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Local Food and Farm Task Force  
Friday, January 23  
1 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.  
Landon State Office Building, Room 560  
900 SW Jackson  
Topeka, KS 66612

1:00 p.m.	Welcome and Introductions of Task Force Approval of December 12 Meeting Minutes	Chair Ron Brown
1:15 p.m.	Support for specialty crops, Farm Bill provisions Farm Loan Program	Todd Barrows <i>Farm Service Agency</i>
2:15 p.m.	Vegetable Research and Production Specialty Crops in Kansas	Dr. Chuck Marr <i>Retired, KSRE</i>
3:15 p.m.	Meeting Adjournment	Chair Ron Brown
3:15 – 3:45 p.m.	Open Networking for Task Force and Public Attendees	

### Attendance

**Task Force Members Present:** Ron Brown, Chair; David Coltrain, Loren Swenson, Dr. Cary Rivard, Senator Dan Kerschen, Representative Adam Lusker and Annarose (Hart) White

**KDA Staff:** Kerry Wefald, Josh Roe and Julie Roller

**Guests:** Dr. Chuck Marr, Todd Barrows, Lee Hartford, Sarah Green, Joanna Wochner, Phyll Klima, Brittany Chaplin, Natalie Fullerton, Rosemary Helms, Norm Winter Julie Mettenburg, Steve Smith, Jessica Bowser, Ashley Wisner, Rachael Savage, Missty Lechner, Janet Barrows, Nancy Brown and Elizabeth Stewart.

**Welcome and Introduction of Task Force:** Chair Ron Brown called the meeting to order at 1:00 and asked the task force and audience members to introduce themselves.

Representative Adam Lusker moved to approve the December 12, 2014 minutes. Senator Dan Kerschen seconded. Motion approved.

**Support for specialty crops, Farm Bill provisions, Farm Loan Program** (see attached handouts): Todd Barrows, agriculture program specialist, Kansas State Farm Service Agency, thanked the task force for the opportunity to speak and extended greetings from Adrian Polansky, Kansas State Director of USDA FSA.

Barrows shared the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), reauthorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides financial assistance to producers of nonsinsurable crops to protect against natural disaster that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

Barrows said one change in the 2014 Farm Act specifies that in order to be eligible for NAP payments, an individual or entity's average adjusted gross income (AGI) cannot exceed \$900,000.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, for example, NAP does provide coverage for specialty crops such as honey and maple sap; sweet sorghum and biomass sorghum, turf grass sod and Christmas trees. He said NAP has been involved with aquaculture and he has worked with several producers (mostly in the central part of the state) who have farm-raised fish.

NAP coverage protects against natural disasters and eligible causes of loss include damaging weather, adverse natural occurrences or conditions related to damaging weather or adverse natural occurrences, such as excessive heat or plant disease. He said that the natural disaster must occur during the coverage period, before or during harvest and must directly affect the eligible crop.

Barrows shared that the 2014 Farm Bill authorized an additional coverage increase from 27.5% to 65% of production and that he thinks the increase will make the program more viable. He said that they have completed a marketing campaign about the increase in coverage and it has generated a lot of interest across the state. He said producers must pay a minimum for the additional coverage, but it is minimal compared to federal crop insurance coverage, and added that grazing crops are not available for additional coverage.

Barrows also outlined the service fees for NAP as \$250 per crop, not to exceed \$750 per producer per administrative county. If producers have crops in multiple counties, there is a cap of \$1,875.

He said that beginning, limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers are eligible for a waiver of the service fee and a 50% premium reduction. Barrows said women are included as socially disadvantaged farmers and that NAP payments are limited to \$125,000 per crop, per individual or entity.

Barrows said the best way for producers to learn about NAP is to visit the website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/> or to contact their local county office or service center.

Lee Hartford, state deputy director for FSA, who supervises lending shared that he has been in the ag lending business for 40 years and has seen a lot of changes during that time. Hartford outlined the changes the ag industry has seen since the 1970s with lower lending limits, to the stress of the 1980s where FSA was able to stabilize a lot of operations. He shared that as an agency of the federal government, FSA cannot be in competition with private lenders. If people can get a loan elsewhere, FSA does not need to make a loan.

Hartford shared that as costs rise, many people cannot obtain large loans to purchase farms.

Hartford also shared information about FSA's Direct Operating Microloan (ML). This program is unique in that it also allows youth to borrow money to start their farms. The program originally had a \$35,000 limit, but has since increased to \$50,000.

Once projects become operational, borrowers can then apply for future funding as adults. According to Hartford, at one time, there was a stigma in regards to borrowing money from the government, but that is no longer the case. He shared that with generational transfer of farms from parents to children, they need the ability to borrow money to buy farms or equipment. For example, the Direct Farm Ownership (FO) loan is for the purchase of farms, construction of buildings or other capital improvements, soil and water conservation or paying closing costs. The maximum amount of this loan is \$300,000 with repayment up to 40 years.

The ML program is to purchase livestock, poultry, equipment, feed, seed, farm, chemicals and supplies.

Hartford shared that the borrower needs to work with FSA loan officers in their county in order to develop a feasible plan. He said that often people read about ideas, but it helps if they have actual experience and rather than thinking it will grow here, show that you have grown tomatoes, pumpkins, etc. here. FSA wants to see that it can work for the borrower. He said showing the marketability of a product also helps, if you can contract with Campbell's Soup or are able to sell tomatoes two weeks before everyone, it helps to show how you will be able to repay the loan. Because specialty crop producers are dealing with perishable commodities that do not last long, it is important to have a plan for what you will do with the crop after harvesting.

In response to the availability of funding, Hartford shared that they have various cohorts for funding and that they are never out of money, but sometimes they have to wait for it to become available. He said as of now, all loans are up-to-date, but there have been periods of time when it takes a while for money to become available.

Hartford also shared information about FSA's Direct Emergency loan. He said the interest rate is one percent higher than operating loans and the loan maximum is \$500,000. He said typically they do not see many of these loans, but they are available to help in emergencies. For example, a rancher that loses livestock could apply.

Hartford suggested the best way to learn about loan programs is to visit one of the 21 lending offices in Kansas. He said it works much better if borrowers are able to speak directly with the person who will be making their loan.

Reflecting, Hartford said it is overwhelming to see how agriculture and lending circle back around. For example, FSA weathered the storm with farmers in the 1980s. He said they could not save them all, but that ones who survived have done well. He said realistic expectations have helped farmers to become successful.

Dr. Cary Rivard thanked Hartford for sharing the information about loans and asked if he felt there is support to provide education about these programs to specialty farmers who are mostly first generation. Hartford said that most of the support would be at the 21 FSA field offices and that at one time they only loaned for "food and fiber", but that is no longer the case today. He shared that it does help to see producers producing on a smaller scale to get their feet wet and to provide a history of past success to a lender.

Dr. Rivard added that specialty crop growers have had difficulty in obtaining traditional bank loans for their crops, so FSA is the only way to help them. He said the task force should encourage growers to take advantage of these programs, but that many growers do not realize these programs exist.

Brown shared that with specialty crops, we talk in feet rather than acres and a producer may have many varieties in a small area.

Barrows agreed, he said that FSA understands that there are many different crops grown in a small area. He said they often measure in 1/10 of acres, rather than acres. He said FSA could still insure those smaller crops, but there is a \$250 fee for the crop. He said that with different varieties, they narrow it down to a smaller number of subcategories for the producer to categorize their crops.

Barrows also added that if a producer does not have a history of producing a crop, they look at other producers in the state who are growing that crop to help establish yields, with the goal to populate their own data.

Barrows said servicing hand-harvest crops is difficult because harvesting occurs at different times. He added they only insure crops for commercial purposes, not personal consumption. He said for NAP, they are able to work with producers to notify FSA when crops are nearing harvest so they can verify production. Loss adjusters can visit ahead of time to appraise the potential of the crop and then if something happens, they have the appraisal data to use.

Rep. Lusker reiterated that insurance and a borrowing source are available for local foods and that the task force would convey that in its report to the legislature. He also thanked Barrows and Hartford for presenting.

Senator Kerschen asked Hartford about FSA's loan portfolio and percentages of loans for purchasing a farm vs operating. Hartford said that there is more for operating, but if averaged out, it would be about half. He said that FSA makes more operating loans because they are on the books for a shorter amount of time and land/farm acquisition loans stay on the books longer. He said it also depends on the people in the loan office. For example, some banks are more aggressive with operating credit if USDA does the land loan.

Senator Kerschen asked if those loans are fixed rate loans. Hartford said the loans are fixed rate for as long as the borrower continues to need them. He said FSA asks borrowers to sign an agreement that they will obtain traditional credit when they are able. He said FSA works with other lenders.

Annarose White asked Barrows and Hartford about cross training with Kansas State University's Research and Extension agents to educate them about FSA programs. Barrows said he had not done any training with them. Hartford said he meets with them from time to time, but has not done any cross training. He said he thinks there is more cross training at the field level. Barrows said that with the 2014 Farm Act there were special provisions for educational purposes, so FSA does work with extension in the field to conduct training with producers.

White also asked if an annual report was available to show how many microloan programs were in the 21 offices. Hartford said that he could obtain that information. Barrows said those reports would be available by county and show how many producers had NAP coverage.

White asked if drift is a reason people can file for coverage. Barrows said that drift would not be an eligible cause of loss because it is not caused by an act of nature. Dr. Rivard said that in some cases, it is and that his family had suffered loss from drift.

White asked if FSA had the capability to work with schools on microloans, for example with the Farm to School Program where students operate a business. Hartford said no, because FSA has to loan to people in a business – individuals, corporations, partnership, joint operations, not a non-profit.

White asked if an individual student could apply. Hartford said yes, but they would need somewhere to produce their crop. He said they may not have land, but if they can find rental property or obtain a plot of land to operate then FSA could work with them. He said they have to look at if the business would be feasible when they graduate.

White also asked if FSA refers producers to the Small Business Development for business plan assistance. Hartford said a lot depends on the individual; many can work on a plan with their loan manager. He said they also suggest contacting the local extension agent to see if there is any information they can share or if they think it is a viable project. He added that he does not think they are discouraged from contact SBDC and that any additional help is a good thing.

The task force members thanked Barrows and Hartford for attending and sharing information about their programs.

**Vegetable Research, Production and Specialty Crops in Kansas:** Brown introduced Dr. Chuck Marr, Kansas State Research and Extension *emeritus*, and shared that Dr. Marr was one of the establishers of the Great Plains Growers Conference.

Dr. Marr shared with the task force that he has worked with KSRE for 37 years and with community gardens across the state through KSRE and the Kansas Health Foundation.

According to Dr. Marr, the most important thing about vegetables is quality. He said there is no other phase of agriculture where a quality product is more important. He said consumers perceive quality based on brightness, color, crunch and safety. Quality is the ultimate goal.

He said the advantage of a quality product is if you grow it, you can sell it. If your product is not quality, you will not be able to sell it. Vegetables are also highly perishable, so you either “sell it or smell it”. Producers need to move product to the market place quickly, but the good news is there are no surplus stocks. He said there is a lot of opportunity for vegetables because they are not a single crop or commodity. There are 400 vegetables in the world, 35 are “vegetables of commerce”, and we know how much is moving in the market place. According to Dr. Marr, most large supermarkets carry 35-75 vegetables.

Dr. Marr said that compared to other commodities, there are many opportunities to get into the market place with vegetables. He said there is a close link between production and market - a producer has to know where they will sell, they cannot wait for the market to open up.

According to Dr. Marr, at one time Kansas was a major producer of vegetables and the Kansas River valley was one of the major producing areas of the United States, but this changed when we discovered California. There are also benchmarks in our history that led to the decline, for example, WWII had a major impact on labor, transportation, and consumer demand and farm subsidies. He said many people went to war and never came back to the farm and with advanced transportation, came the opportunity to ship products for great distances. Dr. Marr shared that when farm subsidies for major grain crops were developed, there was nothing for vegetables.

Dr. Marr said he joined KSRE in 1970 with the charge to encourage vegetable production and processing in Kansas. He said that after WWII, most of the vegetables were consumed by process and that continued to increase. According to Dr. Marr, people did not want to prepare food at home, they wanted to open a can or prepare a TV dinner. He said that as soon as he was hired, he began working towards the goal of processing and then they changed the rules with the oil embargo. The oil embargo limited transportation and people stayed at home and cooked more frequently. Dr. Marr said then Silent Spring came out and consumers began

questioning the food they were eating and supermarkets and salad bars were developed – the demand of processed vegetables dropped and fresh market produce rose. The new goal was to expand the fresh market.

Dr. Marr also shared about the 1980s and the farm crisis. He said there were many overextended farmers who were looking for alternatives and that he dealt with many questions about specialty crops. During this time, farmers' markets grew and the Kansas Department of Agriculture launched the *From the Land of Kansas* program.

Dr. Marr said that with the new millennium, there is now an emphasis on nutrition and dealing with the problems of obesity, ethnic foods and entering the marketplace. In response to the question will Kansas come back as a major vegetable producers, he answered maybe or maybe not. He said we cannot say, "You can't grow that here" because we already have in our past. According to Dr. Marr, there are several ways to be involved in the vegetable business – processing (preserving) and salad processing (forming it into prepared wet or dry salads). Dr. Marr said few restaurants and stores sell anything that is prepared on site, preparation predominately occurs in factories and that trend is growing drastically at 15-20% a year. For example, there is a unique place in the market for potatoes with several processors located in and around Kansas; the largest in the world is located in Liberty, Mo.

Dr. Marr said that in his opinion, the greatest potential is in the local market because it is an inexpensive way to get into the market, producers can take produce directly to consumers at a farmers' market and retain 100% of the profits, there is no large investment of land and producers can talk directly with consumers. Dr. Marr said the relationships developed between producers and consumers are very valuable and people will become loyal customers. He said market studies reveal the shift of the consumer developing a stronger affinity for producers – they do not care about price, they want to help the producer.

Dr. Marr also said that local markets give producers an opportunity to use new technology for building relationships, including social media. He said the opportunity for producers to tell their story helps to build relationships and the *From the Land of Kansas* program has an excellent emphasis on helping Kansans. Farmers' markets offer the opportunity to sell diverse products to together and that is good for the community – it brings people to town and is a social atmosphere.

Highlighting areas of growth potential, Dr. Marr shared the following:

- Fall decorative vegetables – Kansas grows pumpkins, squash, and decorative corn. Because of our central location, we have the ability to ship easier to the east coast than those grown in California.
- Watermelons and muskmelons – Kansas grows quality watermelon and muskmelons and can compete with anyone in the country. These are also low water-consuming crops.
- Sweet corn – Kansas can grow corn, but with a few modifications, we can grow sweet corn with half of the water. Sweet corn does need cooling, so producers need some type of cooling system. Fortunately, Kansas has trucks and knowledge of refrigeration systems in the meat industry in southwest Kansas.
- Sweet potatoes – Kansas is the most northern state where sweet potatoes grow and there is an increase in consumer demand. It also does not require fancy equipment or packaging. Sweet potatoes require little water and are the easiest to grow.
- Ethnic crops – The demand and popularity for these foods are growing, particularly in southwest Kansas.

Dr. Marr also shared information about produce auctions. He said there are several in Missouri and it is an intriguing option for small producers to sell to local stores or other places. He explained that the Eastside/Westside Markets in Manhattan attend produce auctions. Produce auctions are often part of a cooperative. If a building were available in Kansas, it would be interesting to try.

There is also potential for cool season vegetables, Dr. Marr suggested a double-crop cabbage (grown in both the spring and fall)

In order to increase production, Dr. Marr offered the following:

- Not focusing on acres because there is not an acre-to-acre conversion, for example an acre of tomatoes may have a gross return of \$50,000-\$60,000. It is not a comparison to wheat; instead, it is important to look at dollars and jobs. For example, if you are talking about manufacturing, you do not ask how many square feet of “manufacturing” you have, you look at dollars and jobs.
- Getting started is tough, it is a lot like juggling – growing and selling. You have to learn how to market, grow a quality product, learn insects, diseases and weed control for each product.
- Collaborating with surrounding states to share information is very hopeful. For example, the Great Plains Growers Conference is a collaborative effort to train growers from neighboring states. It is difficult to maintain the technical expertise for only one state, so it is important to share knowledge between states. There are also efforts between Departments of Agriculture in multiple states that are helpful.
- Production and marketing technical support is critical, having someone who can consult with growers, provide information and answer questions is very important and is made easier with the advancement of technology.
- Utilizing technology is very helpful, for example the Midwest Vegetable Production Guide is a multi-state guide offering chemical and fertilizer recommendations (See: <http://mwveguide.org>)
- Watching market trends – everyone wants fresh nutritious food and vegetable producers have exactly what the consumer wants. For example, there are countless shows and stories about cooking with fresh fruits and vegetables on TV; it is great free marketing.

Rep. Lusker asked Dr. Marr about Reser’s Fine Foods potato plant and if it located in Topeka because of the potato production in the Kansas River valley? Dr. Marr said no, the company started in Beaverton, Oregon and needed a distribution facility that was centrally location. They bring their own potatoes to the facility.

Dr. Marr also explained that CSA stands for community supported agriculture, which is a subscription-type service where consumers contract with producers to deliver supplies on a weekly basis.

Senator Hawk commented that with the wide variety of fruits and vegetables available, it is interesting that growers only produce a narrow range. Dr. Marr responded that the market is getting there, but it involves availability and consumer trends. For example, when asking students to list their top 10 favorite vegetables, spinach is always in the top five. When asking one student, they responded, “It makes me feel strong”.

Chair Brown asked Dr. Marr for suggestions on what the task force should include in its plan to the legislature. Dr. Marr seconded Dr. Rivard’s comments about the availability of information. He asked if someone is thinking of becoming a producer, where do they get information. This is not very complex, especially with the internet, but having a central, direct source for information

would be helpful. For example, whom do you contact for funding, technical assistance, assistance with where to sell, and who is able to answer those questions relatively quickly.

Chair Brown suggested KSRE could help a lot with these questions and asked Dr. Marr if he had research and test plot money, would that help. Dr. Marr said that yes, money would help, but it is not available. Chair Brown suggested that maybe the task force's report should include funding. Dr. Marr said that they can do more, more efficiently because of technology, but they still need somewhere that the technical support is available. He said someone who can formulate and disseminate the information to the growers would be helpful.

White asked if there is a market for intellectual property in breeding different variety of vegetables. Dr. Marr said no, that there are a few universities still maintaining their breeding programs, but they are getting fewer. He said a few companies do as well, but they are also declining. There is no movement in any of the vegetable crops, with 1-2 exceptions, of moving into GMO – everything is conventional.

Dr. Rivard commented that vegetable seed companies work where there is a market, but protected agriculture such as high tunnels allows for trials. Dr. Marr added that many see companies are aiming towards small market producers and developing varieties to meet those market needs.

Senator Hawk asked Dr. Marr about commercial potato harvesting equipment and if it is possible to make it less labor intensive. Dr. Marr said generally, there are engineers that develop prototypes at the university level and quickly privatize to manufactures. He said some equipment dealers do sell used equipment, so a producer does not have to spend \$500,000 on a piece of equipment and there are even some types of harvesters made for small gardens. At any rate, potatoes are still labor intensive because they need washing and someone has to decide which are in good condition to sell and which are not.

White commented that custom grape harvesting companies are sometimes available.

Dr. Rivard shared that most need to be hand harvested. He said from the extension side, they promote working smarter, not harder. For example, with their new and emerging growers, they have to convince them that no matter what you will work hard, but you need to be more efficient. He said this is part of their trainings, but the biggest issue involves the high cost to purchase a walk-in cooler. In surveys for a food hub in Kansas City, they identified the need to help growers increase the size of their coolers.

Dr. Marr commented that there are opportunities to approach businesses that operate coolers about sharing space. For example, in Manhattan one producer worked with a beer distributor to use space. Obviously, there can be problems with contamination (meat), but there are options for collaborating.

Chair Brown again thanked Dr. Marr for attending and reminded the task force how lucky Kansas is to have Drs. Marr and Rivard.

### **Future meeting dates**

The task force discussed future meeting dates and decided to change the February 13 meeting date to the afternoon of February 20. The March 13 meeting will remain the same. Representative Lusker volunteered to arrange for meeting space.

Rep. Lusker also commented that one of the obstacles is finding a way to link produce with markets. He asked Joanna Wochner from the Kansas Legislative Research Department if she would check into rules/obstacles about co-ops/cooperatives and the proper usage of the names.

Rep. Lusker suggested contacting Dean John Floros, K-State College of Agriculture, to speak at a future meeting regarding overlapping projects and funding.

Chair Brown agreed that the task force is reaching a point where it will be beneficial to start writing its report.

White asked if it would be possible to find out who has received funding to build high tunnels. She said this might require an open records request. Dr. Rivard said the food hub feasibility study may be able to answer or shed light on some of their questions and that he would look into it.

Chair Brown shared the article titled *Louisiana farmers: 'farm to table' is a buzzword, not a revenue stream* and *USDA announces new support to help schools buy more local food* (attached) with the task force.

David Coltrain also shared a handout about the alternative and high-value crop workshop at Seward County Community College (attached).

Chair Brown said that he is speaking at a small farm workshop in Emporia on February 7.

Adjournment followed.

**Attachments:**

1. *USDA FSA 2014 Farm Bill fact sheet*
2. *USDA FSA Farm Loans fact sheet*
3. *Louisiana farmers: 'farm-to-table' is a buzzword, not a revenue stream*
4. *USDA announces new support to help schools buy more local foods*
5. *Alternative and high-value crops workshop*



### The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for 2015 and Subsequent Years

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#### OVERVIEW

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), reauthorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

#### ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS

An eligible producer is a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop and is entitled to an ownership share of that crop. The 2014 Farm Bill specifies that an individual or entity's average adjusted gross income (AGI) cannot exceed \$900,000 to be eligible for NAP payments.

#### ELIGIBLE CROPS

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available and be any of the following:

- Crops grown for food;
- Crops planted and grown for livestock consumption, such as grain and forage crops, including native forage;
- Crops grown for fiber, such as cotton and flax (except trees);
- Crops grown in a controlled environment, such as mushrooms and floriculture;
- Specialty crops, such as honey and maple sap;
- Sea oats and sea grass;
- Sweet sorghum and biomass sorghum;
- Industrial crops, including crops used in manufacturing or grown as a feedstock for renewable biofuel, renewable electricity, or biobased products;
- Value loss crops, such as aquaculture, Christmas trees, ginseng, ornamental nursery, and turfgrass sod; and

- Seed crops where the propagation stock is produced for sale as seed stock for other eligible NAP crop production.

Producers should contact a crop insurance agent for questions regarding insurability of a crop in their county. For further information on whether a crop is eligible for NAP coverage, producers should contact the FSA county office where their farm records are maintained.

#### ELIGIBLE CAUSES OF LOSS

Eligible causes of loss include the following natural disasters:

- Damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes;
- Adverse natural occurrences, such as earthquake or flood; and
- Conditions related to damaging weather or adverse natural occurrences, such as excessive heat, plant disease, volcanic smog (VOG) or insect infestation.

The natural disaster must occur during the coverage period, before or during harvest, and must directly affect the eligible crop.

#### COVERAGE LEVELS

NAP provides catastrophic level (CAT) coverage based on the amount of loss that exceeds 50 percent of expected production at 55 percent of the average market price for the crop.

The 2014 Farm Bill authorizes additional coverage levels ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Additional coverage must be elected by a producer by the application closing date. Producers who elect additional coverage must pay a premium in addition to the service fee. Crops intended for grazing are not eligible for additional coverage.

**APPLYING FOR COVERAGE**

Eligible producers must apply for coverage using form CCC-471, "Application for Coverage," and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. The application and service fee must be filed by the application closing date. Application closing dates vary by crop and are established by the FSA State Committee.

Producers who apply for NAP coverage acknowledge that they have received the NAP Basic Provisions, available at FSA county offices and at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap).

**SERVICE FEES AND PREMIUMS**

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Producers who elect additional coverage must also pay a premium equal to:

- The producer's share of the crop; times
- The number of eligible acres devoted to the crop; times
- The approved yield per acre; times
- The coverage level; times
- The average market price; times
- A 5.25 percent premium fee.

For value loss crops, premiums will be calculated using the maximum dollar value selected by the producer on form CCC-471, "Application for Coverage."

The maximum premium for a producer is \$6,562.50 (the maximum payment limitation times a 5.25 percent premium fee).

Beginning, limited resource, and traditionally underserved farmers are eligible for a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification." To be eligible for

a service fee waiver or premium reduction, producers must qualify as one of the following:

Beginning farmer – a person who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years, and
- Materially and substantially participates in the operation.

For legal entities to be considered a beginning farmer, all members must be related by blood or marriage and must be beginning farmers.

Limited resource farmer – a person or legal entity that:

- Earns no more than \$176,800 in each of the two calendar years that precede the complete taxable year before the program year, to be adjusted upwards in later years for inflation; and
- Has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income for both of the previous two years.

Limited resource producer status may be determined using the USDA Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool located at [www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov). The automated system calculates and displays adjusted gross farm sales per year and the higher of the national poverty level or county median household income.

Socially disadvantaged farmer – these traditionally underserved farmers are a member of a group whose members have been subject to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Groups include:

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives;
- Asians or Asian Americans;
- Blacks or African Americans;
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders;
- Hispanics; and
- Women.

# FACT SHEET

## NAP for 2015 and Subsequent Years

December 2014

For legal entities to be considered socially disadvantaged, the majority interest must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals.

### COVERAGE PERIOD

The coverage period for NAP varies depending on the crop.

The coverage period for an annual crop begins the later of:

- 30 days after application for coverage and the applicable service fees have been paid; or
- The date the crop is planted (cannot exceed the final planting date).

The coverage period for an annual crop ends the earlier of the:

- Date the crop harvest is completed;
- Normal harvest date for the crop;
- Date the crop is abandoned; or
- Date the entire crop acreage is destroyed.

The coverage period for a perennial crop, other than a crop intended for forage, begins 30 calendar days after the application closing date and ends the earlier of:

- 10 months from the application closing date;
- The date the crop harvest is completed;
- The normal harvest date for the crop;
- The date the crop is abandoned; or
- The date the entire crop acreage is destroyed.

Contact a local FSA office for information on the coverage periods for perennial forage crops, controlled-environment crops, specialty crops, and value loss crops.

### INFORMATION REQUIRED TO REMAIN ELIGIBLE FOR NAP

To be eligible for NAP assistance, the following crop acreage information must be reported:

- Name of the crop (lettuce, clover, etc.);
- Type and variety (head lettuce, red clover, etc.);

- Location and acreage of the crop (field, sub-field, etc.);
- Share of the crop and the names of other producers with an interest in the crop;
- Type of practice used to grow the crop (irrigated or non-irrigated);
- Date the crop was planted in each field; and
- Intended use of the commodity (fresh, processed, etc.).

Producers should report crop acreage shortly after planting (early in the risk period) to ensure reporting deadlines are not missed and coverage is not lost.

In addition, producers with NAP coverage must provide the following production information:

- The quantity of all harvested production of the crop in which the producer held an interest during the crop year;
- The disposition of the harvested crop, such as whether it is marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended; and
- Verifiable or reliable crop production records (when required by FSA).

When those records are required, producers must provide them in a manner that can be easily understood by the FSA county committee.

Producers should contact the FSA office where their farm records are maintained for questions regarding acceptable production records.

Failure to report acreage and production information for NAP-covered crops may result in reduced or zero NAP assistance. Be aware that acreage reporting and final planting dates vary by crop and by region. Producers should contact the FSA office where their farm records are maintained for questions regarding local acreage reporting and final planting dates.

For aquaculture, floriculture and ornamental nursery operations, producers must maintain records according to industry standards, including daily crop inventories. Unique reporting requirements apply to beekeepers and producers of Christmas trees, turf-grass sod, maple sap, mushrooms, ginseng, and commercial seed or forage crops. Producers should contact the FSA

office where their farm records are maintained regarding these requirements.

## **REPORTED ACREAGE AND PRODUCTION**

FSA uses acreage reports to verify the existence of the crop and to record the number of acres covered by the application. The acreage and the production reports are used to calculate the approved yield (expected production for a crop year). The approved yield is an average of a producer's actual production history (APH) for a minimum of four to a maximum of 10 crop years (five years for apples and peaches). To calculate APH, FSA divides a producer's total production by the producer's crop acreage.

A producer's approved yield may be calculated using substantially reduced yield data if the producer does not report production for a crop with NAP coverage, or reports fewer than four years of crop production.

Beginning with the 2015 crop year, FSA has changed the production reporting requirements to avoid penalizing producers for years when they do not participate in NAP and do not report their production. Those producers will no longer receive an assigned yield or zero-credited yield in their actual production history (APH) for that year. Producers may also request replacement of assigned yields and zero-credited yields in their APH for the 1995 through 2014 crop years with the higher of 65 percent of the current crop year T-yield or the missing crop year's actual yield.

## **PROVIDING NOTICE OF LOSS AND APPLYING FOR PAYMENT**

When a crop or planting is affected by a natural disaster, producers with NAP coverage must notify the FSA office where their farm records are maintained and complete Part B (the Notice of Loss portion) of form CCC-576, "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment." This must be completed within 15 calendar days of the earlier of:

- A natural disaster occurrence;
- The final planting date if planting is prevented by a natural disaster;

- The date that damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent; or
- The normal harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent. The crops subject to this requirement will be listed in the NAP Basic Provisions.

To receive NAP benefits, producers must complete form CCC-576, "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment," Parts D, E, F, and G, as applicable, within 60 days of the last day of coverage for the crop year for any NAP covered crop in the unit. The CCC-576 requires acceptable appraisal information. Producers must provide evidence of production and note whether the crop was marketable, unmarketable, salvaged, or used differently than intended.

## **DEFINING A NAP UNIT**

The NAP unit includes all the eligible crop acreage in the county where the producer has a unique crop interest. A unique crop interest is either:

- 100 percent interest; or
- A shared interest with another producer.

## **INFORMATION FSA USES TO CALCULATE A PAYMENT**

The NAP payment is calculated by unit using:

- Crop acreage;
- Approved yield;
- Net production;
- Coverage level elected by the producer;
- An average market price for the commodity established by the FSA state committee; and
- A payment factor reflecting the decreased cost incurred in the production cycle for a crop that is not harvested or prevented from being planted.

For value loss crops with additional coverage, payments will be calculated using the lesser of the field market value of the crop before the disaster or the maximum dollar value for which the

## FACT SHEET

### NAP for 2015 and Subsequent Years

December 2014

producer requested coverage at the time of application.

#### PAYMENT LIMITATION

NAP payments received, directly or indirectly, will be attributed to the applicable individual or entity and limited to \$125,000 per crop year, per individual or entity.

#### COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

FSA also wants to hear from producers and other interested stakeholders who may have suggestions or recommendations on the program. Written comments will be accepted *until Feb. 13, 2015* and can be submitted through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

#### MORE INFORMATION

Further information on NAP is available from your local FSA office at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov) or on FSA's website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap).

