

August 2013



Alaska State and County FSA Updates

ALASKA FSA Office

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**County Executive
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Vacant**
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Hours Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

State Executive Director
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State Committee

Arthur Keyes, Chair
Mike Schultz, Member
Nathan Soboleff, Member

State Directors News

Application Period for Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) Ends September 9!

Farmers and ranchers in Alaska can apply for the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP). Apply by September 9, 2013 for this USDA Farm Service Agency program providing relief from high transportation costs.

Eligible farming expenses include:
Chemicals, Feed, Fertilizers, Lime, Gas, Fuel, Oil, Machinery, Equipment, Vehicle, Seed & Plants, Supplies, Vet. Supplies, Parts, etc.

Easy-to-file application forms, FAQ's and other information will be available at www.fsa.usda.gov/ak, at FSA offices in Palmer and Delta, or at other USDA offices around the state.

DON'T DELAY, CALL NOW!

Applications close on September 9, 2013. Receipts must be submitted by November 4, 2013.

Nominees for the Alaska 2013 Elections

Elections for County Committees will be held on December 2, 2013. FSA-669 County FSA Committee Official Ballots will be mailed to eligible producers on November 4, 2013.

The following LAA seats are up for elections and a list of nominees for each LAA.

Northern County LAA-1

LAA-1 Includes the area that encompasses the following areas: North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Yukon-Koyukuk and Nome Census areas, as well as the Denali and Fairbanks North Star Borough.

McLaren “Mac” Carter resides in Central, AK, a diversified farmers market vegetable producer who raises a large variety of crops from tomatoes to potatoes and has lived and farmed in the Central, Alaska community for 16 years. The Carter’s are very involved with the community and each year celebrate a annual bringing in of the crops through a community festival for the whole area.

Lawrence “Bruce” Davis resides in Nome, AK, is a second generation Nome Reindeer Herder who manages and oversees the family Reindeer herd on the Seward Peninsula. Lawrence is involved with different USDA conservation and farm programs that promote sound conservation practices, herd health and grazing measures.

Southern County LAA -2

LAA-2 Includes the municipality of Anchorage, Valdez/Cordova Census area south of Chugach Mtns. Kenai Peninsula Borough north of Kasilof River.

Abby Ala, a 2nd generation farmer in Soldotna on land that has been in her family for over 66 years. Abby operates a greenhouse, produces vegetables as well as hay, and boards horses.

Natasha Ala, a 3rd generation Alaska homestead family in Soldotna follows in a long tradition of farming and soil and water conservation.

William L. Hightower grew up on his grandmother's farm in Iowa and attended Iowa State University studying forestry. Since moving to Sterling, Alaska in 1975 he has been involved in mini farming, raising produce and livestock.

All candidates have agreed to serve if elected.

Drought Conditions Trigger Emergency Haying and Grazing on CRP Acres in Delta

On Friday, August 16, Alaska State Executive Director, Danny Consenstein, allowed the immediate haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres in Delta to help with Alaska's impending hay shortages. Extremely dry conditions in Interior Alaska have resulted in hay yields less than two-thirds of normal. Many areas of Alaska are reporting similar reductions in yields.

The CRP program is a voluntary program for agricultural producers to help the safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolled in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat. Haying and grazing of CRP acreage can be authorized to provide emergency relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought.

CRP contract holders in the Delta areas interested in this emergency haying provision should contact Lloyd Wilhelm in the Delta office for more information.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Farm operating loans are available as well as loans to purchase or improve farms or ranches. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African-Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has a new Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

The low-interest FSA Microloan can help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The streamlined application process fits the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for up to \$35,000 to pay for start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000. Applicants can also obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact the local FSA office to setup an appointment.

Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate 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 \$5,000. For more information you can stop by your FSA county office. Our staff can help with preparing and processing the application forms.

Selected Interest Rates for August 2013

Farm Operating - Direct 1.500%

Farm Ownership - Direct 3.625%

Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.500%

Farm Storage Facility – 7 year 2.000%

Farm Storage Facility – 10 year 2.625%

Farm Storage Facility – 12 year 2.750%

Commodity Loans 1996-Present 1.125%

Dates to Remember

Sept. 9, 2013 – Last day to return RTCP sign up applications to the USDA Service Center

Nov. 4, 2013 - Last day to submit receipts for RTCP to the USDA Service Center

Nov. 4, 2013 – COC ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 2, 2013 - Last day to return voted COC ballots to the USDA Service Center

Jan. 1, 2014 - Newly elected county committee members take office

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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).