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## USDA Stands Up New Team to Better Serve Beginning Farmers in Ohio

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**COLUMBUS, OH, August 27, 2020** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is standing up a new team that will lead a department-wide effort focused on serving beginning farmers.

To institutionalize support for beginning farmers and to build upon prior agency work, the 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to create a national coordinator position in the agency and state-level coordinators for four of its agencies – Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), and Rural Development (RD).

Doug Deardorff was selected as the NRCS USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher state coordinator in Ohio. Doug has spent over 35 years serving farmers with land stewardship and conservation assistance. He and his brother are co-owners of a farm and working with their tenant farmer to protect soil, water and related resources is important to them. Doug is very aware of the challenges and risks that young farmers face to get started and achieve some stability in their farming careers.

Others on the team coordinating Ohio's beginning farmers efforts include, Kurt Leber, Farm Loan Manager with FSA; Jennifer Brown, Community Program Specialist with RD; and Jacob Brockhouse, Risk Management Specialist with RMA. This is a collateral duty for all team members.

Each state coordinator will receive training and develop tailored beginning farmer outreach plans for their state. Coordinators will help field employees better reach and serve beginning farmers and ranchers and will also be available to assist beginning farmers who need help navigating the variety of resources USDA has to offer.

### **More on Beginning Farmers**

Twenty-seven percent of farmers were categorized as new and beginning producers, with 10 years or less of experience in agriculture, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

USDA offers a variety of farm loan, risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs to support farmers, including beginning farmers and ranchers. Additionally, a number of these

programs have provisions specifically for beginning farmers, including targeted funding for loans and conservation programs as well as waivers and exemptions.

### **More Information**

Learn more about USDA's resources for beginning farmers as well as more information on the national and state-level coordinators at [farmers.gov/newfarmers](https://farmers.gov/newfarmers). For more information on available programs in your area, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

#### **Farm Service Agency:**

1400 Independence Ave.  
SW Washington, DC 20250

#### **Contact:**

FPAC Press Desk  
[FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov](mailto:FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov)