

December 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## North Carolina FSA Newsletter

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### North Carolina Farm Service Agency

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**State Executive Director:**  
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Pender Sharp, Chairman  
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Thomas O. Gilmore, Sr., Member  
Nancy Fish, Member  
Doane J. Cottle, Member

**Division Chiefs:**

**Administrative Officer:**

### Financial Hardship and Loan Servicing

Many farm loan borrowers' payments are due on Jan. 1. FSA expects and encourages prompt payment. However, for borrowers who cannot make their payments due to adversity such as a natural disaster or production difficulties beyond their control, FSA is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers with the tools necessary to be successful. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from loan or loan servicing application, through the term of your loan, and after. In order for FSA to help, you must alert your local FSA office to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses
- The development of problem situations
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

There are options for FSA loan customers during financial stress. If you are a borrower who is unable to make payments on a loan, contact your local FSA Service Center to learn about the options available to you.

If past due on payments, FSA will notify you of your options with a Notice of Availability of Loan Servicing. Please pay special attention to this notice as it provides you with your options for FSA servicing programs and outlines specific deadlines that you must

Mike Eaves

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**Dates to Remember:**

December 25, 2017 -  
Christmas Day Holiday  
(Offices Closed)

January 1, 2018 - New Year's  
Day Holiday (Offices Closed)

Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions specific to your operation.

meet. Failure to meet these statutory deadlines may significantly limit your options and FSA's ability to help address your farm's financial difficulties.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). Please contact your local FSA Service Center if you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment to meet with the loan staff to discuss your options.

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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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## The Census of Agriculture is a Producer's Voice, Future and Opportunity

In December farmers and ranchers across the nation will receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web questionnaire. The online questionnaire has been revised extensively to make it more convenient for producers.

Conducted once every five years, the census of agriculture is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them; it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.

Farmers and ranchers, trade associations, government, extension educators, researchers, and many others rely on census of agriculture data when making decisions that shape American agriculture – from creating and funding farm programs to boosting services for communities and the industry. The census of agriculture is a producer's voice, future, and opportunity.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) or call (800) 727-9540.

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## 2018 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.

Applicable crop reporting dates:

January 2, 2018: Honey  
January 15, 2018: Apples, Barley, Blueberries, Grapes, Oats, Peaches, Wheat and all fall seeded small grains  
May 15, 2018: Cabbage, Beans, Potatoes, Strawberries  
July 15, 2018: Corn, Soybeans, Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, Grain Sorghum, CRP, and all other crops and land uses  
September 15, 2017: Cabbage PP2, Beans PP2

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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## FSA Offers Join Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Direct Farm Ownership loans are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a Direct Farm Ownership Microloan option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$300,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA to Measure Final 2017 Row Crop Production and Grain

## Stocks with Two End-of-Year Surveys

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is encouraging producers to respond to two upcoming surveys – the December Agricultural Survey and the County Agricultural Production Survey – that are critical to row crop producers around the country. The results of the surveys help determine the structure of the 2017 farm payment and risk management programs administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency and Risk Management Agency.

The County Agricultural Production Survey was sent to 170,000 row crop producers beginning Nov. 3. Responses are due by Jan. 15, 2018, and NASS will publish county-level results for corn, soybeans, sunflowers, and sorghum on Feb. 22, 2018, in the Quick Stats database. These county-level data are critical for USDA farm payment determinations.

The December Agricultural Survey will go to 84,000 producers beginning Nov. 29. Responses are due by Dec. 21, 2017, and NASS publishes results in the Crop Production 2017 Summary report on Jan. 12, 2018. Information collected in this survey also feeds into the county estimates for row crops. The survey also asks about grain stocks stored on-farm.

When producers receive the surveys, they have the option to respond using the secure online questionnaire or return it by mail. NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

These and all NASS data are available online at [www.nass.usda.gov/Publications](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications) and the searchable Quick Stats database. Watch a video on how NASS data are used at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBW-g1FgLN8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBW-g1FgLN8)

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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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## Selected Interest Rates for December 2017

90-Day Treasury Bill - 1.125

Farm Operating Loans — Direct - 2.875

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct - 3.75

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher - 1.5

Emergency Loans - 3.75

Commodity Loans 1996 - Present - 2.500

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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).