

July 2015



# NEWSLETTER



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## Alaska FSA Newsletter

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### Alaska State FSA Office

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

State Executive Director

Danny Consenstein

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### Northern County Office

PO Box 585

Delta Junction, AK 99737

### County Executive

#### Director/Farm Loan Officer

Lloyd Wilhelm

907-895-4242 ext 150

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Email:

[lloyd.wilhelm@ak.usda.gov](mailto:lloyd.wilhelm@ak.usda.gov)

### Job Opening in the Alaska State Office in Palmer

A permanent full-time Agricultural Program Specialist vacancy located in the Alaska State FSA Office in Palmer is being advertised under Job Announcement FSA-15-1407-AK-PBP and FSA-15-1251-AK-PBP. The closing date is August 6, 2015. We are looking for applicants with a passion for helping Alaska farmers succeed, and an interest in working with a great team of USDA farm professionals. 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/>

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

**County Executive Director**

Erin Sturdivant  
907-761-7754  
Fax: 907-761-7789  
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**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 July TBA  
Southern Co July TBA

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

## Welcome Steve Gallagher, Northern County Loan Analyst

Steve Gallagher is our newest employee in the Northern County Office in Delta. Steve was the Farm Loan Manager for Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation, ARRC for 12 years. We're excited to have him on the team! If you're in Delta, please stop in and introduce yourself to Steve.

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## Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## FSA County Committee Nomination Period Is Now Open

The nomination period for the Northern and Southern FSA County Committee began on June 15, 2015. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the Northern and Southern County FSA Office by close of business on Aug. 3, 2015.

County Committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice on federal farm program implementation at the local level.

To be eligible to serve on the FSA County Committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) where they are nominated. All producers, including women, minority and beginning farmers and ranchers are encouraged to participate in the nomination and election process.

The Alaska Northern and Southern County 2015 election is being held in the following LAAs:

**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).

**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 Mat-su Borough. (Includes Delta Junction, Glennallen, and Kenny Lake.)

Producers may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Organizations representing minority and women farmers and ranchers may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and more information about county committee elections is available online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues. County committees consist of three to 11 members.

FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 9. Ballots are due back in the Northern and Southern County Office by mail or in person no later than Dec. 7, 2015. All newly elected county committee members and alternates will take office January 1, 2016.

All FSA offices will accept nominations through August 3, 2015. If you would like to nominate a candidate, or yourself, the nomination form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>. For more information contact your local FSA office [www.fsa.usda.gov/ak](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak).

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## **USDA Program Helps Offset Transportation Costs for Farmers and Ranchers in Alaska**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that beginning July 20, farmers and ranchers residing outside the contiguous continental United States can enroll in the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) for fiscal year 2015. Applicants must submit their application to their administrative county FSA office by Sept. 11, 2015. Applicants will have until Nov. 2, 2015, to provide supporting documentation.

The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized the program, which offsets a portion of the costs of transporting agricultural products over long distances. The program allows farmers and ranchers in Alaska, Hawaii and insular areas including the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands of the United States, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau, to recover transportation costs.

Payments are calculated based on the costs incurred for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs, subject to an \$8,000 per producer cap per federal fiscal year. In the event that claims for payments exceed the funds available from the program for a fiscal year, payments will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

For more information on the RTCP program, 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). To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov> and/or [www.fsa.usda.gov/ak](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ak).

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## **Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services**

Local Offices Issue Receipts for Services Provided

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form – serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

To learn more about FSA, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or to find your local USDA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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## 2015 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit your local County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for All Counties in Alaska:

July 15, 2015:	CRP, all other crops
September 30, 2015:	Value-loss and controlled environment crops (except Nursery)
December 15, 2015:	perennial forage, fall seeded small grains

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above 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 above 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 dates listed above 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 County FSA office.

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## Microloans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000, on Nov. 7, 2014. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

The microloan change allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to [small and midsized farming operations](#).

To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers and ranchers access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans. **Important Note:** Microloans cannot be used to purchase real estate.

Since 2010, more than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers and FSA has increased its lending to targeted underserved producers by nearly 50 percent.

Please review the FSA [Microloan Program Fact Sheet](#) for program application, eligibility and related information.

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## Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted underserved 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, targeted underserved 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.

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## Save Time - Make an Appointment with FSA

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>.

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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).

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