

June 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Arkansas State FSA Newsletter

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### State Farm Service Agency

700 West Capitol, Room 3416  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201  
Phone: 501-301-3000  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/ar](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ar)

#### State Committee:

Chairman: Ron Chastain

Members: Gary Churchill,  
Sarah Dunklin, Nathan Reed,  
& Vivian Wright

#### State Committee Meeting:

July 25-26, 2018

#### State Executive Director:

David Curtis

### Message from the SED

It is time for the 2018 FSA county committee election process. County committees are an important part of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They work to make FSA farm programs serve the needs of local producers. To be eligible to serve on a county committee, producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program and reside in the area where the election is being held. Local FSA offices will accept nominations for county committee members beginning June 15, 2018.

I would like to encourage all eligible producers to visit their local FSA office to find out how to get involved in their county's election.

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### Upcoming Events and Workshops

#### Upcoming Events and Workshops

The USDA Arkansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to educating producers on available programs and loans. FSA

**Administrative Officer:**  
Sharon Baker

representatives will be available at the following workshops and conferences.

**Farm Programs:**  
Terri McManus

**Farm Loan Programs:**  
James Culpepper

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county. To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/ar](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ar)

### **Baptist Health Farmers Market**

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct four workshops in the upcoming months. The workshops will include Farm Service Agency's role in the farming community, County Committee Elections, Farm Program and Farm Loan Program information. **The workshops will be held June 19th, June 26th, July 10th, and July 17th from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00p.m.** The workshops will be held at the Baptist Health Farmers Market, Ground Level Parking Deck, [9601 Baptist Health Dr, Little Rock, AR 72205](http://www.baptisthealth.com).

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## **Farm Safety**

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand — it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped.

The mechanical operation of grain handling equipment also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

FSA wants all farmers to have a productive crop year and that begins with putting safety first.

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## **USDA Partners with Texas A&M to Help Veterans Seeking Agriculture Loans and Careers**

USDA announced a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas A&M's AgriLife Extension Service to help military veterans obtain loans and pursue careers as farmers and ranchers. Secretary Perdue joined local dignitaries, members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and community leaders at the Dallas Farmers Market to unveil the new pilot program.

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) (FSA) is collaborating with AgriLife Extension Service on the pilot, which is part of the Texas A&M Battleground to Breaking Ground project. The program makes it easier for veterans to meet federal requirements to get FSA direct [farm ownership](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) loans, which can help provide access to land and capital.

The pilot program, which will include 15 to 18 veterans, will roll out in three phases: an introductory workshop, a business planning curriculum, and a production curriculum over a period of 12 to 18 months.

Typically, loan applicants must participate in the business operations of a farm for at least three years during a 10-year period. However, as part of this pilot program, participants can combine the certificate they receive with their military leadership or management experience to satisfy this requirement. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, approximately 45 percent of armed service members are from rural America.

Pilot program applications will be accepted from interested veterans between June 15 and July 20, 2018, until 11 p.m. central standard time, [apply here](#). For more information about USDA programs, visit [newfarmers.usda.gov/veterans](http://newfarmers.usda.gov/veterans) or <https://www.farmers.gov>.

To learn about other ways USDA is supporting veterans, visit <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/initiatives/veterans>, and watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAeLqXHUU3w>.

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## USDA Resumes Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment

*One-Year Extension Available to Holders of Many Expiring Contracts through Continuous Signup*

As part of a 33-year effort to protect sensitive lands and improve water quality and wildlife habitat on private lands, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will resume accepting applications for the voluntary [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP). Eligible farmers, ranchers, and private landowners can sign up at their local [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) office between June 4 and Aug. 17, 2018.

FSA stopped accepting applications last fall for the CRP continuous signup (excluding applications for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP grasslands). This pause allowed USDA to review available acres and avoid exceeding the 24 million-acre CRP cap set by the 2014 Farm Bill. New limited practice availability and short sign up period helps ensure that landowners with the most sensitive acreage will enroll in the program and avoid unintended competition with new and beginning farmers seeking leases. CRP enrollment currently is about 22.7 million acres.

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## 2018 Signup for CRP

For this year's signup, limited priority practices are available for continuous enrollment. They include grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others. [View a full list of practices](#).

FSA will use updated soil rental rates to make annual rental payments, reflecting current values. It will not offer incentive payments as part of the new signup.

USDA will not open a general signup this year, however, a one-year extension will be offered to existing CRP participants with expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less. Producers eligible for an extension will receive a letter with more information.

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## USDA Reopens Application Period for Producers Recovering from Cattle Loss, Other Disasters

*Signup Begins June 4 for Livestock Indemnity Program and Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin accepting disaster assistance program applications on June 4 from agricultural producers who suffered livestock, honeybees, farm-raised fish and other losses due to natural disasters.

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) is reopening the application period for two disaster assistance programs in response to statutory changes made by Congress earlier this year.

Beginning June 4, FSA will accept new applications for losses for calendar year 2017 or 2018 filed under the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) or [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP). Producers who already submitted applications and received decisions on their applications for these years do not need to file again, but they can reapply if they have additional losses or their application was disapproved because it was filed late.

In February, Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, which made several changes to these two disaster programs, including:

- Removing ELAP's \$20 million fiscal year funding cap, enabling FSA to pay producers' 2017 applications in full and their 2018 applications as soon as they are approved.
- Removing the per-person and legal entity annual program payment limitation of \$125,000 for LIP for 2017 and future years. (The income limitation applies as it did before, meaning producers with an adjusted gross income of more than \$900,000 are not eligible.)
- Changing LIP to allow producers to receive a payment for injured livestock that are sold for a reduced price due to an eligible event. Previously, the program only covered financial loss for livestock death above normal mortality.

Producers interested in LIP or ELAP should contact their [local USDA service center](#). To apply, producers will need to provide verifiable and reliable production records and other information about their operation.

Drought, wildfires and other disasters continue to impact farmers and ranchers, and LIP and ELAP are two of many programs available through USDA to help producers recover. Learn more at <https://www.usda.gov/disaster>.

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## 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.

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## Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

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## USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

*Producers, Including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, Have a New Option to Gain Access to Land*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans), or contact your local FSA office.

## Rates and Dates

		Dates to Remember	
		Date	Event
<b>Selected Interest Rates for June 2018</b>		6/9/18	Final date to file prevented planting for rice& peanuts
		6/15/18	COC Election Nomination Period Begins
		6/30/18	Final date to file prevented planting for soybeans not following another crop
		7/10/18	Final date to file prevented planting for soybeans following another crop
		7/15/18	Final date to report 2018 spring seeded crops. (NAP crops check with local county office for dates)
		8/1/18	Last day to file COC Election Nomination Forms
		11/5/18	COC Election Ballots mailed to eligible voters
		12/3/18	Last day to return Voted COC Election Ballots to USDA Service Center
		1/1/19	Newly elected COC members take office
		90-Day Treasury Bill	1.750
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.625		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.000		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500		
Emergency Loans	3.750		
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	3.000		
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years)	2.875		
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	3.250		

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).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations 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)).