



Farm Service Agency  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## [USDA Stands Up New Team to Better Serve Beginning Farmers and Ranchers in Montana](#)

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**BOZEMAN, Montana, August 19, 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 and ranchers.

To institutionalize support for beginning farmers and ranchers 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).

Faith Hill was selected as the USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher state coordinator in Montana. Hill is a beginning farmer. Born and raised in Montana, she grew up with a love for the livestock industry. Hill and her husband have a handful of commercial cattle and are trying to find their place in agriculture. For the past two years, Hill has been a civil engineer for the NRCS. She is passionate about Montana agriculture, conservation, her family's role in producing food and fiber for the world and preserving the rural life they hold dear.

Others on the team coordinating Montana's beginning farmers and rancher efforts include, Kris Nicholson, farm loan manager with USDA Farm Service Agency; John Lockie, risk management specialist with USDA Risk Management Agency; and Marlee Sandry, business and community programs intern with USDA Rural Development. 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 and Ranchers](#)**

Twenty-seven percent of farmers and ranchers 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](#).

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