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*If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

# FARM LOANS

2014 FARM BILL  
FACT SHEET

November 2014

## Farm Loan Information Chart

The following chart summarizes FSA farm loan information. Additional details are available at local FSA offices and on FSA's website: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

Program	Maximum Loan Amount	Rates and Terms	Use of Proceeds
Direct Farm Ownership (FO)	\$300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate based on agency borrowing costs</li> <li>Term up to 40 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase farm</li> <li>Construct buildings or other capital improvements</li> <li>Soil and water conservation</li> <li>Pay closing costs</li> </ul>
Direct Farm Ownership (FO) Participation	\$300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate is direct FO rate less 2% with a floor of 2.5% if at least 50% of loan amount provided by other lender</li> <li>Term up to 40 years</li> </ul>	Same as Direct FO
Direct Down Payment Farm Ownership Program	The lesser of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45% of the purchase price,</li> <li>45% of the appraised value,</li> <li>\$300,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate is direct FO rate less 4% with a floor of 1.5%</li> <li>Term of 20 years</li> <li>Down payment of at least 5%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase of farm by a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer</li> </ul>
Direct Operating (OL)	\$300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate based on agency borrowing cost</li> <li>Term from 1 to 7 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase livestock, poultry, equipment, feed, seed, farm chemicals and supplies</li> <li>Soil and water conservation</li> <li>Refinance debts with certain limitations</li> </ul>
Direct Operating Microloan (ML)	\$50,000	Same as Direct OL	Same as Direct OL
Direct Emergency	100% actual or physical losses \$500,000 maximum program indebtedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate is based on the OL rate plus 1%</li> <li>Term from 1 to 7 years for non-real estate purposes</li> <li>Term up to 40 years for physical losses on real estate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore or replace essential property</li> <li>Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year</li> <li>Pay essential family living expenses</li> <li>Reorganize the farming operation</li> <li>Refinance debts with certain limitations</li> </ul>
Guaranteed Operating	\$1,392,000 (Amount adjusted annually for inflation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate determined by the lender</li> <li>Term from 1 to 7 years</li> <li>Loan guarantee fee is 1.5%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as direct OL</li> </ul>
Guaranteed Farm Ownership	\$1,392,000 (Amount adjusted annually for inflation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate determined by the lender</li> <li>Term up to 40 years</li> <li>Loan guarantee fee is 1.5%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as direct FO except loan may be used to refinance debts</li> </ul>
Guaranteed Conservation Loan (CL)	\$1,392,000 (Amount adjusted annually for inflation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate determined by the lender</li> <li>Term not to exceed 30 years, or shorter period, based on the life of the security</li> <li>Loan guarantee fee is 1.5%</li> <li>Eligibility requirements expanded to include large and financially strong operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement any conservation practice in an NRCS approved conservation plan</li> <li>May be used to refinance debts related to implementing an NRCS approved conservation plan</li> </ul>
Land Contract (LC) Guarantee	The purchase price of the farm cannot exceed the lesser of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$500,000</li> <li>The current market value of property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate cannot exceed the direct FO interest rate plus 3%</li> <li>Amortized over a minimum of 20 years with no balloon payments during the first 10 years of loan</li> <li>Down payment of at least 5%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sell real estate through a land contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer</li> <li>Guarantee is with the seller of the real estate</li> </ul>

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, write to the address below or if you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint, please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
**FARM SERVICE AGENCY**

# Farm Loans

**2014 FARM BILL  
FACT SHEET**  
November 2014

## Microloans

### Overview

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations by modifying its Operating Loan (OL) application, eligibility and security requirements. The program will offer more flexible access to credit and will serve as an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA). These smaller farms, including non-traditional farm operations, often face limited financing options.

### Use of Microloans

Microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan Program, including but not limited to:

- Initial start-up expenses;
- Annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents;
- Marketing and distribution expenses;
- Family living expenses;
- Purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials essential to farm operations;
- Minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers;
- Hoop houses to extend the growing season;
- Essential tools;
- Irrigation;
- Delivery vehicles.

### Simplified Application Process

The application process for microloans will be simpler, requiring less paperwork to fill out, to coincide with the smaller loan amount that will be associated with microloans. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to accommodate smaller farm operations, beginning farmers and those with no farm management experience. FSA understands that there will be applicants for the ML program who want to farm but do not have traditional farm experience or have not been raised on a farm or within a rural community with agriculture-affiliated organizations. ML program applicants will need to have some farm experience; however, FSA will consider an applicant's small business experience as well as any experience with a self-guided apprenticeship as a means to meet the farm management requirement. This will assist applicants who have limited farm skills by providing them with an opportunity to gain farm management experience while working with a mentor during the first production and marketing cycle.

### Security Requirements

For annual operating purposes, microloans must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount, and up to 150 percent, when available. Microloans made for purposes other than annual

operating expenses must be secured by a first lien on a farm property or agricultural products purchased with loan funds and having a security value of at least 100 percent of the microloan amount.

### Rates and Terms

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$50,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular OL rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less.

### Obtaining Forms and Submitting an Application

FSA Microloan application forms can be obtained from the local FSA office or can be downloaded and printed from the USDA website. Applicants who are having problems gathering information or completing forms should contact their local FSA office for help. After completing the required paperwork, an applicant should submit the farm loan application to the [local FSA office](#).

The following form must be completed:

[FSA 2330 -- Request for Microloan Assistance](#)

[\(Instruction Form for FSA 2330\)](#)



FLP Rates

A Interest Rates for FLP's

\*--The following provides interest rates for FLP's as of February 1, 2015.--\*

Loan Type	Current Rate (%)	Date Set
Rural Housing - Farm Loan Purposes		
<b>Note:</b> For the current interest rate, contact the National Office.		
Operating	2.625	12/1/14
Operating - Limited Resource	5.000	12/1/90
Farm Ownership and Conservation Loans	*--3.750	2/1/15--*
Farm Ownership - Limited Resource	5.000	4/1/86
Farm Ownership - Down Payment	1.500	5/22/08
Farm Ownership - Joint Financing	2.500	2/7/14
Soil and Water	*--3.750	2/1/15
Soil and Water - Limited Resource	5.000	7/1/92
Recreation - Individual	3.750	2/1/15
Farmer Program - Homestead Protection	3.750	2/1/15
Shared Appreciation Amortization	2.750	2/1/15
Softwood Timber Loans	3.750	2/1/15
Economic Emergency - Operating	2.625	12/1/14
Economic Emergency - Real Estate	3.750	2/1/15
Emergency - Amount of Actual Loss	3.625	12/1/14
Emergency - Major Adjustment: Subtitle A Purpose (Excess of Loss)	6.125	2/1/15--*
Emergency - Major Adjustment: Subtitle B Purpose (Excess of Loss)	4.750	12/1/14
Emergency - Annual Production	4.750	12/1/14
Nonprogram - Chattel Property	4.750	12/1/14
Nonprogram - Real Property	*--6.125	2/1/15
Apple Loans	1.000	2/1/15
Association - Grazing	3.750	2/1/15
Association - Irrigation and Drainage	3.750	2/1/15--*
Indian Land Acquisition	5.000	2/1/91

Publication 622, which provides amortization tables and financial basic payment tables, is available from MSD Warehouse. To request Publication 622, complete FSA-159, available at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/forms.html>, and submit it by 1 of the following methods:

- FAX to 816-823-4740 or 816-823-4741
- e-mail to [ra.mokansasc2.kcasbwhse](mailto:ra.mokansasc2.kcasbwhse)
- mail to:

