
USDA Stands Up New Team to Better Serve Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

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WASHINGTON, March 16, 2020 ? The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is standing up a new team of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) staff that will lead a department-wide effort focused on serving beginning farmers and ranchers.

“More than a quarter of producers are beginning farmers,” said USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Censky. “We need to support the next generation of agricultural producers who we will soon rely upon to grow our nation’s food and fiber.”

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).

Sarah Campbell was selected as the national coordinator to lead USDA’s efforts. A beginning farmer herself, Campbell held previous positions with USDA and has a wealth of experience working on issues impacting beginning farmers and ranchers. She recently served as acting director of customer experience for the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center, where she led the piloting of innovative, customer-centric initiatives.

In her new role, she will work closely with the state coordinators to develop goals and create plans to increase beginning farmer participation and access to programs while coordinating nationwide efforts on beginning farmers and ranchers.

“We know starting a new farm business is extremely challenging, and we know our customers value and benefit from being able to work directly with our field employees, especially beginning farmers,” Campbell said. “These new coordinators will be a key resource at the local level and will help beginning farmers get the support they need. I look forward to working with them.”

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 newfarmers.usda.gov and farmers.gov. 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