

July 2013



Alaska State and County FSA Updates

ALASKA FSA Office

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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

Reimbursement Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) Update

Alaska farmers make a big contribution to the economy, the health and the security of our communities. They provide jobs and healthy, local food for Alaskans. But our farmers face unique challenges. In addition to our northern climate, they experience high costs of fuel, equipment, materials, fertilizer and other inputs because of our location. The RTCP program helps level the playing field for our producers and provide more local food at competitive prices.

In 2009, when Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack visited Palmer, Bethel and Hooper Bay, he saw first-hand the challenges faced by Alaska producers. USDA is committed to developing new programs like this that fit the needs of Alaska producers. I also want to thank our congressional delegation for all of their work to support this program in Congress.

Alaskans Receive Payments For FY 2012 Costs

This month, a diverse group of 173 Alaskan producers received \$390,766 to help offset the high cost of farming in Alaska by participating in FSA's newest program, the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP). Farmers, ranchers and growers from all across the state -- from Craig, to Bethel, to Kodiak and Manley Hot Springs -- received payments ranging from \$70 to \$6,130. These farmers produced a wide range of livestock and crops, including hay, vegetables,

oysters, dairy products, grain, and peonies.

Get Ready to Apply for This Year's Transportation Reimbursement Payments!

I hope all Alaskan producers have been keeping track of their farm-related expenses over the past nine months. Costs associated with the production or transportation of an agricultural product may be eligible for partial reimbursement through RTCP. This year's program will cover costs incurred from October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013 (Fiscal Year 2013). Sign-up for Fiscal Year 2013 will begin on July 22, 2013, and end on Sept. 9, 2013. Although applicants must file their RTCP application in an FSA office by Sept. 9, 2013, producers will have until Nov. 4, 2013 to provide supporting documentation of actual costs to the FSA office. In most cases, copies of credit card transactions for expenses such as fuel, feed, fertilizer or supplies will be sufficient documentation. Easy-to-file application forms, FAQ's and other information are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/ak, at FSA offices in Palmer and Delta, or at other USDA offices around the state.

Disaster Relief Available for Alaska Farmers and Ranchers

Farmers and ranchers who suffered agricultural damages due to flooding that occurred between May 17, 2013 and June 11, 2013 in designated areas may be eligible for low-interest, federal loans to help recoup losses. Areas that were contiguous to the affected areas and are eligible for assistance are the Denali and Fairbanks-North Star Boroughs and the following Census Areas: Nome, Southeast Fairbanks, Valdez-Cordova, Wade-Hampton, and Yukon-Koyukuk.

A disaster designation M4122 recently announced by President Obama triggered the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Emergency Loan Program (EM). FSA is accepting loan applications in county offices until February 25, 2014.

Applicants must be established farmers and must have suffered an agricultural loss due to the disaster named in the designation. An applicant's farm must be family-sized. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and

repayment ability. The federal government does not intend to compete with private business, so applicants must be unable to obtain credit elsewhere to finance their needs.

Weather Related Losses on Farms and Ranches

FSA would like to encourage agricultural producers to report any significant weather related production and/ or physical losses they may have suffered (or are currently experiencing) on their farms to their local FSA County Office. These losses will be included in any Disaster Assessment Report that is being compiled by the County Office to determine if a disaster declaration should be pursued to assist affected producers in the area.

County Committee Nominations

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

The COC nomination period runs from June 17, 2013 through Aug. 1, 2013. For more information contact your local FSA office or visit the Alaska website at www.fsa.usda.gov/ak

Nominees must complete and sign form FSA-669A available at USDA Service Centers and online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections> Nomination forms for the 2013 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1, 2013. Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee.

A 2013 Election is Being Held in the Following LAAs

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.

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.

USDA EXTENDS ACREAGE REPORTING DEADLINE FOR FSA TO AUG. 2, 2013

Risk Management Deadline Remains Unchanged

Farmers and landowners have an additional 18 calendar days to submit their annual report of acreage to their local FSA county office with the deadline extended from Monday, July 15, 2013, to Friday, Aug. 2, 2013. Only the FSA reporting deadline has been extended. The acreage reporting requirement for crop insurance has not changed and remains July 15.

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.

Special Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

Selected Interest Rates for July 2013

Farm Operating - Direct 1.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct 3.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.500%
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year 1.500%
Farm Storage Facility – 10 year 2.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year 2.375%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present 1.125%

Dates to Remember

Aug. 1, 2013 – Last day to file nomination forms at the local USDA Service Center
Aug. 2, 2013 - Acreage reporting deadline and DCP sign-up deadline
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).