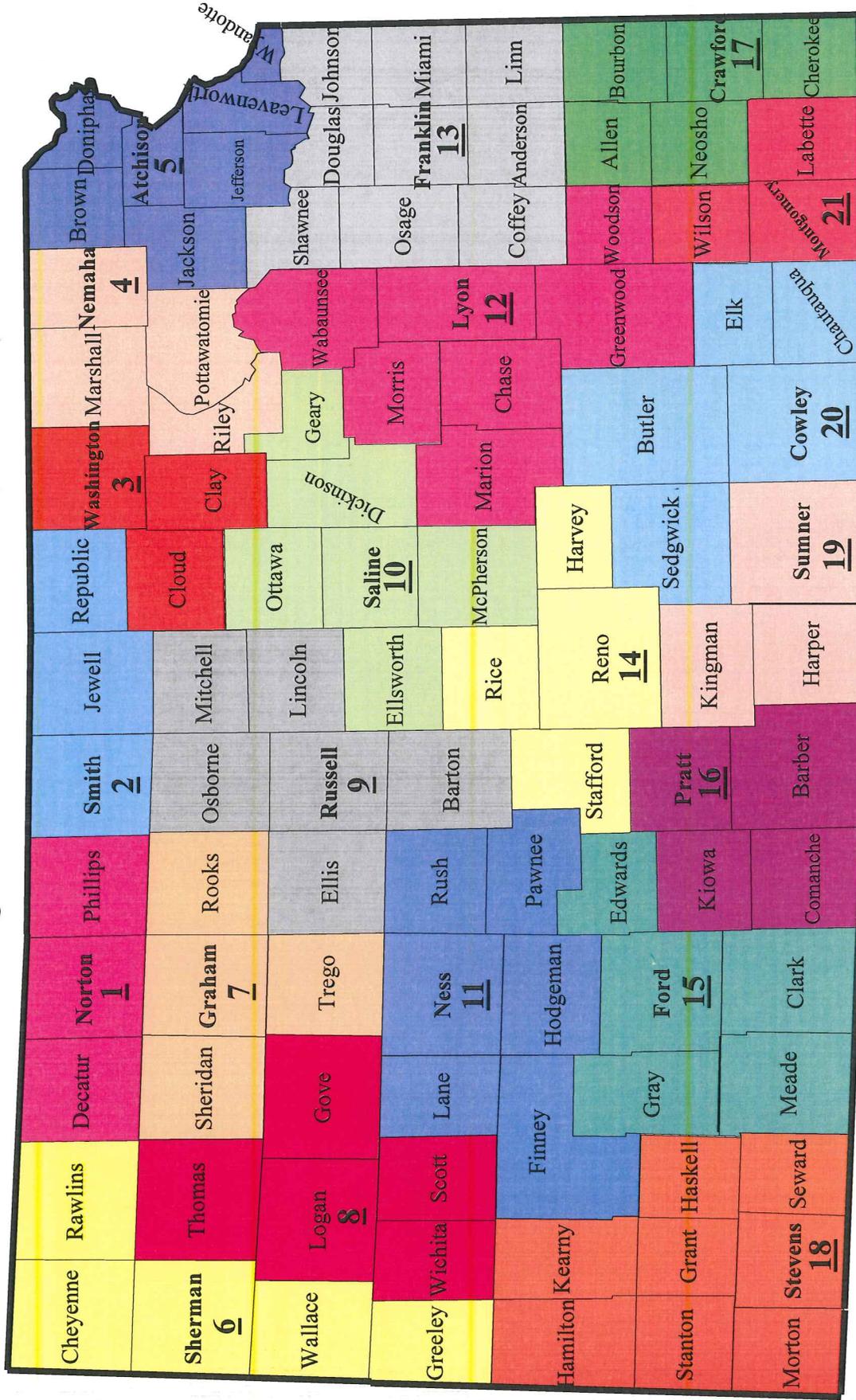
USDA/FSA/Kansas City Warehouse  
9240 Troost Ave  
Kansas City MO 64131.





# Kansas Farm Service Agency Farm Loan Programs

Office Locations - Areas of Responsibility –  
Loan Manager/Officer Contact Information (effective 12/1/14)



1. Pat Bohl, 11640 Pineview Dr., Norton, KS, 67654, 785-877-5156
2. Bret Strine, 319 Roger Barra Way, Smith Center, KS 66967, 785-282-3832
3. Emily Allen, 705 B. St., Washington, KS 66968, 785-325-2253
4. Kay McCoy, 409 North St., Seneca, KS 66538, 785-336-3543
5. Bruce Nutsch, 605 Sixth St., Effingham, KS 66023, 913-833-5460
6. Patty Eckhardt, 210 W. 10<sup>th</sup> St #2, Goodland, KS 67735, 785-899-3070
7. Randy Thiel, 100 N. 12<sup>th</sup> Ave., Hill City, KS 67642, 785-421-2115
8. Dwight Jurey, 1015 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Oakley, KS 67748, 785-672-4861

9. Mark Herrmann, 555 S. Fossil, Russell, KS 67665, 785-483-5618
10. Bill Mahanay, 1410 E. Iron, Suite 12, Salina, KS 67401, 785-825-8269
11. Bonita Pfannenstiel – 18635 140 Rd, Ness City, KS 67560, 785-798-3614
12. Eric Guenther., 3020 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite A, Emporia, KS 66801, 620-343-2812
13. Stacy Kull, 343 W 23<sup>rd</sup> St., Ste 1, Ottawa, KS 66067, 785-242-3260
14. Ray Bartholomew, 18 East 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., S Hutchinson, KS 67505, 620-669-8161
15. Kevin Vondra, 104 Soule St., Dodge City, KS 67801, 620-227-5731

16. Kevin Vondra, 299 NE SR 61, Pratt, KS 67124, 620-672-7449
17. Bob White, 207 S. Summit, Girard, KS 66743, 620-724-6227
18. Will Schmittler, 607-A E. 11<sup>th</sup>, Hugoton, KS 67951, 620-544-2261
19. Limal Vinson, 320 N. Jefferson, Wellington, KS 67152, 620-326-2269
20. Limal Vinson, 2118 E. 9<sup>th</sup>, Winfield, KS 67156, 620-221-2060
21. Becky Witest, 410 Peter Pan Rd, Suite A, Independence, KS 67301, 620-331-4860





# Louisiana farmers: 'farm-to-table' is a buzzword, not a revenue stream

Megan Wyatt and Adam Duvernay, Gannett Louisiana 7:56 p.m. CST January 18, 2015



(Photo: Jim Hudelson/The Times)

The growing farm-to-table movement seems like it would be a win-win for Louisiana. Farmers get to sell and spotlight their products on local restaurant menus. Chefs get to work with the freshest local ingredients. Customers get to support and learn more about local agriculture.

But the movement hasn't given Louisiana farmers the financial backing they'd like.

They say farm-to-table is a buzzword that does little more than market their product. And in some cases, restaurant owners even falsely advertise they are serving goods from area farms the restaurants aren't purchasing.

And they're concerned with a part of the message that seems to favor small-batch farming over the kind of industrialized process responsible for the state of American farms and the feeding of millions around the world.

"It's a great initiative because it is locally grown and healthy, but I don't think you have to say just because it wasn't grown here's it's less healthy," said Steve Logan, owner of Logan Farms. "Don't confuse buying sweet corn at the farmers market when it's in season with feeding your family year round on locally grown produce."

Logan grows soy beans, cotton and corn in fields across north Caddo Parish. His profit margins are small and require great efficiency to maintain from year to year, something modern techniques, fertilizers and machinery allow him. Farm-to-table isn't a term with which he has great familiarity, but he's noticed a call for "organic" produce and he isn't impressed.

"It just makes them feel better," Logan said. "Someone out there is working their tail off to get those foods into grocery stores."

Logan and other Louisiana farmers want people to know where their food came from. They want them to know American farmers raise the healthiest and most abundant crops on the planet. They want them to be proud of their local growers.

They don't want to be part of a fad.

## Local in Acadiana

"How has the farm-to-table movement impacted us?" mused Acadiana farmer Brian Gotreaux. "I can't say that it has a whole lot."

Located in Scott just outside of Lafayette, Gotreaux Family Farms has grown during the past 15 years from a small operation meant to provide organic, nutrient-dense food for Gotreaux and his family into one that anchors the Hub City Farmers Market and provides fresh produce and meat to many in Acadiana.

Gotreaux grows 167 varieties of produce and is known for his grass-fed, pasture-raised chickens. He also produces tilapia, lamb, beef, goat, eggs and honey on the farm.

On a recent chilly Wednesday afternoon, he was preparing an order for Lafayette restaurant Dark Roux, which opened Dec. 29.

Restaurant owner Ryan Trahan recently picked up 120 pounds of chicken, 80 pounds of turkey, 40 tilapia filets, 20 dozen eggs and about 100 pounds of fresh winter produce — enough food to last the restaurant about two days.

"We've been seeing the Gotreauxs pretty much daily since we opened," Trahan said.

