

October 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Alaska State FSA Newsletter

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### Alaska State Farm Service Agency

800 W Evergreen, Ste 216  
Palmer, AK 99645  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/ak](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak)

### State Executive Director

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### Northern County Office

PO Box 585  
Delta Junction, AK 99737

### County Executive

### Alaska FSA State Director News

Before freeze-up many animal operations want to get their corrals and barns cleaned for the coming winter. I have been cleaning my corrals and barns and it reminds me of my youth, hauling manure on the dairy where I was raised. Last spring, my soil test and associated fertilizer recommendation included adding compost to the soil to boost organic matter. My garden is getting a heavy covering of raw cow manure now.

The manure coming out of barns and corrals has a lot of nutrient value that can reduce overall fertilizer costs. Alaskans pay higher costs for commercial dry fertilizer than elsewhere which makes local manure even more valuable. A nutrient analysis could be helpful to determine application rates. Steve Brown at UAF extension calculates the value of raw cow manure at about \$25 per ton.

**Director/Farm Loan  
Manager**

Lloyd Wilhelm  
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**Southern County Office**  
800 W Evergreen, Ste 216  
Palmer, AK 99645

**County Executive  
Director/Farm Loan  
Manager**

Erin Sturdivant  
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Hours Monday-Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Committee Meetings:  
Northern Co TBA  
Southern Co Nov 13, 10:00  
am

Please contact your local FSA  
Office for questions specific to  
your operation or county

A farmer said that composted manure is the most valuable product produced on a farm. Using manure to reduce expenses or expand revenue has the same balance sheet effect on the profitability of the enterprise. Composting takes time, equipment and space to stabilize the nutrients. Hopeful that your barns and corrals are all clean as you prepare for this coming winter.

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## Job Opening at Alaska State Farm Service Agency in Palmer, Alaska

Alaska State Farm Service Agency is currently advertising for a permanent full-time Agricultural Program Specialist vacancy located in the Alaska State Farm Service Agency in Palmer, Alaska. The Agricultural Program Specialist vacancy is being advertised under Job Announcements FSA-18-0672-AK-MS and FSA-18-0662-AK-MS. Applicants wishing to be considered for all announcements must submit separate and complete application packages for each vacancy announcement. The closing date is October 12, 2018. If you are interested and meet the qualifications for the position, you are encouraged to apply. Please go to the Federal Government's Official Job site USAjobs to view this vacancy announcement <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

We are looking for applicants with a passion for helping Alaska farmers succeed, and an interest in working with a great team of USDA professionals. For more information on Alaska Farm Service Agency, please see our website [www.fsa.usda.gov/ak](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak)

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## USDA Reminds Farmers and Ranchers of Nov 2 Deadline to Submit Your RTCP Receipts

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) signup ended on September 7, 2018. This program covered transportation expenses incurred from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018. If you applied for the RTCP program, and have not turned all your receipts in to the FSA office, now is the time to do so. Applicants will have until COB on Nov. 2, 2018, to provide supporting documentation. If you have any questions, contact your local FSA office.

For more information on RTCP, farmers and ranchers in the eligible areas can visit their FSA county office or the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport) or [www.fsa.usda.gov/ak](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak)

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## FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2018 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on November 5, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is December 3, 2018.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters in the Northern County local administrative area 3 and the Southern County local administrative area 1, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center. Dec. 3, 2018, is the last day for voters to submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than Dec. 3. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2019.

The following are this year's candidates who have been nominated in their LAA's to serve as a committee member. All candidates have agreed to serve if elected.

**Northern County LAA-3** which includes the area beginning at the SE corner of the Matsu Borough proceeding north to NW corner of SE Fairbanks Census area, east to line following Clearwater road intersecting AK Hwy, proceeding SE to AKGREAA line, south then SE following line to Canadian border, south following Canadian border to Chugach Mtn. Range, turning west following Chugach Mtn. west to SW corner of Matsu Borough. (Includes Delta Junction, Glennallen, and Kenny Lake.)

**Robert Green** moved to the Delta area in 1965. The family was highly involved with all stages of bringing land into production in the Delta area. In 1971 the first crops were planted, and since then they have raised hay, grain, and have had up to 450 head of livestock at a time. Currently the farm is actively producing hay and grain with all crops processed and marketed throughout the state. Bob is involved with many aspects of farming and wants to see agriculture remain strong throughout the state.

