

September 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Arkansas FSA Newsletter

Arkansas Farm Service Agency

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Phone: 501-301-3000
www.fsa.usda.gov/ar

State Committee:

Chairman: Ron Chastain

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

State Executive Director:

David Curtis

Administrative Officer:

Sharon Baker

Message from the SED

I would like to say thanks to all the employees that attended the Arkansas FSA Statewide Employee Training meeting last month. Thank you to NRCS, County Committee Members, and the temporaries that provided support to keep the offices open during this time. Also, I would like to thank the farmers for their understanding and hope that no one was inconvenienced by the absence of employees. It's been 14 years since our last statewide meeting, so we were long overdue. We hope to make this an annual event.

Keep in mind that for farms that **Do Not** have generic (cotton) base acres the Agricultural Risk Coverage Price Loss Coverage Program (ARC/PLC), enrollment deadline is **September 28, 2018**.

Upcoming Events and Workshops

The USDA Arkansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to educating producers on available programs and loans. FSA representatives will be available at the following workshops and

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

conferences. Producers interested in attending these conferences/workshops should follow the registration or RSVP instructions listed below.

September 27th – University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) Agriculture Field Day

UAPB is hosting an Agriculture Field Day at the Pearlie S. Reed/Robert L. Cole Small Farm Outreach Wetlands and Water Management Center, on the UAPB Farm at Lonoke, Arkansas. Registration begins at 7:30am, welcoming remarks at 8:30am, and the tours begin at 9am. **FSA Representatives will be present to address any inquiries regarding FSA Program.** The Small Farm Outreach Wetlands and Water Management Center is located at 235 O-Cain Road, off Hwy 31, about 2.8 miles from the I-40 Lonoke Exit 175. Lunch will be served.

October 15th - Landowner Field Day

UAPB in collaboration with Prairie View A&M University and SW Research and Extension Center will host a Landowner's Field Day. The Southwest Research and Extension Center Tour will begin at 1:00 P.M. The tour will involve Vegetable and Forestry Research Projects. **FSA Representatives will be present to address any inquiries regarding Farm Programs and Farm Loan Programs.** Please contact Kandi Williams (870-571-9428) for additional information.

October 25th & 26th - 2018 ALCDC Annual Youth Day and Conference

Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation is hosting their 2018 Annual Youth Day and Conference on the ALCDC campus located at 484 Floyd Brown Drive in Fargo. **FSA will present on Farm Programs and Farm Loan Programs.** The Annual Youth Day will be held Thursday, Oct. 25, 2018, and the Annual Conference will be held Friday, Oct. 26, 2018. Both are free to attend, and lunch will be served. Registration and Program start times will be forthcoming.

UAPB to Offer Borrower Training for FSA Borrowers

The Small Farm Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) will be conducting financial management and production training which will satisfy the Borrower Training requirements for many new or beginning Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrowers.

The first course is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Dec. 7-8, in the conference room of the UAPB S.J. Parker Agricultural Research Center. The course gets underway at 8:00 a.m. each day and ends at 5:00 p.m. Producers will undergo two days of intensive education consisting of 12 hours of farm business training and six hours of production, crop or livestock training.

Producers will have required homework and will be tested at the end of the training. They will receive a score of 1 to 3. A score of 1 or 2 is needed to pass the course. The score will be sent to the FSA state office and to the borrower's local FSA loan officer. Most producers have two years from receipt of their first FSA loan to complete the Borrower Training.

The cost for the training is \$300 per person. Funds will go to a UAPB Small Farm Program Borrower Training Fund. Fees will be collected on the first day of the course. Only a cashier's check or money order, made payable to UAPB Small Farm Program, will be accepted

The S.J. Parker Agricultural Research Center is located at 2101 Oliver Road in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Those interested in taking the course should contact the Small Farm Program at (870) 575-7226 or 7246.

Contact your local FSA office for additional online training options.

Elections for the 2018 County Committee

Elections for USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) County Committees are underway.

It is important that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the USDA. County committee members are a critical component of FSA operations. Committees should be comprised of members who reflect the diversity of producers involved in production agriculture.

County committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on November 5, 2018. The last day to return completed ballots to the Name County USDA service center is December 3, 2018.

For more information on eligibility to serve on FSA county committees, visit:

www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

USDA Launches Trade Mitigation Programs

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA [provided details in August](#) of the programs to be employed. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) to provide payments to corn, cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, and wheat producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted. USDA is currently working to determine how to address market disruptions for producers of almonds and sweet cherries.

The sign-up period for MFP is now open and runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at www.farmers.gov/mfp. MFP provides payments to cotton, corn, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, and wheat producers who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA.

Market Facilitation Program

Commodity	Est. Initial Payment**	Initial Payment Rate (in \$1,000s)
Cotton	\$0.06/lb.	\$276,900
Corn	\$0.01/bu.	\$96,000
Dairy (milk)	\$0.12/cwt.	\$127,400
Pork (hogs)	\$8.00/head	\$290,300
Soybeans	\$1.65/bu.	\$3,629,700
Sorghum	\$0.86/bu.	\$156,800
Wheat	\$0.14/bu.	\$119,200
Total		\$4,696,300

**Initial payment rate on 50% of production

MFP payments are limited to a combined \$125,000 for corn, cotton, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat capped per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined \$125,000 for dairy and hog producers. Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than \$900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

For more further information or to locate and contact local FSA offices, interested producers can visit www.farmers.gov

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.

Maintaining the Quality of Farm-Stored Loan Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and Farm Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the

contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Arkansas is April 1st through July 15th. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

Rates and Dates

Selected Interest Rates for September 2018			
90-Day Treasury Bill	2.000		
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.750		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.000		
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500	Dates to Remember	
Emergency Loans	3.750	11/5/18	COC Election Ballots mailed to eligible voters
Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years)	2.750	12/3/18	Last day to return Voted COC Election Ballots to USDA Service Center
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	2.875		
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	3.375	1/1/19	Newly elected COC members take office

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).

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).