Trahan uses Gotreaux and other local vendors to populate his always-changing menu, which consists wholly of local foods except for three items he hasn't been able source locally: flour, onions and the heirloom corn used in the stone-ground grits.

Dark Roux is one of only a few truly farm-to-table restaurants in Acadiana, according to Gotreaux.

Gotreaux said there are many more restaurants that purchase a handful of veggies from a farmers market to use in a dinner special so they can increase their business through the buzzword "farm-to-table." Other restaurants actually will use local producers' names on menu items that are not coming from the sources cited.

"There's a lot of chefs who say they're using our products," Gotreaux said. "There's a lot of chefs just using the buzzword for market share."

Farm-to-table isn't even a description Gotreaux likes to use.

McDonald's or Burger King could be considered farm-to-table restaurants, he reasons, because they source their food from some kind of a farm and it ends up on a table.

Trahan agrees.

"All food really comes from a farm, whether it be a commercial farm or a local farm or whatever," Trahan said. "All food comes from a farm, and it all in some way ends up on a table. Everything can be farm-to-table."

So if not farm-to-table, then what?

"We support local foods," Trahan said. "We're a community food-based restaurant."

### **Movement growing in Northwest Louisiana**

In North Louisiana, winters can be harsh and summers are always hot. Drought has sapped yields and profits both. Crops just aren't available all year long, according to Logan.

"We have such severe seasons," Logan said. "It's not practical to serve a whole menu from local foods."

For Jason Brady, owner of Wine Country Bistro in Shreveport, making partnerships with local farmers serves a twofold purpose — letting him shake the hands which feed his customers and ensuring as many dollars stay in the area as possible.

During the bountiful spring and summer seasons, Brady said as much as 80 percent of his menu is locally sourced. His menu will change as many as three times a year. When he can get local tomatoes, he does. When he can't, he gets them from somewhere else.

"I'm fortunate in a way because Wine Country is based on a seasonal menu. We worked to be local. We worked to be regional. We worked to be seasonal," he said. "At the end of the day it's true food, healthier food and a more honest approach to the way we cook."

Farm-to-table — and working with growers such as Princeton's Mahaffey Farms — is a passion for Brady, but the area is a small market when compared to the food demands on New Orleans. If more restaurants put in the effort to source their food locally (he hopes to add more Ark-La-Tex protein to his menu in 2015) it might encourage more farmers to make the efforts necessary to sell directly to them.

"Within a couple of years, I see the most popular steaks, lamb chops and pork chops coming from within 30 miles of Shreveport," Brady said.

Mchaffey Farms is a small vegetables and pastured meats operation, according to owner Evan McCommon. He considers his farm a craft operation, one bent on helping local chefs — professional and amateur — discover a flavor that could define this area's food.

The idea "farm-to-table" is a dishonest term doesn't sit well with him.

"I wouldn't call it a buzzword. It's more of a trend or a movement that starts small and grows," McCommon said. "We're just seeing the beginning of this."

The number of restaurants buying his produce and the pork, beef and chicken that are the bulk of his business has increased strikingly over the last year, McCommon said. He said he'll keep raising and growing the food if local chefs keep trying to raise the bar in their homes and restaurants.

"We can't be farm-to-table without chefs," McCommon said. "They're the ones who have to let me in the door and buy from me."

matter how it's phrased, the business farmers such as Gotreaux now receive from restaurants focusing on local foods isn't enough to really impact earnings.

"I can't say one way or another that it would make or break us," Gotreaux said. "It's a small movement here in Lafayette. A lot of people think it's bigger than it really is."

Farmers in other parts of the state are saying the same.

"To me, 'buy local' means bought from the individual who grew it or raised it; that you didn't just walk into Walmart," said Caddo cattleman Marty Wooldridge. "Is it a trend? It's trendy, but I think it's here to stay."

Five years ago, Wooldridge might've had just five cows set aside and "on feed" for individuals looking for fresh, homegrown beef. This year he's got 20, but that prospect, an effort to clear the legal hurdles to selling his own branded beef products at farmers markets and a new interest in hogs are only a small part of his overall business.

"It's about diversification for us. It won't be 100 percent of our business, it won't be 50 percent, but it's growing," Wooldridge said. "Yes, it's probably a hot topic right now, but people are becoming more aware of where their food is coming from."

Based in Farmerville, Anthony Yakaboski grows a few hundred acres of peaches, purple hull peas, melons, okra and other local produce on his farm. He got into the business about 18 years ago because of his love for growing.

Although his customer base has grown through the years, he doesn't see any real difference in business from the local foods movement.

"Everybody says local, fresh is the way to go," Yakaboski says, "but they don't really practice what they preach."

What Yakaboski is seeing is individual customers and restaurants seeking convenience above all else. Customers used to pick their own fruits and vegetables from his farm, but now they want it washed and packaged at farmers markets. Most restaurants have moved from working with a handful of local vendors to using large supply companies where they can be guaranteed to get the products they want.

Even so, everybody wants a piece of that local foods market share.

"If you're not careful, you'll find a lot of people who will actually lie to you and try to say that they are but they're not actually promoting fresh, local stuff," Yakaboski said.

Again and again that is the story farmers are telling in Louisiana. Many promote local, but few actually purchase local.

Marguerite Constantine, who owns WesMar Family Farms in Moreauville, echoes the sentiment. Sitting on only about two acres of land, her farm consists primarily of goats — about 70 dairy and meat — but also includes seasonal produce.

"We've been very disappointed in some of the restaurants that we thought would embrace the ability to purchase locally," Constantine said.

Like Gotreaux and Yakaboski, Constantine didn't inherit her farm but instead began raising goats about 15 years ago because she could not find sources for the goat milk and cheese she grew to love during her time spent traveling abroad.

Part of her mission with the farm has been not only to make ends meet but to educate people, including her children and grandchildren, on where food comes from. The farm is certified as a zoo just so she can allow the public to tour the farm.

"I want the restaurant owners and their staff to come visit, come taste, come see, come pet the goats," Constantine said. "And it's amazing they have."

Constantine has seen a slow-and-steady increase in business through the years, although she said the farm-to-table movement isn't necessarily why.

More than a steady revenue stream, the restaurants have provided an awareness about local foods.

"Louisiana is starting to get it," Constantine said. "Our business has gotten stronger because of that awareness."

Consumers getting smarter about their food is a good thing, Wooldridge said, and so is an interest in supporting local producers. People want to shake their farmers' hands and meet their beef.

"I would love for them to," Wooldridge said. "When I sell it to them, I tell them it was born here and raised here. They like to hear that. I even tell them it's

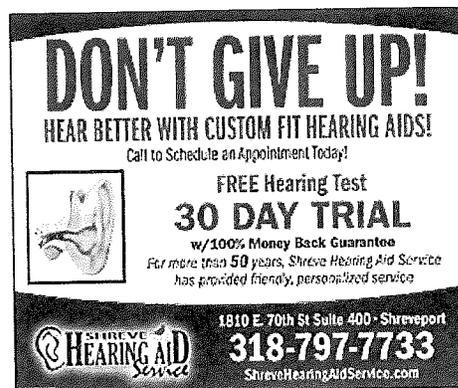
Louisiana farmers: 'farm-to-table' is a buzzword, not a revenue stream  
been raised mostly on locally grown grain. They even like to hear that."

Louisiana  
Not a  
No  
of

### What exactly is farm-to-table, anyway?

Farm-to-table is a movement concerned with producing food locally and delivering it directly to local consumers. It is closely linked to the local food movement and is promoted by those in the agriculture, food service and restaurant communities who are concerned with sustainable agriculture. According to Google Trends, the term farm-to-table first trended in 2006 and has seen slow but steady growth ever since, seeing record use in August 2014. The term is forecast to become even more popular this year.

Read or Share this story: <http://www.shreveporttimes.com/story/news/local/louisiana/2015/01/18/louisiana-farmers-farm-table-buzzword-revenue-stream/21974047/>



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# USDA announces new support to help schools buy more local food

By Larry Dreiling

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack Dec. 2 announced more than \$5 million in grants for 82 projects spanning 42 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands that support the U.S. Department of Agriculture's efforts to connect school cafeterias with local farmers and ranchers through its Farm to School Program.

