

USDA Reopens FSA Offices for Some Services During Government Shutdown

Tuesday, January 22, 2019 News Release from the USDA

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced that all Farm Service Agency offices nationwide will soon reopen to provide additional administrative services to farmers and ranchers during the lapse in federal funding. Certain FSA offices have been providing limited services for existing loans and tax documents since January 17, and will continue to do so through January 23. Beginning January 24, however, all FSA offices will open and offer a longer list of transactions they will accommodate.

Additionally, Secretary Perdue announced that the deadline to apply for the Market Facilitation Program, which aids farmers harmed by unjustified retaliatory tariffs, has been extended to February 14. The original deadline had been January 15. Other program deadlines may be modified and will be announced as they are addressed.

"At President Trump's direction, we have been working to alleviate the effects of the lapse in federal funding as best we can, and we are happy to announce the reopening of FSA offices for certain services," Perdue said. "The FSA provides vital support for farmers and ranchers and they count on those services being available. We want to offer as much assistance as possible until the partial government shutdown is resolved."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has temporarily recalled all of the more than 9,700 FSA employees to keep offices open from 8 am to 4:30 pm weekdays beginning January 24. President Trump has already signed legislation that guarantees employees will receive all backpay missed during the lapse in funding.

For the first two full weeks under this operating plan (January 28 through February 1 and February 4 through February 8), FSA offices will be open Mondays through Fridays. In subsequent weeks, offices will be open three days a week, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, if needed to provide the additional administrative services.

Agricultural producers who have business with the agency can contact their FSA service center to make an appointment.

FSA can provide these administrative services, which are critical for farmers and ranchers, because failure to perform these services would harm funded programs. FSA staff will work on the following transactions:

- Market Facilitation Program
- Marketing Assistance Loans
- Release of collateral warehouse receipts
- Direct and Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans, and Emergency Loans
- Service existing Conservation Reserve Program contracts
- Sugar Price Support Loans
- Dairy Margin Protection Program
- Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage

- Livestock Forage Disaster
 - Emergency Assistance Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish Program
 - Livestock Indemnity Program
 - Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
 - Tree Assistance Program
 - Remaining Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program payments for applications already processed
- Transactions that will not be available include, but are not limited to:

- New Conservation Reserve Program contracts
- New Direct and Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loans
- Farm Storage Facility Loan Program
- New or in-process Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program applications
- Emergency Conservation Program
- Emergency Forest Rehabilitation Program
- Biomass Crop Assistance Program
- Grassroots Source Water Protection Program

With the Office of Management and Budget, USDA reviewed all of its funding accounts that are not impacted by the lapse in appropriation. We further refined this list to include programs where the suspension of the activity associated with these accounts would significantly damage or prevent the execution of the terms of the underlying statutory provision. As a result of this review, USDA was able to except more employees. Those accounts that are not impacted by the lapse in appropriation include mandatory, multiyear and no year discretionary funding including FY 2018 Farm Bill activities.

Updates to available services and offices will be made during the lapse in federal funding on the FSA shutdown webpage (<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/help/shutdowninfo>).

Programs managed by FSA that were re-authorized by the 2018 farm bill will be available at a later date yet to be determined.

Taylor Recognized with Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Award

Friday, January 18, 2019

From AgriLife TODAY

The Governor Dolph Briscoe Jr. Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership, or TALL, program has honored Daniel Taylor with the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Achievement Award.

The award was presented recently at the Austin Club during a "Tribute to Texas Leadership" reception, hosted by The Governor Dolph Briscoe Jr. TALL program alumni, the Texas A&M University System and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Previous honorees of the TALL Lifetime Achievement Award include former Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe and former Congressman Charlie Stenholm.

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Since 2009, Taylor has been president/manager of DLT Enterprises Inc. where he is involved in agricultural investments and land management in Castro, Hockley, Lamb, Llano, Lubbock, Lynn, McCulloch and Terry counties in Texas.

“TALL has benefited greatly from the wisdom and guidance Dan Taylor has contributed,” said Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, TALL program director in College Station. “His first-hand knowledge of agriculture operations combined with his passion for education and his sharing that knowledge has made a huge contribution to this state.”

After graduating from Texas Tech University with a bachelor’s degree in agriculture education, Taylor spent 10 years as an agriculture science teacher at Lubbock Cooper High School in Woodrow, where he led students involved in all FFA activities and participated in many state and national contests.

