

August 2014



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Alaska FSA Offices

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Southern County Office

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Erin Sturdivant
907-761-7754

Alaska FSA State Director News - Reimbursement Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) Update

Application Period for Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) Ends September 8!

Farmers and ranchers in Alaska can apply for the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP). Apply by September 8, 2014 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 8, 2014. Receipts must be submitted by November 3, 2014.

Fax: 907-761-7789
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erin.sturdivant@ak.usda.gov

Farm Loan Manager
Jeff Curry
907-761-7773
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Hours Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Committee Meetings:

Northern Co. check AK website
Southern Co. check AK website

Save Time-Make an Appointment With FSA

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> .

County Committee Nominees for the Alaska 2014 Elections

Elections for County Committees will be held on December 5, 2011. FSA-668 County FSA Committee Official Ballots will be mailed to eligible producers on November 3, 2014.

The following LAA seats are up for elections.

Northern County LAA-2

LAA-2 Includes the area that begins where the Clear-water road intersects the AK Hwy NE to north line of Southeast Fairbanks census area, proceeding to Canadian border, then SE following Canadian border where the Alaska Gateway Regional Educational Attendance Area (AKGREAA) line intersects the Canadian border, turning NW following AKGREAA line to the AK Hwy, then proceed NW on AK Hwy to Clearwater road.

Roger Hendry resides on Cummings Road, Delta Junction. Roger has been raising forage crops and livestock as well as potatoes since 1989. Roger Hendry is a member of Alaska Farm Bureau.

Randy Mayo resides on Spruce Road, Delta Junction. Randy has been managing the Steven's Village Bison Ranch for the past 5 years. The farm produces Bison for meat and raises small grain forage for animal feed. Randy is a member of the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Southern County LAA -3

LAA-3 Includes all of the Matanuska Borough.

Rose Marie "Tiny" DePriest arrived as a Colonist in the Mat-Su Valley in 1935. Tiny worked with her parents farming over 100 acres of potatoes and without electricity she worked in the dairy operation. With her spouse, they own and operate the Tiny Moose Farm & Earth Products since 1957 with dairy operation and farming peas, oats and brome grass.

Pam Lewis of Palmer married into a third generation farm family 33 years ago. She has helped her husband with the planting and harvesting of several varieties of spuds. The last two years she has ventured into the greenhouse business, along with tending a nice outdoor veggie garden where she has been harvesting and selling her produce at the Anchorage Farmers' Market.

All candidates have agreed to serve if elected.

USDA Notifies Producers on Acreage History and Yields

Written notifications from USDA are underway to farmers that provide updates on their current base acres, yields and 2009-2012 planting history.

Please cross check the letter from USDA with your farm records. If the information is correct, no further action is needed at this time, but if our letter is incomplete or incorrect, contact your local FSA office as soon as possible.

Verifying the accuracy of data on a farm's acreage history is a required early step for enrolling in the upcoming Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. Later this summer, farmers and ranchers will have an opportunity to update their crop yield information and reallocate base acres.

By mid-winter all producers on a farm will be required to make a one-time, unanimous and irrevocable election between price protection and county revenue protection or individual revenue protection for 2014-2018 crop years. Producers can expect to sign contracts for ARC or PLC for the 2014 and 2015 crop years in the spring of 2015.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (includes short grain rice and temperate japonica rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed, and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity.

Visit www.fsa.usda.gov or the local FSA office for information about FSA and the 2014 Farm Bill programs.

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

Changes mandated through the 2014 Farm Bill require producers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file.

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 form must be on file with the FSA. Since many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) programs have this requirement, most producers should already have an AD-1026 on file. If producers have not filed, they must do so by June 1, 2015.

When a farmer completes the AD-1026, FSA and NRCS staff will outline any additional actions that may be required for compliance with the provisions. The Risk Management Agency, through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers and ranchers.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues the requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA and NRCS. This includes the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs.

FSA recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: www.fsa.usda.gov. USDA will publish a rule later this year that will provide details outlining the connection of

conservation compliance with crop insurance premium support. Producers can also contact their local USDA Service Center for information. A listing of service center locations is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/local/.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Announces Online Hay and Grazing Acres Locator Tool

For many years, FSA's **Hay Net** website www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet has been the "go to" online resource for agricultural producers to list information concerning the need for hay or the availability of hay.