The program helps schools purchase more food from local farmers and ranchers in their communities, expanding access to healthy local food for school children and supporting local economies.

According to USDA's first-ever Farm to School Census released earlier this year, school districts participating in farm to school programs purchased and served over \$385 million in local food in school year 2011-12, with more than half of participating schools planning to increase their purchases of local food in the future.

"USDA is proud to support communities across the country as they plan and implement innovative farm to school projects," said Vilsack. "These inspiring collaborations provide students with healthy, fresh food, while supporting healthy local economies."

"Through farm to school projects, community partners are coming together to ensure a bright future for students, and for local farmers and ranchers."

Vilsack made this announcement at Common Market, a pioneering food hub in Philadelphia that connects wholesale customers to farmers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Common Market is receiving a grant to support their "An Apple a Day" Program. The facility will act as a bridge between Pennsylvania Family Farms, a small Pennsylvania value-added processor, and public charter schools to provide food safety, product development, packaging, educational, marketing, planning, ordering and delivery support to farm and school food service partners.

Together, Common Market and the other selected projects will serve more than 4,800 schools and 2.8 million students, nearly 51 percent of whom live in rural communities.

In Colorado, the Mancos Conservation District has won a \$97,683 grant for the Mancos Conservation District's Local Foods4Local School's project. The project is developing a new model for school-

based food production by hiring school staff to cultivate a farm plot on school district property, increasing student's access to local foods, and engaging students in educational farming and gardening activities. The Local Foods4Local Schools program will serve Montezuma and La Plata Counties as well as two Native American reservations.

In Kansas, the Kansas State Department of Education Child Nutrition and Wellness Team received a \$24,990 grant to host four farm to school networking and training workshops throughout the state to increase the availability of quality local foods in the school cafeteria by strengthening local farm to school supply chain networks, knowledge of food safety requirements and school-based procurement processes.

The regional workshops will plant the idea to move beyond fruits and vegetables and explore options and opportunities across the school breakfast and lunch tray. Workshops will address the need for production, processing and handling safety as well as provide networking opportunities for local producers and school personnel.

The Inter Tribal Buffalo Council in South Dakota received \$99,189 to provide locally raised tribal bison meat into the school lunch programs, procure other locally produced food products, and implement school gardens.

The National FFA Organization also received a \$50,000 grant to connect local youth producers/FFA members to school food buyers and host a series of webinars focused on developing state level partnerships.

For a complete list of FY15 Farm to School grant recipients, visit [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/FY\\_2015\\_Grant\\_Award\\_Summaries.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/FY_2015_Grant_Award_Summaries.pdf).

USDA's Farm to School Grants help schools respond to the growing demand for locally sourced foods and increase market opportunities for producers and food businesses, including food processors, manufacturers and distributors. Grants will also be used to support agriculture and nutrition education efforts such as school gardens, field trips to local farms and cooking classes.

USDA Farm to School Conference and Event Grants support regional, state and national conferences, events and/or trainings that have a specific emphasis on developing supply chain relationships by connecting local producers to school food buyers, along with events and trainings that provide technical assistance or other programming in the area of local procurement, food safety, culinary education and integration of agriculture-based curriculum.

USDA's Farm to School Program is made possible by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which authorized USDA to provide grants and technical assistance to help schools gain better access to local foods. Since 2012, USDA has awarded \$15.1 million in grants to 221 Farm to School projects in 49 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. The Farm to School program is a core element

of the USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative, which coordinates the department's work on local food systems.

USDA is focused on improving childhood nutrition and empowering families to make healthier food choices by providing science-based information and advice, while expanding the availability of healthy food.

America's students now have healthier and more nutritious school meals due to improved nutrition standards implemented as a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

USDA's MyPlate symbol and the resources at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) provide quick, easy reference tools for parents, teachers, healthcare professionals and communities.

USDA awarded \$5.2 million in grants to provide training and technical assistance for child nutrition foodservice professionals and support stronger school nutrition education programs.

Since 2009, USDA has provided \$160 million in kitchen equipment funding to states and schools. President Barack Obama's fiscal year 2015 budget requests an additional \$35 million for kitchen equipment grants. These grants are one of several ways that USDA is supporting schools as they implement the updated nutrition standards.

USDA recently launched a pilot project, called Team Up for School Nutrition Success, which is working with schools to identify challenges, provide free, customized training and match schools with mentors who have successfully addressed similar challenges.

Collectively these policies and actions are helping to combat child hunger and obesity, while improving the health and nutrition of the nation's children. For more information on USDA's Farm to School Program, visit [www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool).

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## Revitalized MU Soil Characterization Lab will find new home in CAFNR

For many years the Soil Testing Lab at the University of Missouri has been a valuable resource for producers of the state. Results from the tests give farmers a list of recommendations to improve crop and forage yields. But a lesser-known testing facility is getting a facelift and will be ready to receive samples come spring.

Once housed in the MU College of Engineering, ownership of the MU Soil Characterization Lab is transferring to the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Lab space is being renovated at the college's South Farm

of undisturbed prairie, pristine forests, cultivated fields and even areas that have been under cover crops."

Instead of just recommendations the lab will give results on the soil properties and the attributes of active carbon. By referencing the results against other sites, it gives the grower better comprehension of the test based on localized and site-specific indexes.

"Think of it like human genetics," added Miles. "Each of us is born with specific traits. The same is with soil. Some areas inherit certain traits and can't be

suggested strategies are getting the job done that can have a huge impact on efficiency," said Miles.

As the lab distributes results from producers, it will build on a database for future tests. The more location assessments the lab accumulates, the more it will help a producer define their specific site as healthy.

The MU Soil Characterization Lab is unique as it is the only remaining lab of its kind at a land-grant university. The only other lab is the National NRCS Kellogg Soil Survey Center in Lincoln, Nebraska.



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Kansas & Neighbors Vegetable Production: Past, Present, Future – *David Coltrain*  
Growing Vegetables in Southwest Kansas – *Cary Rivard*  
Marketing Considerations – *David Coltrain*  
Making the Most of Your Water – *Cary Rivard*  
The Return of the Small Family Farm – *Dan Kuhn*  
Retail Marketing – *TBD*  
Turning Your Hobby Into a Business – *David Coltrain*  
Extending the Growing Season with Microclimate Modification – *Cary Rivard*

SPONSORS INCLUDE EXTENSION OFFICES FROM GRANT, HASKELL, MEADE, SEWARD & STEVENS COUNTIES.

Register by Jan. 29: [david.coltrain@sccc.edu](mailto:david.coltrain@sccc.edu) or call 620-417-1354.



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**Student Union 229 C/D, Seward County Community College**

- |       |   |                |
|-------|---|----------------|
| 8:45  | Registration  |                |
| 9:00  | Welcome, Kansas Vegetable Production: Past, Present, Future | David Coltrain |
| 9:30  | Growing Vegetables in SW Kansas                             | Cary Rivard    |
| 10:15 | Marketing Considerations                                    | David Coltrain |
| 10:45 | Break   |                |
| 11:00 | Making the Most of Your Water                               | Cary Rivard    |
| 11:45 | Lunch   |                |
| 12:30 | Wholesale Marketing   | Dan Kuhn       |
| 1:00  | Retail Marketing  | Jill Elmers    |
| 1:30  | Break   |                |
| 1:45  | Turning Your Hobby into a Business                          | David Coltrain |
| 2:30  | Extending the Growing Season with Microclimate Modification | Cary Rivard    |
| 3:15  | Questions, Wrap Up, Future Topics, Evaluations              | Presenters     |

Registration: \$10.00 (includes lunch)

**Sponsors:**

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <del>Pay at the Door</del>     | Grant County Extension   |
| RSVP by January 29             | Haskell County Extension |
| Contact David Coltrain         | Meade County Extension   |
| Phone: 620-417-1354            | Seward County Extension  |
| email: david.coltrain@sccc.edu | Stevens County Extension |