)

For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to
- productive agricultural use
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- affect the productive capacity of the farmland
- impair or endanger the land

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. No producer is eligible for more than \$200,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence. The following types of measures may be eligible:

- removing debris from farmland
- grading, shaping, or releveling severely damaged farmland
- restoring permanent fences
- restoring conservation structures and other similar installations
- Producers who have suffered a loss from a natural disaster may contact the Rhode Island FSA County Office and request assistance.

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all of the following are met:

- an application for cost-share assistance has been filed
- the local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an
- Onsite inspection of the damaged area
- the Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), has made a needs determination, which may include cubic yards of
- earthmoving, etc., required for rehabilitation

For more information about ECP, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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.

Rhode Island is Eligible for Emergency Loans

The entire state of Rhode Island has now been declared a primary/contiguous disaster due to drought using the streamlined Secretarial Disaster Designation process. Under these designations, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

The streamlined disaster designation process issues a drought disaster declaration when a county has experienced a drought intensity value of at least a D2 (severe drought) level for eight consecutive weeks based on the U.S. Drought Monitor during the crop year.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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).