Now, in response to requests from livestock producers and landowners, FSA has expanded the site to include the option to list a need for grazing acres or to list acres available for grazing.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, producers are in need of hay and/or grazing acres to support livestock, please use **Hay Net** to post an advertisement seeking these resources. Likewise, landowners who have hay and/or grazing acres available for livestock producers should post a Hay Net advertisement as well.

A few things to remember when using the **Hay Net** website:

- There is a one-time registration process that should be completed by all users who want to post an ad online.
- Users who just want to browse ads DO NOT NEED to have an eAuthentication user id.
- Hay and grazing acre ads will be automatically removed after a period of 13 months.
- Please help your fellow farmer and rancher by keeping ads current and up to date and remove ads you no longer need or want advertised on **Hay Net**. Please, no corporate advertisements on this site.

Hay Net is brought to you by FSA as a public service. The sole purpose of this online resource is to provide a site for the exchange of information. FSA does not endorse, guarantee, or otherwise make representations of any kind regarding any user of this site and FSA is not responsible for defining the terms of grazing agreements or lease contracts.

For more information about **Hay Net** and other FSA services and programs, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy) for dairy producers. The new, voluntary risk management program replaces the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which expires on Sept. 1, 2014.

MPP-Dairy offers protection to dairy producers when the difference (the margin) between the all-milk price and national average feed cost falls below a certain producer selected amount.

Eligible producers may purchase coverage for their dairy operation by paying an annual administrative fee of \$100 and a premium, as applicable, for higher levels of coverage. Producers in the dairy operation will have to select a desired coverage level ranging from \$4.00 to \$8.00, in \$0.50 increments and a desired coverage percentage level ranging from 25 to 90 percent, in 5 percent increments. Producers will also have to decide whether or not to participate in the MPP-Dairy Program or the Livestock Gross Margin program administered by

the Risk Management Agency (RMA), but they will not be allowed to participate in both.

A decision tool will be made available in the fall of 2014 to help producers make coverage level decisions. Enrollment will also begin this fall. Dairy operators will establish their production history during signup. Verification of the production records will be required. The regulations for MPP-dairy are still being developed. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

New Farm Bill Offers Increased Opportunities for Producers

The 2014 Farm Bill offers increased opportunities for producers including farm loan program modifications that create flexibility for new and existing farmers. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available [here](#).

The Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Changes that will take effect immediately include:

- Elimination of the 15 year term limit for guaranteed operating loans.
- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.
- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership Down Payment Loan Program from \$225,000 to \$300,000.
- Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.
- Increase of the guaranteed percentage on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.
- Microloans will not count toward direct operating loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rulemaking processes. Visit the [FSA Farm Bill website](#) for detailed information and updates to farm loan programs.

USDA Extends Deadline for the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program

The enrollment deadline for the 2012 and 2013 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) has been extended to Aug. 15, 2014. Originally, program sign-up was scheduled to end Aug. 1.

The new deadline gives livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who experienced losses because of

disease, adverse weather, wildfires or colony collapse disorder between Oct. 1, 2011 and Sept. 30, 2013, an additional two weeks to enroll in ELAP.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA service center or visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov for additional information regarding ELAP.

NAP Coverage NOT Available for Annually Planted Crops Used for Mechanically Harvested Livestock Feed

Producers are reminded that NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annually planted forage crops used for mechanically harvested livestock feed that includes, but is not limited to: small grains, forage sorghums, mixed forages, turnips and other annually planted crops with the following intended uses: "fg," "gc," "Hy," and "sg." The Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced a pilot program last year that offers a CAT level Rainfall Index-Annual Forage Insurance Plan to producers in Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Producers were allowed to use NAP coverage for 2014 annual forage crops because there was limited time for producers in the pilot states to transition from NAP to the new RMA pilot program. However, NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annual forage crops used for mechanically harvested livestock feeds.

NAP Coverage Available for 2015 Crops for Livestock Feed Intended for Grazing:

It is important that producers note that NAP coverage WILL be available for annually planted crops for livestock feed intended for grazing because RMA is not offering CAT level coverage under the Rainfall Index-Annual Forage Insurance Plan. The NAP sales closing date for this insurance is September 30 for all fall seeded crops and March 15th for annually tilled crops planted in the spring.

Please contact your local FSA office for questions concerning NAP or your crop insurance agent for questions concerning RMA crop insurance. A list of agents can be found at www.rma.usda.gov/.

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).