In 1975, Taylor became manager and co-owner of Buster’s Gin and later purchased the gin in 1983. From a humble beginning of ginning less than 2000 bales from only two customers, Taylor each year saw increased production, according to his award nomination. He later updated the gin to a modern, state-of-the-art facility, always keeping the quality of ginning and service a priority.

Keeping with his educational roots, Taylor built an expansion on the gin with space for the public to experience the cotton ginning process in person, along with a museum that includes antique ginning equipment and memorabilia Taylor has collected over the years.

Through the years, Taylor has served as president of the Bayer Museum of Agriculture and has been a member of the Texas Tech School of Agriculture and Natural Resources advisory board. He previously served as president of the Texas FFA Foundation Board and is still a board member.

The Governor Dolph Briscoe Jr. Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program is a competitive leadership development program that includes seminars with experts, on-site tours, meetings with business and government leaders, international study and personal skills improvement. It is funded by individuals and institutions through private gifts and grants. Participants pay a participant fee and AgriLife Extension provides administrative support with 100 percent of the program support paid by the agriculture industry.

The TALL program is designed for men and women in the early stages of their leadership careers. Each cohort consists of at least 25 people who are associated with agriculture. Participants come from every sector of agriculture and all parts of Texas.

Upcoming Area Ag Conferences and Auxin Trainings

January 28 – Top of Texas Cotton Conference, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., M.K. Brown Auditorium, 1100 W. Coronado Drive, **Pampa**. Three CEUs in IPM available; no cost. More info: Jody Bradford, Carson County CEA-AG/NR, (806) 537-3882.

January 28 – Cotton Pre-Plant Meeting, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Happy State Bank Conference Room, 500 Main St., **Silverton**. More info: Mason Carter, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 823-2522.

January 29 – Llano Estacado Cotton Conference, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Bailey County Electric Cooperative, 610 E. American Blvd., **Muleshoe**. CEUs available. More info: John David Gonzales, EA-IPM or Curtis Preston, Bailey County CEA-AG/NR, (806) 252-4583, or Sergio Mendez, Parmer County CEA-AG/NR, (806) 251-5120.

January 29 – West Texas Cotton Research Update hosted by The Cotton Board, 8 a.m., Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, 1102 E. FM 1294, **Lubbock**. More info: <http://www.cottonboard.org/news/press-releases/cotton-board-hosts-meeting-to-inform-producers-about-west-texas-cotton-incorporated-funded-research/>

January 30 – Pre-Plant Producers Meeting (with Auxin Training), 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Kuhlman Extension Center, 200 N. Brown Road, **Canyon**. More info: Dr. J.D. Ragland, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 468-5543.

January 31 – Moore County Crops Conference (with Auxin Training), 8:30 a.m., Moore County Community Building, 16th and Maddox, **Dumas**. Cost \$10. More info: Marcel Fischbacher, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 935-2594.

January 31 – Hale/Swisher Crops Conference, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Ollie Liner Center, 2000 S. Columbia St., **Plainview**. Cost \$20, lunch provided, CEUs available. More info: Jason Miller, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 291-5267.

February 1 – High Plains Cotton Conference, Hansford County Event Center, 622 East D Avenue, **Spearman**. 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., no cost, 3 CEUs available. More info: Kristy Slough, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 878-4026.

February 8 – Auxin Training, 9-11 a.m., Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, 1102 E. FM 1294, **Lubbock**

February 8 – Auxin Training, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, **Amarillo**

February 12 – Randall Commodity Marketing Workshop, 3-6 p.m., Kuhlman Extension Center, 200 N. Brown Road, **Canyon**. \$10 cost, dinner provided, RSVP by February 8. More info: Dr. J.D. Ragland, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 468-5543.

February 12-13 – No-Till Texas Soil Health Symposium, Amarillo Civic Center North Exhibit Hall, **Amarillo**. Registration \$60. More info: <https://www.no-tilltexas.com>.

February 14 – Oldham County Ag Day, Oldham County Barn, 305 Coke Street, **Vega**. 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. More info: Amanda Spiva, CEA-AG/NR, (806) 267-2692.

To see a complete list of upcoming conferences and auxin trainings, visit <http://www.plainscotton.org/agconferences.html>.

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Editor’s Note:

“Cotton News”, a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email PCG at: editor@plainscotton.org