**Joshua Scott** resides in LAA-3 and has cleared and put into production over 30 acres of cropland, producing brome hay, bees/honey, constructed a high tunnel, and raises a variety of vegetables that have been sold through the local farmers market for over 8 years. Joshua is active with Copper River Valley Soil and Water Conservation District and serves as President. Joshua also works with the Kenny Lake Soil and Water Conservation, Alaska State Soil and Water Conservation, has organized Ag Forum for Kenny Lake area, and instrumental in expanding SWCD to the whole copper valley area, works with the local Alaska Native Corporations, and is vocal in raising local farming issues with legislatures. Participates with FSA in several programs.

**Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Northern County FSA Office at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 6, 2018.**

**Southern County LAA -1** which Includes all of the following boroughs and census areas: Wade Hampton Bethel Dillingham Bristol Bay Lake & Peninsula Aleutians East and West Kodiak

Island and the Kenai Peninsula Borough south of the Kasilof river (includes Homer and surrounding area).

**Rita Jo Shoultz** is the managing partner of Alaska Perfect Peony (APP) a family owned business. APP was the first commercial peony cut flower farm in Alaska. In 2017 APP harvested over 50,000 stems. Past experiences include owner of Fritz Creek Gardens, a small retail nursery in Homer; 40 plus years in marketing positions, finance, 25 years in Commercial Real Estate Development and just finished 4 years as President of the Kenai Peninsula Farm Bureau. Rita Jo was a nominee for 'Champions of Change for the Future of Agriculture' and invited to the White House and was just recently named the 'Small Business Champion' for Alaska.

**Paulette Selkirk** is a farmer originally from New Mexico. Her dad and uncle taught her about farming and running the business at a young age. Her passion was to grow up and have her own farming business one day. Her and her husband moved to Kodiak in 2009. She has been in the poultry business for over 15 years. She is the owner of Beaks n Feathers. Her husband, children and grandchildren help with the operations, building the next generation of farmers. She sells fresh eggs and adult meat chickens. Along with poultry she raises and sells mealworms for poultry, wild birds, reptiles and amphibians on the Island. Great source of protein and treat as well.

**Election Ballots will be Counted in Public at the Southern County FSA Office at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 6, 2018.**

More information on county committees, such as the new 2018 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections) or at a local USDA Service Center <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## USDA Market Facilitation Program

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's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn, cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The sign-up period for MFP runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at [www.farmers.gov/mfp](http://www.farmers.gov/mfp). MFP provides payments to producers of eligible commodities 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.

For a list of initial MFP payments rates, view the [MFP Fact Sheet](#).

MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined \$125,000 for eligible crop commodities
- A combined \$125,000 for dairy production and hogs
- A combined \$125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds

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.

### **Expanded Hog Timeline**

USDA has expanded the timeline for producers with whom the Aug. 1, 2018, date does not accurately represent the number of head of live hogs they own. Producers may now choose any date between July 15 to Aug. 15, 2018 that correctly reflects their actual operation.

MFP applications are available online at [www.farmers.gov/mfp](http://www.farmers.gov/mfp). Applications can be completed at a local FSA office or submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing. To locate or contact your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

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## **Organic Certification Cost Share Program**

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2017, through Sept. 30, 2018, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope. The application deadline for the 2018 program year is Oct. 31, 2018.

Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certification fees, late fees and inspections necessary to address National Organic Program regulatory violations.

Producers and handlers may submit OCCSP applications to FSA county offices or they may apply through participating State Agencies, which will be listed at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index> as their agreements to administer the program are finalized.

The FSA OCCSP application form is available at [USDA's eForms site](#), by selecting "Browse forms" and entering "OCCSP" in the "title or keywords" field on the search page.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/organic](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/organic) or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts.

FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Supervised Credit

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, it is our goal to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will advise borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation's goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA's staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings and/or events should contact Lloyd Wilhelm, Northern CED, at (907) 895-4242, Erin Sturdivant, Southern CED, at (907) 761-7754 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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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).

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