

# BARNYARDS & BACKYARDS

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## Beginning farmer, rancher loan programs part of 2014 Farm Bill

Passage of the 2014 farm bill made available beginning farmer and rancher loans, including direct operating, guaranteed operating, direct ownership, and guaranteed farm ownership.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) targets a certain portion of its direct and guaranteed loan portfolio to beginning farmers and ranchers, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. FSA Loan Funds Reserved for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers**

Program	% of Funds Targeted
Direct Operating	35
Guaranteed Operating	40
Direct Farm Ownership	70
Guaranteed Farm Ownership	25

### For more information

Visit the Farm Service Agency's website at <http://bit.ly/FarmLoanPrograms> or visit your local FSA office to learn more about the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loan Program and other loan programs available. USDA has Web resources available for new farmers as well at [newfarmers.usda.gov](http://newfarmers.usda.gov).

For more information on this and other risk management topics pertinent to your operation, visit [RightRisk.org](http://RightRisk.org).

Availability is on a first-come, first-served basis, until funding (as appropriated by Congress) is depleted for the fiscal year.

### Program Requirements

Eligible new farmers and ranchers must not have been actively farming or ranching for 10 years. Applicants may not have owned a farm in that time larger than 30 percent of the average farm size in their counties.

This recent change makes the program more accessible, whereas previously the requirement was based on median farm size.

Applicants must also meet the standard requirements for USDA loans and financing: good standing, credit history, no federal debt forgiveness, etc.

### Direct Loans and Guarantee Funding

Direct loans are made and serviced directly through FSA, whereas a commercial bank or other lender originates guarantee funding for either real estate or operating loans, and FSA then guarantees the loan up to 95 percent of the value.

FSA provides oversight of the loan after the guarantee has been made in a guaranteed loan situation.

Direct loans of up to \$300,000 may be made for up to 40-year terms. Direct down-payment guarantee

Beginning farm operators often view financing as one of the more crucial parts of their risk management planning.

Finding accessible low-rate financing can also mean the difference between success and failure.

loans of \$300,000, for up to 45 percent of the purchase price, may be made for no more than 20-year terms.

Qualifying producers are expected to pay 5 percent of the purchase price as a down payment.

Direct operating loans can be for up to \$300,000 for one- to seven-year terms. Guaranteed loan amounts are adjusted for inflation.

### Joint Financing Arrangement

Beginning farmer and rancher applicants also have the option of a joint financing arrangement. FSA will lend up to 50 percent of the amount financed, with another lender providing the balance.

Interest rates on joint financing loans are 2 percent lower than on direct loans, with a floor at 2.5 percent and loan terms for up to 40 years.

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## Best Russian olive control usually combines mechanical, herbicide treatments

This beautiful, long fall has been enjoyable, especially for getting projects marked off the to-do list.

If Russian olive removal and control is on the list, here are some considerations. (And one positive aspect is that Russian olive control can be done during the winter when most fieldwork is waiting for better weather.)

As with all weed control, identification is the first and one of the most important parts of the control process. Most people can identify Russian olive trees. They are considered a fast-growing deciduous shrub or small tree that can reach 10 to 25 feet in height. The reddish-brown branches usually have thorns that measure 1 to 2 inches and leaves that are 2 to 3 inches in length. The alternately arranged leaves are lanceolate-shaped with smooth margins (leaf edge) and a two-toned coloring with green-gray on the upper leaf surface and a silvery-gray on the lower leaf surface. This foliage coloring gives a silvery-gray appearance to the tree.

Russian olive trees produce yellow, bell-shaped flowers arranged in clusters that typically appear between May and June. Russian olive trees have deep, well-developed roots that have the ability to regrow if the tree is cut down.

### Regrowth Makes Control Difficult

A Russian olive's ability to regrow from various plant parts, such as twigs, branches, the crown, and lateral roots, makes this plant difficult to control and manage. As with a lot of weeds, the most effective and cheapest control method is to prevent their establishment in the first place. Unfortunately, many

of us are not in this situation and usually have a mature Russian olive tree, if not an entire grove of trees.

Established trees can be controlled through mechanical and herbicide methods, with the best control usually resulting from a combination of the two.

Mechanical methods involve physically removing the tree, typically by mowing or sawing. Mowing with a brush hog is mainly for saplings and suckers (regrowth). This is a cheap and effective method but must be repeated regularly as regrowth emerges. Mature trees are typically cut down with a chainsaw; however, dispose of or burn all the top growth of a Russian olive tree that has been cut down. This prevents regrowth of the tree from the branches and twigs.

Monitoring and continual removal of suckers is necessary once an established tree is removed.

### Herbicide, Mechanical Control

Herbicide is another control method and can be combined with mechanical methods. Herbicides can be applied several ways: foliar, bark treatment, and cut-stump, to name a few.

Foliar sprays, which are applied during the growing season, are used to control suckers, saplings, and mature trees under 6 feet. Bark treatments can be applied any time of year, typically in the winter, and are applied to trees with stem diameters of 5 inches or less. Cut-stump treatment for any size tree is to apply herbicide to the stump less than 15 minutes after a tree has been cut down.

Cut-stump treatment is probably the most used method for controlling Russian olives,

because it physically removes all above-ground growth (provides instant satisfaction), while also controlling the regrowth from the roots.

No matter what control method is used, monitoring and diligent control of regrowth is the only way to remove this stubborn plant from an area.

For more detailed information on controlling Russian olives, contact your local University of Wyoming Extension educator. A list of county offices and contact information is at [www.uwyo.edu/uwe/county](http://www.uwyo.edu/uwe/county). Also, contact your local weed and pest control district office for possible cost-share programs and funding sources for removing Russian olives. District offices and contact information are at [www.wyoweed.org/about/district-offices](http://www.wyoweed.org/about/district-offices).

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