

May 2016



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## Arkansas FSA Newsletter

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### Arkansas Farm Service Agency

700 W. Capitol Avenue  
Room 3416  
Little Rock, AR 72201

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

#### State Committee:

Sr. Chair Theodore Eldridge Sr.  
Member, Eric Anderson  
Member, Mike Freeze  
Member, Johnny Loftin  
Member, Richard Simmons

#### State Executive Director:

Linda Newkirk

#### Administrative Officer:

Sharon Baker

#### Division Chiefs:

Anita Wilson, Farm Programs  
James Culpepper, Farm Loans

### A message from the State Executive Director

Congratulations to John Frank Pendergrass, former Arkansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee member, who was inducted into the Agriculture Hall of Fame on March 4, 2016.

The following is an excerpt from a Farm Bureau news release announcing Pendergrass' selection:

*Pendergrass was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to serve on the Arkansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee formerly known as the Agriculture Stabilization Conservation Service (ASCS) in 1977. Pendergrass is a fifth-generation cattle rancher who has become known as an innovator in the stocker and feeder cattle business. As president of Pendergrass Cattle Company in Charleston, Pendergrass is still active on the Pendergrass Ranch in Franklin County, which sits on land his great, great-grandfather first settled after the Civil War. He took over operations of Pendergrass Cattle from his father in 1972 and has built one of the top beef herds in the state. He was one of the first in the state to implement a program of preconditioning weaned calves and this, along with his continued focus on innovation and efficiency and dedication to animal care, helped earn him recognition as 2008 Arkansas Stocker of the Year by the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association and the 2008 National Stocker Award from Beef magazine, representative of the top stocker herd in the United States.*

*Pendergrass graduated from County Line High School in Franklin County in 1954 and he attended both the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. As a young man, he was a member of 4-H and Future Farmers of America, and has continued to be involved in industry and community organizations ever since.*

*Pendergrass is a member of the National Beef Association, where he served as chairman of the political action committee and on the food and safety committee, foreign trade committee and membership committee. He has also served as a member and past president of the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association and has served as a member of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association state board of directors. His commitment to improving rural life in Arkansas is illustrated by his long service on the Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative board of directors,*

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

*which he joined in 1962. He served as chairman of that board twice and is also a member of the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation board.*

To view the full Farm Bureau news release, visit: <http://www.arfb.com/media-communications/pressreleases/2016/john-frank-pendergrass-to-be-inducted-into-agriculture-hall-of-fame/>.

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## Double - Cropping

Each year, state committees will review and approve or disapprove county committee recommended changes or additions to specific combinations of crops.

Double-cropping is approved when the two specific crops have the capability to be planted and carried to maturity for the intended use, as reported by the producer, on the same acreage within a crop year under normal growing conditions. The specific combination of crops recommended by the county committee must be approved by the state committee.

Double-cropping is approved in Arkansas on a county-by-county basis. Contact your local FSA Office for a list of approved double-cropping combinations for your county.

A crop following a cover crop terminated according to termination guidelines is approved double cropping and these combinations do not have to be approved by the state committee.

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## USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

*Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly*

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also

be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport) or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Establishes New Partnerships to Link Underserved Farmers to FSA Programs

*Minority, Women, New and Beginning, Military Veteran and Urban Producers to Receive Training and Information on Agency Services*

USDA announced cooperative agreements with 55 partners to educate farmers and other producers that have been underserved by USDA programs historically about Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs that provide financial, disaster or technical support. Nearly \$2.5 million will go to nonprofits, associations, universities, and foundations that will provide training and information on agricultural best practices, local networking opportunities, and more.

FSA, which solicited applications last fall, received nearly 100 proposals that requested over \$9 million in funding. Cooperative agreements, encompassing more than 28 states, will be between \$20,000 and \$75,000 each and several involve multi-state or national efforts. A list of awardees can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach).

FSA also announced today that it is accepting proposals for consideration in the second evaluation period. Applications are due no later than July 11, 2016. Projects not selected during the first evaluation period will be reconsidered during the second period. Additional information on the funding solicitation and the related FSA programs can be found at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) using reference number USDA-FSA-CA-2016-001. For nonprofits and public institutions of higher education that are considering participation, a recording of the online informational session held with stakeholders is posted on the web at [www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach).

USDA is also helping producers find an entry into farming through urban agriculture opportunities and the increasing consumer demand for locally-produced items. Under this Administration, USDA has invested more than \$1 billion in over 40,000 local and regional food businesses and infrastructure projects. USDA is committed to helping farmers, ranchers, and businesses access the growing market for local and regional foods, which was valued at \$12 billion in 2014 according to industry estimates. More information on how USDA investments are connecting producers with consumers and expanding rural economic opportunities is available in [Chapter IV](#) of [USDA Results on Medium](#).

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## Changing Administrative Counties

Producers who wish to transfer their farm records to a different administrative county for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 must file a request no later than August 1, 2016. Restrictions do apply when transferring to an office other than the county in which the land is physically located. Contact your local FSA office for more information.

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## Fire Management on CRP Acres

Landowners who participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are responsible for fire management on their CRP acreage. Fireguard technical practices should be outlined in the Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO).

Landowners must complete the necessary management activities outside of the Primary Nesting Season. In Arkansas, the Primary Nesting Season is April 1 through July 15 for grazing benefits and April 1 through July 15 for all other activities. The goal is to suppress the amount of fuel in the event of a wildfire while still promoting the diversity of the conservation cover.

FSA encourages producers to be proactive in preventing the spread of wildfire. Fire management includes installing firebreaks, which should be included in the contract support document and installed according to NRCS firebreak standards.

Barren firebreaks will only be allowed in high risk areas, such as transportation corridors, rural communities, and adjacent farmsteads. A conservationist must certify that there will not be an erosion hazard from the barren firebreak. If erosion becomes a problem, remedial action will be taken.

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## 2016 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific deadlines.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the applicable acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the applicable dates or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA office.

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## Filing a Notice of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office

by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, within the required 15 calendar days.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

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## **Borrower Training**

Borrower training is available for all Farm Service Agency customers. This training is required for all direct loan applicants, unless the applicant has a waiver issued by the agency.

Borrower training includes instruction in production and financial management. The purpose is to help the applicant develop and improve skills that are necessary to successfully operate a farm and build equity in the operation. It aims to help the producer become financially successful. Borrower training is provided, for a fee, by agency approved vendors. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Manager for a list of approved vendors.

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## **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.

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## May Rates and Dates

Selected Interest Rates for May 2016	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.375%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.375%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.50%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	1.625%
Commodity Loans 1996- Present	1.625%

Dates to Remember	
5/31/2016	Final Marketing Assistance Loan Availability Date for: Rice, Cotton, Grain Sorghum, Corn, Soybeans
6/15/16 – 8/1/16	County Committee (COC) election nomination period
8/1/2016	2016 ARC/PLC Enrollment Deadline
8/1/2016	Final date to request farm reconstitutions and transfers

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting/function/event should contact their local County Executive Director or Sharon Baker at 501-301-3014, (TDD# or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339), and ([Sharon.baker@ar.usda.gov](mailto:Sharon.baker@ar.usda.gov)). approximately 1 week before the event occurs.

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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).